

Guidelines of the Cultural Life Program

I. Intent of the Cultural Life Program

The Cultural Life Program (CLP) encourages students to attend a variety of high quality events that provide diverse and enriching cultural experiences. The Program, taken as a whole, should engage students across a broad spectrum of issues, ideas, and artistic expressions from various disciplines and cultures. Events should foster a sense of community on campus, and expose those who attend to multiple compelling views, inspiring a life-long pursuit of intellectual fulfillment and engagement.

The Program will offer a broad range of perspectives. CLP credit does not imply University endorsement of the views expressed by any participant in any event. In addition, the faculty sponsors of an event may not necessarily hold the viewpoints expressed.

All events are expected to model civil discourse defined procedurally (see V.5. below).

For more, see [History & Purpose of the Cultural Life Program](#).

II. Major Guidelines for Acceptance

Event planners should read the following notes carefully to understand the duties of those hosting CLP events. The CLP Committee (hereafter “the Committee”) is charged with granting approval prior to an event. The event proposal establishes the nature of the event and becomes a rubric for evaluation. Failure to give assurances of the following points can warrant rejection by the Committee:

1. Events should contribute to the academic formation of students by exploring significant issues or questions.
2. Events should not deal with vocational development, practical skills, or personal health or safety unless placed in a broader intellectual, social, artistic, or scientific context.
3. Events should not focus on specific college campuses or issues specific to college life unless placed in a broader intellectual, social, artistic, or scientific context. Exceptions may be made for traditional events such as University Convocations.
4. Participants in an event must demonstrate a fundamental respect for all persons in accordance with the university’s mission statement and strategic plan.

III. Specific Guidelines Regarding Format and Credentials

Event format and credentials must be carefully explained in the proposal.

1. Artistic Performances and Cultural Demonstrations

Proposals for performances (in the performing and visual arts) and demonstrations (including but not limited to specifically designed religious ceremonies and athletic events) must:

- a. Describe the cultural event and explain its importance.
- b. Inform the Committee of the significance of the performance or demonstration, and how its importance will be conveyed to the attendees (e.g., through introductory statements, concluding remarks, program notes, oral or written annotations, etc.).

- c. Describe the qualifications of the artist(s) or event participants. This should include their credentials, and might also include previous performance venues, years performing and critical reviews.
- d. Indicate the presence of material or language that might be considered offensive or particularly provocative.

Note: Proposals for performances or demonstrations featuring or involving students must explain the extent to which Furman faculty or appropriately credentialed “masters” or experts will be involved in the production of the event. Student performances without deep and significant faculty or expert involvement will not receive CLP credit.

2. Films and Documentaries

Proposals for films and documentaries must:

- a. Describe and explain the significance of the film or documentary. Include other information necessary to understanding the importance of production.
- b. Inform the Committee as to how the above information will be conveyed (e.g., through introductory statements, concluding remarks, program notes, oral or written annotations, etc.).
- c. Identify and give the credentials of the presenter or panel used to frame and contextualize the film or documentary. Speaker credentials must be compelling. Speakers will typically have a terminal degree (often a Ph.D.) in an appropriate field. [The Committee recommends that the presentation and/or panel discussion should last ten to fifteen minutes, with an additional audience question-and-answer time.]
- d. Indicate the presence of material or language that might be considered offensive or particularly provocative.
- e. Demonstrate that the sponsor has secured the appropriate public performance license to show the film or has determined a copyright exemption for public performance is allowed. Screenings open beyond students seeking CLP credit will almost always require a public performance license. Very few films, including only a small number held by the Furman University Libraries, are already licensed for public performance. If there are questions regarding public performance licenses for films, contact the University Copyright Officer.

3. Panels, Lectures, and Debates

Events that offer the presentation of ideas by experts and notable individuals must:

- a. Describe the event and its significance by placing it in its intellectual, social, artistic, or scientific context. The Committee encourages relevant Furman faculty participation. It also encourages sponsors of events featuring speakers with a particularly narrow or provocative message to include a panel of individuals qualified to respond to the speaker(s).
- b. Give the name(s) and credentials of the speaker(s). Speaker credentials must be compelling and align closely with the event topic. The speaker(s) will typically have a terminal degree (often a Ph.D.) in an appropriate field. Extraordinary life experiences and notable accomplishments may sometimes substitute for formal credentials. It is the sponsor’s duty to make a compelling case for this exception.
- c. Identify the way(s) the audience will participate in the event (e.g., through a question- and-answer period).

