SoIC Alcohol and Entertainment Policy

The School of Informatics and Computing recognizes the importance of entertainment, and providing alcohol at certain events, to help advance certain missions of the school. These missions include employee retention, donor development, advancing SoIC’s reputation with external constituents, attracting the best employers for SoIC students, and recruiting the best faculty and staff. This policy is being created to provide guidelines to faculty and staff on what the school administration feels is reasonable with respect to the use of entertainment and alcohol at events. This policy is subordinate to all IU policies regarding entertainment and alcohol. As such, if a conflict arises between this policy and an IU policy, the IU policy must be followed.

Events Where Alcohol May Be Provided

Events where alcohol might be available include, but are not limited to:

- Meals with donors
- Meals with prospective faculty and graduate students
- Meals with staff interviewees
- Official school and department/division receptions
- Conference/workshop receptions
- School holiday party
- Alumni receptions
- Retirement receptions
- Employer receptions

Events where alcohol is not allowed include any event where undergraduate students may be present.

Defining Reasonableness

IU uses the term “reasonable” to guide decisions regarding entertainment. IU is a public university, not a private institution, or a corporation, and so levels of reasonableness may appear more modest to faculty and staff who are accustomed to non-public employers. In addition to respecting IU’s public institution status, consideration also needs to be given to the funding source of alcohol purchases. The only funds available to the school to purchase alcohol are those given by donors.

The school administration often uses two tests to help think through reasonableness. The first test is the "newspaper test”. Since IU is a public institution, IU is subject to the Open Records Statutes of the State of Indiana. As such it should always be assumed that everything the school does could be open to scrutiny by the public, often via newspaper requests for information.

The second test is the "donor test”. How comfortable would the school be if a donor was presented with an accounting of what their funds were used for. Donors are allowed to request this information.

Based on these tests the school administration has created the following guidelines.

Guidelines

Meals with donors, guest faculty, employers, prospective graduate students and other non-IU constituents

The school has set a guideline maximum of $60 per head, which should include food, alcohol, tax and tip. IU has a guideline that normally only three employees will entertain a guest. Combining these two guidelines provides $240 dollars for meals with guests. To utilize the more expensive restaurants in town some employees have opted to have only two employees entertain the guest which allows up to $80 per head.

The IU guideline also allows spouses to attend if the guest’s spouse is in attendance. In this case the total meal guideline maximum would be increased to $480 (assuming at least 6 attendees).

Generally children of employees should not be in attendance at business dinners. However, the school understands that sometimes the unexpected may happen (like childcare arrangements falling through at the last minute) and in these situations children may be in attendance. Children’s meal costs cannot be paid for by IU.

Quantity and Cost of Alcohol

Generally, providing guests and employees with one or two alcoholic beverages is considered reasonable by the school. As such, at events with an open bar it may be prudent to provide guests and employees with one or two drink tickets. Additional beverages would need to be purchased from the bar by the person. This may not be appropriate at all events, but events such as the holiday party are particularly well suited to this.

Alcohol can be very expensive. Receipts with expensive bottles of wine and expensive shots of liquor have the appearance of being excessive. As such, the school recommends not spending more than $30 to $40 on a bottle of wine and avoiding or limiting expensive liquors. As stated above, all alcohol costs must be included within the per-head guideline amount.

Events for Graduate Students

The school has over 250 PhD students, and graduates many each year. It would likely be seen as excessive and not reasonable to have a graduation reception for each PhD student, paid for by the school. Some reasonable options available to celebrate PhD graduations could
include:

- Following the guest guideline above and have 2 or 3 employees take the student out for a meal to celebrate their graduation, staying within the $240 guideline.
- Having a modestly sized event to celebrate multiple graduations at the same time.
- Holding an open event where guests pay their own bills, but IU covers the graduate and 2 or 3 employees bills.

Some departments and programs have a tradition of an annual event for graduate students. These events are sometimes held at the beginning of the school year as a 'welcome event', and sometimes towards the end of the year as a 'coming of age' event. These events should be limited to one per year for each set of students. Generally these events will not have alcohol paid for by the school. If attendees wish to purchase alcohol that is their choice. Since there is no alcohol provided at these events the per head cost should not be more than $25-$30.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE POLICY

There are occasions when there are good reasons to go beyond the guidelines above. This may include entertaining major gift donors, and other VIPs. In these instances employees should seek prior approval for going beyond these guidelines. For faculty, approval should be sought from the chair or EAD (in consultation with the Senior Director of Administration and Finance). For staff employees approval should be sought from the Senior Director of Administration and Finance.