Paladin Nites Offers Multiple Events for Simultaneous FUN!

With 2,600 students and 96% of them living on campus, Furman University (SC) was in a pickle: what to do with all these on-campus students on the weekends with no other entertainment venues located near the campus? There was a definite need for some serious late-night weekend programming.

While the need for such programming was evident, to that point in time, none had ever been attempted. The school needed late-night weekend programming not so much as an alternative to events involving alcohol, but as something fun to do on campus with no ties whatsoever to academics. Therefore, the need—and idea—for Paladin Nites was born.

After researching the program wish lists of our campus, as well as the needs of the Office of Student Activities and the University Center in sponsoring a program series of this nature, we submitted a proposal to the administration during budget requests to support this ongoing program through annual operating funds, not student activities fees, which ensured its ongoing perpetuation.

We proposed a series of six late-night programs throughout the year, offering our assurance that, once this program was shown to be successful, the student organizations would help sponsor future Paladin Nites. And it worked! Combining this program with our Thursday Alive @ the UCI program (see the October 2005 “Idea File”), we were awarded $45,000 as an annual budget for this offbeat programming.

The program has been a success from the beginning: attracting an average of 750–1,000 students at each Paladin Nites program during the past two years, it has become a popular destination for Furman students. Our programming formula is as follows: BIG SHOW (hypnotists, game shows, mentalists, etc.) + COMEDIAN + MOVIE (shown twice) + INTERACTIVE EVENT + BINGO (with fabulous prizes!) + FOOD (snacks all night and a late-night breakfast bar), all offered simultaneously from 8 pm–1 am.

The budget for each Paladin Nite averages $7,000–$8,000, and student organizations, especially the Furman University Student Activities Board (FUSAB), have begun to contribute programming to the series.

One note, though: while a by-product of this program is that it provides an alternative to events involving alcohol, we never want to advertise it as such; we always promote the fact that this is simply a super-fun night to spend with friends.

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Share Your Successful Program Ideas

Members are encouraged to share and submit successful programs they've implemented on campus for the idea file. In lieu of a 300-word limit, ideas should be brief and to-the-point. Submissions may also be accompanied by graphics, photography, and even video clips that capture the essence of the program. Be sure to keep ideas described in this section applicable to the student body, the core experiences of the university, and the student experience. Address ideas to program@naca.org.