INTRODUCTION

September 2017, Dr. Elizabeth With, Vice President for Student Affairs, put a freeze on all open parties hosted by student organizations. This decision did not rest solely on the actions of one organization’s event, but rather a combination of past safety and security issues which have occurred when parties were large in scale and included individuals not affiliated with the university. In response, Dr. With initiated a task force charged with “providing recommendations of best practices for open parties”, with a primary focus on ensuring the safety of student organizations and the overall campus community. Those serving on the task force included representatives from, or appointed by, Student Affairs, Risk Management, the Division of Equity and Diversity, UNT Police, University Union, the Dean of Students office, Greek Life, Student Activities, the Event Safety Committee (ESC), and presidents of the Student Government Association (SGA), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), Black Student Union (BSU), Progressive Black Student Organization (PBSO), Multicultural Greek Council (MGC), and Interfraternity Council (IFC).

INFORMATION GATHERING

In order to better understand the challenges and opportunities, the task force reviewed the following information:

- A historical overview of open parties from the UNT police perspective and likely root causes that led to safety issues at student organization events.
- Benchmark data from peer institutions on guidelines and practices for open parties.

See Appendix A for copies of these documents.

During our information gathering stage, we also wanted to make sure we kept the importance and value of open parties to student organizations in mind. Students on the task force summarized the value of open parties as follows:

- Fundraising/revenue for student organizations
- Recruitment for the organization and UNT
- Publicity
- Socialization
- Organization branding

Ultimately, the task force summarized the challenges needing to be addressed as:

- Overcrowding/capacity issues, which has led to upset guests and crowd control issues.
- Unknown and unaffiliated guests attending open parties.
- Large amounts of cash at door.
- Fights/verbal altercations/injuries.

An additional challenge was brought up by student representatives on the task force. There is a concern regarding the ESC not knowing about all parties taking place, particularly those taking place in Greek
houses. The task force did discuss this issue and while Greek Life is aware of the concern, addressing this particular issue is outside the scope of this specific task force.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given these challenges and needs, the committee’s recommendations are as follows:

- **Enhanced Pre-Event Education and Planning for Student Organizations**
  - This education should be linked with student organization training, but the ESC should also offer regularly scheduled trainings for student organizations wanting to host a large-scale event. Trainings should include a suggested timeline for planning large-scale events.
  - Student organization representatives (including the advisor) should meet with UNT Police, a facilities representative, and an ESC representative 2-3 days prior to the event to conduct a walk through and discuss event logistics (i.e. placement of stage, police presence, entrances/exits, etc.). At least 1 police officer should be an officer attending the event.
  - Add to ESC process that student organizations should share advertisements with committee prior to release to ensure promotion is clear regarding who is invited (only language will need to be reviewed).

- **Increased Awareness of Attendees and Improved Crowd Control**
  - Require organizations to offer pre-sale tickets for any open party. Pre-sale tickets will be open to all potential attendees, up to 1 hour before the event. An individual can purchase up to 2 tickets (one for self and one for guest).
    - Pre-sale tickets should utilize the Union Ticketing System so that university scanners can be used. It is recommended the Division of Student Affairs covers the usage fee for student organizations to help promote using this system.
    - Any attendee utilizing a pre-sale ticket will still have to show valid ID at the door.
    - The person purchasing the ticket must provide ID at the door, as well as the guest of the person purchasing the ticket must provide ID at the door. This will help ensure we have an accurate list of all party attendees.
  - Tickets purchased on-site must be made by a student with a valid college ID and is limited to 1 additional guest (additional guest does not have to be a college student).
    - All guests should be required to show a valid ID at the door.
    - If an attendee arrives and does not have a college ID and is not a guest of an attendee with a college-ID, they will not be granted admittance to the party.
    - It is also recommended that on-site ticket sales be at an increased price from online to promote online sales, but this should remain at the student organization’s discretion.
    - Whatever tickets are not sold via the pre-sale system, will be available to students (meeting the above requirements) at the door, until capacity of the space is reached. Capacity is determined by UNT Risk Management and the facility.
  - The Union will determine thresholds (in coordination with student organizations) to cut checks for the student organization to pay upfront costs (e.g. after first 50 ticket sales,
then after each subsequent 100, Monday morning following event). This will help student organizations pay any upfront costs.

