A Five College guide for promoting events

Make a plan
When promoting an event or program, start by outlining your goals (packing 2,000 people into the Fine Arts Center? getting two dozen people into a classroom?), your potential audience (students? specifically students interested in art?), and your budget.

By targeting your audience right from the start, you’ll save time and money and probably attract more people. If, for example, you are having an event that you think will appeal to Live Action Role Players and Dungeon & Dragons fans, look for gaming groups on each campus and ask their organizers how to reach their members. Consider recruiting a point person from each campus to help promote your event, or at least offer advice on the best ways to do it. Click here for student clubs and organizations https://www.fivecolleges.edu/students/clubs and here for a list of academic programs, centers and committees https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/departments_programs/categorized

With your goals, audiences and budget in mind, consider what among the following approaches will work the best for you. The list is roughly organized from the least to most expensive.

Social media
The following are a list of steps and ideas for promoting your event or program via social media. First, go through your event or program description and/or materials and list the following:

- What are the most interesting aspects?
- Who are the key people involved?
- Who are well known people talking about similar topics?
- Is there anything going on in the news that could be tied to it?
- Do you have any videos or images that are relevant?
- Could you create a countdown or some other type of campaign leading up to the event or program?

Once you have that information in hand:

- Write a series of posts for the social media outlets you are part of, or if you want us to post about your event/program on Five Colleges’ Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube, write posts for each media and send them to Taliesin at tnyala@fivecolleges.edu
- If you’re putting the posts on your social media, schedule them to go out several times a week leading up to the event/program
- Tag key influencers in posts (people with lots of followers or who are influential within the particular field of the event/program)
- If you have the budget for it, pick 3-4 key posts to pay for on all outlets
- Track engagement via Facebook Insights, Twitter Dashboard, or your YouTube analytics
- Pick top performing content to re-post and promote
- Reach out to key people via email with text they can use to promote via their social networks
Press releases
If your event is open to the Five College community or general public, a press release is a great—and free—way to generate awareness. Keep to the basics—who, what, where, when—and try to keep it to one page. Since you’ll be emailing it to people, include links to background information about your speakers or about the subject of your event. Send it to these campus event planning and promotion resources:
https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/news/public_affairs/events_planning_publicity
http://www.hampshire.edu/news/949.htm
http://www.mtholyoke.edu/studentprograms/eventplanning.html
http://www.smith.edu/news/submit.php
http://www.umass.edu/newsoffice/contact
http://www.honors.umass.edu/news-submission-guide

Email addresses to Five College campus newspapers
Mount Holyoke News: mhnews@mtholyoke.edu
The Hampshire Climax: climax@hampshire.edu
UM Daily Collegian: news@dailycollegian.com
Amherst Student: astudent@amherst.edu
Smith Sophian: sophian@smith.edu

Local news email addresses for press releases
Daily Hampshire Gazette: newsroom@gazettenet.com
Springfield Republican: news@repub.com
Valley Advocate news: skraft@valleyadvocate.com
Valley Advocate arts: jheflin@valleyadvocate.com
NEPR: news@nepr.net

Calendar listings
Calendar listings are a free and easy (but somewhat time-consuming) way to get the word out about your event. Most calendars will ask for either a 40-word or 100-word description of your event. See the list of calendar listings links in resources below, and think of which will best reach your audience.

Campus calendars
UMass Amherst events: http://www.umass.edu/umhome/events/
Amherst College events: https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/news/calendar/events
Hampshire College events: http://www.hampshire.edu/index_news.htm
Mount Holyoke College events: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/conference/event_department_ad
Smith College events: http://www.smith.edu/news/submit.php

Regional Calendar listings:
Amherst Bulletin: http://www.amherstbulletin.com/home/
Valley Advocate: http://www.valleyadvocate.com/calendar/

Updated: 2015
Posters
Posters can be done fairly cheaply at campus printing offices, Staples and other quick-print centers. Before postering a campus that you don’t know well, get advice from someone on that campus on the best places to reach your target audiences. If you have the money to hire a designer to create your poster, see Designers, below. For Five College programs, you can download poster templates here.

Table tents!
Students report that getting these on the tables of campus dining commons can be an effective way to get the word out. Each campus has its own table tenting policies, so be sure to check with each campus’ dining services.

Web page and websites
If your organization already has a website, it’s a great idea to use a page on it to both promote your event and offer more detailed information about it than you can fit in printed materials or social media posts. If you don’t already have a website, you’re probably best off creating an event on Facebook and linking there in your materials. Unless you have resources to easily do it, creating a website to promote single event may be a bit of overkill. If you are determined to create a website but don’t have the skills to do it yourself, see Designers, below.

Advertising
Advertising is a good way to hit a very broad audience. It’s also a good way to spend a lot of money without being sure of how effective your efforts have been. If you can find a medium that targets your audience, or if your event is aimed at a very wide audience, advertising may be right for you.
Each outlet or media has different requirements—and fees—for their advertising, so check in with them as you are creating your promotional plan.

Links to advertising with local media
Daily Hampshire Gazette: sales@gazettenet.com
Springfield Republican: http://www.repub.com/advertising.html
Valley Advocate: sales@valleyadvocate.com
NEPR: rkenney@nepr.net

Designers
A designer can create attractive advertisements, posters and even websites, but it will cost you. Most designers charge between $40 and $100 an hour, so even a simple poster design could cost several hundred dollars, before you even print it. Some designers can also offer excellent ideas on promoting your event, and can arrange to get your ads into publications and onto websites. For suggestions of area designers, contact Kevin Kennedy at kkennedy@fivecolleges.edu

Additional Resources
Student clubs and organizations
https://www.fivecolleges.edu/students/clubs

Academic programs, centers and committees
https://www.fivecolleges.edu/academics/departments_programs/categorized

Campus event planning and promotion resources
https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/news/public_affairs/events_planning_publicity
http://www.hampshire.edu/news/949.htm
http://www.mtholyoke.edu/studentprograms/eventplanning.html
http://www.smith.edu/news/submit.php
http://www.umass.edu/newsoffice/contact
http://www.honors.umass.edu/news-submission-guide