

**Special Events
Unit Annual Report
2002-2003**

Personnel

Maggie Larson	Program Associate, special events coordinator (60% time) LaFave House Manager (40% time)
Adrienne Stark	Student work study/house assistant
Corina Bernstein	Student work study/house assistant
Stephanie Buckholz	MAI/house and special events assistant

Purpose

The coordinator of special events has primary responsibility for the scheduling, planning, and execution of campus special events with an emphasis on external relationship building. This position also oversees the management of LaFave House, with responsibility for scheduling, enforcement of policies, coordination of LaFave House special events and activities held in support of the house and its functions.

Function

The Office of Special Events coordinates campus recognition and external relations programs, including commencement, the annual faculty/staff recognition banquet, the student honors and awards day, and special visits to campus by legislators, donors, and other dignitaries. The manager of LaFave House schedules activities at the house, enforces the house policies, serves on the advisory board, and supports the house and all of its functions.

Narrative

The special events office continues to operate within LaFave House, and this combination functions in a successful partnership as the gracious social and entertainment center for the campus and community that Chancellor Sam Schuman envisioned. It has clearly become apparent that special events and LaFave House manager responsibilities overlap in many instances (special guests that visit UMM are entertained at LaFave House), and therefore it becomes more difficult to separate the two roles into distinct time percentages.

Routine responsibilities include coordinating various community events throughout the summer months, planning the “summer celebration” event, and coordinating the new faculty dinner. Additional tasks include acting as an ex-officio member of the Functions

and Awards Committee, striving for continued improvements in the campus beautification efforts, coordinating building dedications, the Chancellor's Holiday Reception,

Senior Salute Day in March, the Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner, Student Honors and Awards Day, and Commencement. Core responsibilities include planning and coordinating special visits to campus by legislators, donors, and other dignitaries as well as management of LaFave House. *Additional* core responsibility has been assigned for assisting with the Lakeside Event, the WCSA Reunion in July, and Homecoming events, the fall Scholarship Dinner, and planning the annual Friends of LaFave House fall gala. *Eliminated* responsibility is managing the University Store, as after careful analysis it was determined this no longer served its originally intended purpose for UMM.

The landscaping project at the House was completed on August 9, 2002, and upon that completion a decision was made to invite general community individuals and groups to use the House. Minor changes were made to the community-use contract, were approved by the Policy Committee, and the House hosted its first (of seven) community event(s) on February 8, 2003. From June 10, 2002 through July 31, 2003, the House has enjoyed 2,345 guests (while being closed for use from June 11-August 8 for the landscaping project). Based on those numbers, the House has averaged 234 guests per month in 2002-2003. A Morris Academic Intern was employed as "house assistant" throughout the academic year.

The Coordinator for Special Events serves on a permanent basis on the Dining Services Committee, the Functions and Awards Committee, and the Commencement Committee, The Friends of LaFave House Board and sub-committees, and has consulted on the Acoustic and Aesthetics Committee, the Pride of the Prairie Committee, the Minnesota Supreme Court Justices Dinner Committee, the Barber Lecture Series Committee, the Welcome Ceremony Committee, the Campus Calendar Committee, and the Commission on Women. The Coordinator also served as the External Relations representative on the Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving search committee.

Outreach efforts included service on the Pride of the Prairie local foods group and the Minnesota Supreme Court Justices visit committee, coordinating the Chancellor's Community Coffee held at Willie's Super Value, volunteering at the Stevens County Fair, assisting at the Festival of Lakes event as well as the Lakeside event, and attendance at several off-campus events. The Coordinator also planned and hosted the Potpourri Study Club campus visit, and planned UMM's participation in the Prairie Pioneer Days parade in July, the Homecoming parade in September, and the Parade of Lights parade in November. Due to the personal leave of the Campus Communications Coordinator the Special Events office planned the campus community picnic in August as well as the community picnic held at the East Side Park in September. LaFave House was included in the Morris Area High School post-prom fundraiser Tour of Homes in December, and efforts at promoting the House and its value to the campus and community continue.

Communications included commencement presentations at all fall senior meetings as well as coordination and presence at the “Senior Salute Day” for graduates. Tours are still offered to the many drop-in guests of LaFave House as well as a narrative on the history of the House and the LaFave family’s influence in helping establish UMM. Policies and various LaFave House pieces are updated as changes occur throughout the year.

Evaluation and Changes Recommended

The budget crisis seriously impacts special events as it becomes increasingly more difficult to make events “special” when the budget for same has been greatly reduced. Extreme times call for extreme measures. Creativity and calls for assistance in campus beautification efforts will become the norm, and the coordinator will need to expend more time in those efforts vs. hiring others to do it. Volunteers will be requested more often.

LaFave House has become a valuable asset to both the campus community and the community of Morris at large. Friends of LaFave House gifts have allowed us to purchase accessory items that enhance and add comfort. The guest roster and revenue figures show that we had a very successful first year of full operation, and we look forward to increased use in the coming year. While we knew that the campus community craved such a social center it is now becoming apparent that the Morris community craves such a place for special occasions and celebrations as well.

In light of the above two paragraphs, it is highly recommended that the LaFave House Manager become the *resident* house manager, utilizing the upstairs of LaFave House as private quarters and paying rent for its use. This will help to slightly lessen the budget burden and will help to greatly lessen the stress and strain on the house manager. It is an exciting possibility for UMM!