- **Improved Cash Handling Procedures**
  - Once all cash is collected for an event from on-site ticket sales, a UNT police officer should escort a student organization member to a location in the University Union to secure the money. The following week, the University Union will cut a check to the organization for the amount deposited or transfer the funds to a university account, should the organization have one.
    - For events that do not take place in the University Union, the ESC and the student organization will establish an appropriate plan to secure cash during and after the event. This should be addressed during the event planning process.
  - Specific details on how money will be secured and returned to the student organization should be developed with the help of a representative from Asset Control (Division of Finance and Administration). Minimally, written procedures should include the responsibility of each party in counting the money prior to the deposit.
  - From the University Union's perspective, it will be imperative that funds are transferred back to the organization as quickly as possible after the event. It is the task force’s recommendation that funds be transferred no later than the end of the next business day after the event.

- **Planned Access to Union Space**
  - At least part of the Union is to remain open through duration of event so that guests can continue to enter the party.

- **Required Staffing at Event**
  - Although we believe this occurs regularly, we want to reiterate that student organization advisors and ESC representatives are required to attend all events to ensure adherence to policies. Those required to be in attendance should be identified during the event planning process.

On November 28, 2017, the above recommendations were vetted through the NPHC and PBSO advisors. Both advisors agreed with the recommendations. In addition, the advisors requested that organization accountability for following approved guidelines and safety/security issues be considered in order to avoid broad scope freezes on open parties in the future. As such the task force recommends the following:

- **Defined/Clarified Accountability**
  - Develop a committee to determine the best way to handle accountability. Currently, there are not written guidelines or processes that address the topic of accountability when student organizations do not adhere to requirements set forth by the ESC or when safety/security issues occur. Developing these guidelines and processes was outside the scope of this task force, but we strongly recommend that it should be researched. Departments to include in this discussion should include (minimally) the Dean of Students
We believe these recommendations should apply to all open parties, regardless of size.

*Note: It is important to note that at least one student representative on the task force did not agree with the recommendations related to cash at the door because no cash handling issues had occurred in the past. While advisors did state that cash boxes have gone missing, this was not believed to be true by at least one student representative.

CONCLUSION

The task force recognizes the value that student organizations and events hosted at UNT bring to the campus community. In addition, the safety and security of the campus community is and will continue to be of the utmost importance. Through these recommendations, the task force has focused on maintaining a balance between the safety and security of our campus community and ensuring student organizations can continue to benefit from the value created by these events.

While these recommendations will not definitively prevent safety and security issues from occurring, they do proactively mitigate known risks from impacting students, visitors, and employees. As a result of the collaborative efforts of those on the task force, we present these recommendations for the purpose of fulfilling the charge of the task force and in support of UNT’s continued efforts to continually enhance the safety and security of our campus community.
APPENDIX A
Historical Perspective of Open Parties from the Police Department
Late Night Dances

A 30 Year
(1987 to 2017)
Historical Perspective

Late Night Dances

- Late Night Hours – 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
- Social – attract UNT students, outside guests and alumni with a max capacity of 800
- Dances – DJ playing music from a stage, large speakers, lights turned down low, limited seating, open dance floor
History of Late Night Dances

- Greek Explosion & After Parties
  - The first was in 1969
  - The last was March 2008, the 38th Annual Greek Explosion
  - Counterfeit tickets, access control/breaches, fights, crowd control issues, major injuries
- Kerr Beach Party
  - Kerr Beach venue became problematic, moved to Rec Sports Field
  - Fights, crowd issues, parking, cruising, etc...
- Old University Union Dances prior to Visitor Center/Lyceum Lobby remodel
  - Ticket Booth manned by Union staff
  - Union staff controlled and sold wristbands
  - Implemented metal detection
  - Access control issues (majority of bldg closed, crowd control barriers, etc...)