- d. Indicate whether or not the material or views presented could be considered by some to be offensive or particularly provocative.

If an event does not fit any of the above categories, the sponsor should contact the Committee chair to discuss the proposal.

The Committee will not consider proposals that feature workshops, charity and awareness campaigns, self-help or “how-to” topics, student research or coursework, student organization activities, or political campaigns.

IV. CLP Accessibility and Credit Guidelines

1. Events should be accessible to the entire student body.
2. Events will be in-person. Only students physically present in the room will receive credit (with exceptions for students with educational accommodations). Sponsors may propose events with a planned virtual element (e.g., a panelist appearing virtually) described clearly in the proposal. The Committee will evaluate such proposals on a case-by-case basis paying particular attention to the envisioned quality of the educational experience for the students present at the event.
3. In the event of a change in an approved proposal, the sponsor must inform the Committee chair.
4. Sponsors of CLP events should attempt to keep admission costs for students to a minimum. If an event’s price for Furman students exceeds \$10, sponsors should explain in their proposal the reason for the higher cost. Events primarily focused on fundraising will not be approved for CLP credit.
5. Students enrolled in courses noted on the academic transcript, which regularly involve performance or production of CLP events as a requirement for the successful completion of the course, will receive one CLP credit for each semester for which they are enrolled. These courses include but are not limited to forensics, music ensembles and theater productions.
6. A general audience should readily understand the subject matter and cultural significance of the CLP event. One should not have to be an expert to understand its content.
7. The event should take place at a time and in a location that does not preclude the attendance of students with disabilities.
8. Proposals should take into account the capacity of the hall or room for which an event is scheduled. No one will be permitted to enter an event once room capacity has been reached.
9. Off-campus events may be held only if sponsored by a Furman University Sponsored Organization and meet the other CLP guidelines. Organizations will provide their own staff for recording student attendance for CLP credit. No CLP workers will be asked to staff off-campus events. All off campus CLP events require student participants to complete a [liability form](#).
10. Generally, events are scheduled to begin at one of the following times, Monday through Friday: 12:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:00. The recommended duration for events is one hour. Events scheduled to begin at atypical times or planned to last less or more than one hour are possible but the timing should be justified in the proposal. It may be difficult or impossible to staff an event during popular class hours. If staffing cannot be guaranteed, the event will not be approved for CLP credit.

11. Only events occurring during academic sessions may be proposed for CLP credit. CLP events will not be held during study days or examination periods. One CLP event, however, may be held each year during first-year orientation, which will serve as a sample program to introduce new students to the CLP requirement.

V. Responsibilities of the Faculty or Staff Sponsor

1. Although any staff member, student, or student group may help host a CLP event, an official “faculty or staff sponsor” must submit the event proposal. Appropriate sponsors include all educators at Furman University (defined for the purpose of CLP submission as all members of the teaching faculty) and designated staff members. The Committee will approve a list of eligible sponsors at the beginning of each academic year. ***Sponsors may not necessarily hold the viewpoints expressed in the event, but are expected to hold the credentials necessary to judge its academic merit.***
2. The sponsor must submit the proposal, oversee arrangements and logistics, and have a clear understanding of the nature of the event. The Committee chair will use the sponsor as the primary contact for all related inquiries.
3. Sponsors must attend events they propose, or designate another qualified sponsor to attend. The sponsor is required to moderate any panel discussion or question-and-answer period. Sponsors who do not feel qualified or comfortable fulfilling this responsibility may appoint another qualified individual who meets the requirements of a CLP sponsor (see above).
4. The sponsor ensures consistency between the proposal, marketing, and implementation of the event. Event advertising should include the exact title proposed to the Committee, the name of all participating university programs, and a “For More Information” line with a regularly monitored email address. Advertising materials must be reviewed by the sponsor and conform to the standards of civil discourse at Furman University.
5. Sponsor should see that electoral candidate promotion and merchandise sales are not a central feature of the event.
6. Sponsors ensure that the conduct of the speaker(s) and audience at the event is appropriate. It is the duty of a sponsor to end an event if it deviates substantially from the guidelines of the Cultural Life Program. The sponsor can later decide, in conversation with the Committee chair and the Associate Dean and University Registrar, if credit should still be allocated for the event.
7. The sponsor—indeed, any member of the faculty, staff, and administration—has the duty and authority to withdraw CLP credit from students whose behavior is inappropriate (e.g., using electronic devices, studying, or heckling the speaker). Credit can be expunged in conversation with CLP staff or the appropriate administrative office.
8. The sponsor shall promptly notify the appropriate administrative office if an event is canceled or if its time and/or location are changed. Failure to do so will result in revocation of the event’s credit.

