

Pride of CASE V Awards Program 2009

Category 46: Excellence in Special Events, Invitations and Collateral Materials Trustee Breakout Dinner Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)

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Description:

The Trustee Breakout Dinner took place on February 18, 2009, following a regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting where a draft of the university's new strategic plan was first introduced.

A brief cocktail reception took place before the dinner, at which deans briefly outlined themes of the strategic plan. This outline served as a recap for the trustees, who were presented with the plan at the meeting earlier that day, and as an introduction to their spouses. Following the introduction of the themes, guests were invited to sign up for a topic of interest, which would, in turn, become their table assignment for the evening.

At the conclusion of the reception, guests were instructed to move to their selected tables. Once seated, guests were encouraged to discuss their themes, with a few key "experts" planted at each table:

- Host (a member of the Executive Committee)
- Student member of the strategic plan steering committee
- A member of IIT's staff (dean or vice president)

- Remaining spots open for sign up

Each table host was provided with conversation starter questions in advance of the event.

To engage attendees, the invitation and onsite print materials were designed using bold colors and thematic imagery. 24" x 18" foam core signs were scattered throughout the reception for table signups and at the dinner tables to reinforce the themes from the plan.

Enclosed print pieces:

- Invitation
- Menu card
- Table sign ups
- Theme signage

Goals and objectives:

The goal of the Trustee Breakout Dinner was to spark interesting, creative and exciting discussion surrounding the themes of the strategic plan, such that guests would leave with more knowledge about and excitement toward the plan.

Description of how project fits into overall institutional and/or advancement goals:

As part of the strategic planning process, IIT's president wanted to engage trustees and collect their constructive feedback. The mission of the Institutional Advancement office is to build relationships and partnerships, which was a direct outcome of collaborating with the trustees in the planning process.

Audience:

Board of Trustees and their spouses, student members of the strategic plan steering committee, academic leadership. 80 attendees.

Total number of professional and support staff who worked on the program:

This event involved five primary members of the Institutional Advancement team (listed above); others contributing to the project included:

- Five additional advancement staff for onsite support
- Collaboration with the Office of the President and the IIT Office of Communications and Marketing
- IIT's on-campus catering and facilities departments provided food, setup, and audio-visual support

Budget:

Catering / Production	\$11,479 (food/bev \$69/ea plus labor, rentals, A/V)
Décor	\$800
Invitations	\$799 (\$3.20/ea)
Event signage, menus	\$910
Photo/video	\$660
Total	\$14,648

Any special circumstances or challenges faced:

- How do you convey multiple themes of a strategic plan using printed communications?

We utilized colorful, graphic imagery to represent the multiple themes in the invitation and continued through to onsite print materials. Copy was user-friendly and did not get overly-technical.

Documented results, measurements of effectiveness:

Trustees were able to interact with IIT leadership on a level playing field, participating in a “thinking outside the box” event. Guests had a fun experience, with some friendly competition during table signups, and the opportunity to sit in a mixed seating environment (as opposed to the traditional seated dinner).