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History of Late Night Dances

- Fall of 1987 – Wisconsin Sleepers
  - Held in the Lab School Gym (ESSC footprint)
  - Attendance of 400
  - Four officers assigned
  - Attendee pulled a gun on the dance floor
  - Subject dropped the BB gun when confronted by Police
  - Ultimately arrested and escorted out a back door
  - Party was shut down early
- Fall of 1996 – unknown hosts (Greek Fraternity)
  - Held in the Silver Eagle Suite in the University Union Bldg
  - Reached capacity, crowd formed outside
  - Officers called in to handle the upset crowd on the exterior
  - Fights and "shots fired" occurred outside as the overflow crowd became unruly
  - Multiple BMV's discovered in area parking lots after the event
  - A moratorium was issued by the UNT Administration

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History of Late Night Dances

- Sept 2007 - Assault on a Police Officer
- Oct 2007 - Assault on a Police Officer
- Jan 2010 - Over crowding
- Mar 2010 - Fight, knife, foot pursuit, & arrest
- Jan 20, 2012 - Verbal altercations involving football players
- Jan 21, 2012 - two simultaneous fights (inside & out), outside fight involving football players & 3 unconscious victims, and subsequent man w/ a gun call from adjacent apartments

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History of Late Night Dances

- Oct 2015
  - Circle R Ranch in Flower Mound
  - Planned for 500 with over 2000 actual attendance
  - Parking outside of venue and walking in
  - Fights, property damage, shots fired
  - Adjacent Church was found to have a window shot out and shell casings at the scene
- Jan 2016
  - First dance in the new Union
  - 800 capacity reached at 1145
  - 500 additional in Union unable to get in the Dance
  - Traffic issues on the exterior
  - Exterior temp of 37 degrees assisted in clearing of campus after the event
History of Late Night Dances

Jan 2017
- Premier Event Center, Lewisville, Texas
- Estimated attendance of 1000 inside, no on site Police noted
- Estimates of 500 to 1000 additional outside the venue
- Local Police called area business customers reporting threats, marijuana use, loitering, etc...
- Lewisville PD called for mutual aid to assist with a hostile, unruly, and riotous crowd, over 40 officers responded from five adjacent/local agencies

Sept 2017
- Held in the new Union with only 300 in attendance
- Belligerent guest ejected from the Dance
- Subsequent resistance and fight with officers
- Aggravated Assault resulting in serious bodily injury (broken jaw requiring reconstruction)
- Resulted in five arrests for various offenses including Assault on a Police Officer

Problems Encountered
- **Overcrowding/Security Breaches** – fortunately have avoided a crowd crush incident (venue occupancy issues)
- **Alcohol & Drug Issues** – not a large number but a contributing factor at times
- **Weapons** – have found all types
- **Verbal Altercations** – occur at every event with very few exceptions and generally start on the dance floor
- **Fights** – physical altercations stemming from verbal
Problems Encountered

✓ Injuries – to both officers and attendees
✓ Ancillary/Secondary Crimes - offenses stemming from dances, assaults, weapons offense, burglary of vehicles, etc...
✓ Venue Cleanup – trash, vomit, gum in carpet, etc...
✓ Property damage/missing - broken glass windows, doors, chairs, etc...
✓ Cash – hosts handle large amounts of $$$$; fortunately we never had a robbery or theft
✓ Unruly/Unpredictable/Riotous Crowds – upset guests not allowed access due to reaching capacity