VI. Submission Regulations

1. Proposals should be written in non-technical language. The language of the proposal should match the “Intent of the Cultural Life Program” above. Sponsors ensure that the Committee receives all relevant information regarding content, format, and credentials. Proposals must be

submitted electronically using the approved form.

2. Sponsors will not obfuscate or mislead the CLP Committee in any way. The title and content of the event cannot change for event advertising or orchestration. The date and time for an outstanding proposal cannot be changed unless the event is to be moved to a later date in the term, and only if the appropriate administrative office is given two weeks notice to staff the event. The Committee chair and appropriate administrative personnel must approve any changes.
3. Sponsors should submit events as early as possible. The Committee recommends beginning the submission process at least five weeks before the event. This process includes preliminary conversations with the Committee chair if necessary, obtaining confirmation of a campus room reservation, and electronic submission. The Committee will consider submitted (or resubmitted) proposals at its weekly meetings during fall and spring terms (excluding breaks and university holidays). It will only consider proposals for events scheduled two weeks or more from the day of submission (or resubmission). Summer proposals will be reviewed as necessary.
4. Ordinarily no more than three CLP events may be scheduled on the same day. When events are submitted, program administrators will notify the sponsor and Committee chair if three events are already planned for the proposed date of the event (thus disqualifying the new proposal from consideration). Any exceptions to the “three event rule” will have to be approved by the Committee.
5. Once the Committee has reviewed a proposal, the Committee chair will notify the sponsor of the Committee’s decision. Three decisions are possible. The Committee may choose to accept the proposal as written. The Committee may choose to deny the proposal. In the event that a proposal is rejected, the Committee will provide the sponsor with an explanation. Finally, the Committee may choose a “revise and resubmit” option and detail the specific changes that would bring the event into compliance with the guidelines. A revise and resubmit decision allows the sponsor to submit a revised proposal for Committee review. Sponsors revising proposals must remain aware of timing requirements (see #2). The Committee will consider a revised proposal at its next scheduled meeting.

VII. Accountability

The Committee will ensure the quality of the program in the following ways:

1. Sponsors are responsible for guaranteeing that CLP events in their actual execution are consistent with the proposal that has been approved. Violations may include deviation from the proposal in marketing or event orchestration; insufficient communication with the Committee chair or administrator regarding change of location, time, or event cancellation; or events of such a low quality or ill-will as to cast doubt on their academic merit.
2. If any member of the university community submits a formal, written complaint to the Committee chair or University Registrar regarding an event or its marketing, either before or after the event, the Committee will decide if a formal hearing is necessary. If a hearing is called for, the Committee will invite appropriate parties to present evidence before the Committee during a regularly scheduled meeting. The Committee will render its decision within 7 days (excluding breaks and holidays). Decisions by the Committee are final.
 - a. If the complaint is related to a *scheduled* event, the Committee may decide to leave the event unchanged, to require alteration of the event in collaboration with the sponsor, or in rare cases to cancel the CLP status of the scheduled event.

- b. If the complaint is related to an event *that has already been held*, the Committee will investigate whether the event in its execution deviated from its proposal in a substantial way. If the Committee determines that a violation has occurred, it will work with the sponsor to identify the causes of the violation to ensure that the same mistakes are not made again, and to facilitate an appropriate apology and, if necessary, restitution.
- c. If the Committee determines that the event in question did not satisfy the CLP program requirements in its execution, it may decide to disqualify the sponsor from hosting further CLP events for a period of time up to one academic year. In extreme cases, the Committee may invoke other penalties.

last updated 5/5/2025

DISCLAIMER: The CLP Committee does not make decisions regarding the validity of the viewpoint expressed in any particular event.