Past Risk Reduction Efforts

✓ Moratoriums/Suspensions – temporary stop of all late night dances
✓ Officers/Security – from 4 to as many as 10
✓ Metal Detection – implemented successfully
✓ Crowd Control Measures – metal portable fencing
✓ Traffic Control/Restrictions – restrict cruising outside venue
✓ Planning - better planning & involvement from ALL Stakeholders
✓ Reviewing Marketing – review of all advertisements/marketing
✓ Require College ID - only students with college ID’s
✓ Video - equipment in old Union proved helpful many times
Lessons Learned & Challenges

✓ Practices match Policies – implementation of policies can be/look a lot different than original intent
✓ Can’t Be Police Only – ALL stakeholders have to be on board and supportive of ALL policies, procedures, and practices
✓ Consistency (Not Complacency) – must guard against deterioration of standards, policies, procedures, practices and enforcement afterwards regardless of success
✓ New Student Leadership - its always a challenge each and every year with new student organization leadership (constant educational process)

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APPENDIX B
Benchmark Data Received from Peer Institutions
Aspirational Peer

- Arizona State University- Tempe
  - ASU Office of Special Events
  - http://specialevents.asu.edu/
  - Do you allow student organizations to hold these large scale parties on your campus? We do, however they are not common.
  - Do you have any policies in place about holding these types of events? If so, would you be willing to share them? Our only policy is that they register the event with the University. This process will inform relevant agencies on campus (Police, Fire, Environmental Health & Safety, etc.). If they feel it necessary they can insist the event have a certain level of security, police present, and so on.
  - What do you all do to mitigate the risk of so many off-campus guests at these types of events? The process above helps us identify high risk events and intervene as necessary.

- University of California- Santa Barbara
  - Minor events committee
  - Major events committee (2,500 people+)

Similar to UNT Peer

- University of Oklahoma- Norman
  - Open Social Event Notification Form
  - Due one month prior to event occurring
  - Must have current college/university ID and driver’s license
  - One exemption to have off campus guests per semester
  - Require liability raver for participants
  - Don’t need to happen on campus
    - Must be within Norman city limits
  - Sign in sheet collect guest names and phone numbers
  - Security personnel responsible for sign in
  - Completed sign in sheets must be submitted to student life 3 days after event
  - Minimum of 2 security guards
  - For every 50 people over 100, one additional guard is required
  - Open events on campus must have minimum of 1 officer present
  - http://www.ou.edu/content/studentlife/get_involved/student_organizations/forms/plan_an_open_socialoralcoholevent.html
  - Forms attached

- George Mason University
  - “We absolutely have events like this on campus every semester in our Student Union builds. Like your University we also do not require ID’s in order to enter the party. When a student puts a request in for a large party they are required to complete a checklist. This checklist ensures that all the proper offices on campus are aware of this party. They must go to said office’s and gather the required signatures, that checklist is due 10
business days before their event. I’ve attached a copy of the checklist. Depending on the event there are other signatures that are needed. For example if they plan on having minors at their event they have to get a special signature for that aspect of their event. If for some reason the checklist is not completed 10 business days before the event the event is cancelled, this is a hard deadline. Most of these events require a couple of our on campus police to be present and some cadets. Our office of Student Involvement will also wrist band the event to ensure that the space does not go over capacity. I hope this information is helpful, if you have any other questions please feel free to email me.

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Texas Peer

- University of Houston
  - Yes, we do allow students to host these types of events but it’s rare that they do because of the cost. So we typically do not charge registered organizations a fee to reserve space in our Student Center if they are hosting a UH only event. But if the event is open to students that are not part of the University, is social in nature, or charges a fee to get in (must meet two of these requirements) we have something called the RSO Indoor Social Event Policy. The students must come to a stakeholders meeting with the Center for Student Involvement, the building coordinator for the space they are attempting to reserve, the University Police department, and if they are Greek, their Chapter coach from the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life.
  - Also, students that are charging a fee to get into the event are required to then pay for the space at what is called the RSO Fundraiser rate.
  - Usually the fact that they have to pay for the space is enough for them to not host the event on campus for non-UH students.
  - Please let me know if this helps and if you have any other questions!