

Running an Arts & Sciences Collegium in the SCA

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Kingdom of Atenveldt

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One of the great things about the SCA is the ability to freely share knowledge with others who share a similar historical interest. I feel that SCA Collegiums are one of the most beneficial and important things the SCA offers. The fighting arts are what usually attract people to the SCA, but it is the arts in the SCA that sustain us as a society and is what makes us who we are today.

When starting on your goal to organize a Collegium find out as much as you can by volunteering to lend a hand at every Collegium that happens anywhere. This will give you a good idea what the basics are of how a typical Collegium works. Also contact as many individuals who have had experience in running a Collegium and get their views, ideas, what worked, and what did not work for them. This will give you a better starting place and a rough outline of what you will need to do. There is no need to make mistakes that others have already learned from.

Depending on where you are, you may or may not need to find a site to have the Collegium. For instance, there may be an event that someone would like to have classes at, or the whole event will be the Collegium. So this next step is if you are also looking for a site to have the Collegium.

Most of the time it is easiest to find a school with enough rooms to rent for what you will need, as everything will already be conducive to an educational environment with tools and set up, etc. But in all reality, you just need a place that has enough rooms that you can rent. Find out what the average amount of rooms that have been needed in the past to find out roughly how many rooms you will need. If a Collegium has never been done in your area, start off small and work your way up. Besides the rooms, you will need to have the basics of any similar event like securing enough chairs and tables, etc.

Once you have found some possible sites you should read any information you can get your hands on concerning being a steward for an event (also known as Event Stewarding) including site and bid submissions. I would suggest starting with your local seneschal to find answers. My advice here, and with any event you would like to do, is keep asking for help until someone lends you a hand. Not everyone will have the time or the patience so be persistent. To get more knowledge and important information on running an event and the site and bid process look for articles of "How to be an Event Steward" or the like on the Kingdom or local website. To make

things easier you could try and get someone to help in splitting the Event Stewarding duties with someone to handle the “classes” and someone to handle “the rest of the event”,

After all the foot work, research, and form submitting is done and everything gets approved it is time to go ahead with the organization of running a Collegium. To start off in the right direction the first thing you must do is keep track of everyone that helped, or is helping you. Make a thank you list as early in this process as you can, this will help you if you ever want to do any event in the future. You never know whose help you will need in the future so keep track and remember to thank everyone who helps, including the teachers.

To ensure a good event and the best possible turn out: Advertise, advertise, and advertise. The more you get the word out the more teachers and overall attendance you will have. Write up a missive for the purpose of publishing in every newsletter. Get the information out, soon and often. Try and have it announced in every Court you can by you or by the Herald. In the advertising announcement you will be sending and or having announced you should include; a general and pleasant greeting/what will be going on at the event/who to contact for those who would like to teach /cost of entry to the event/times of start and stop/ Other activities for the populace, or youth activities/where with good directions. Do not forget any site-specific rules that everyone should know.

If you were not in charge of finding the site, go and collect as much information as you can about the site, or place, where the Collegium will take place. If it is indoors you will need to know how many total rooms are available, what are the room dimensions, how many tables and chairs can you have use of, is the AC and Heat working, will you have help setting up and taking down, etc. You and or a close friend should do a walkthrough of the site so you will know what classes will fit where and what amenities are in what class rooms. Along with all of the rooms for classes you will need ~~and~~ to have a rather large centralized room like a hall or cafeteria to use as a common area for populace to gather and set their things down and eat, and for troll and class sign up. If you can manage it get two more extra rooms, one for a Royal Ready room and one small room for the teachers to unload their things between classes, and relax between their classes.

If it is outdoors you will have the unpredictable weather element and need to keep flexible in your organization and the available shelter to accommodate everything you will be planning. Whether you are indoors or outdoors, make an earnest attempt to create a map of the area that you will be using. This will be of visual assistance to you when figuring out what teacher will be going where, and will be used later to have copies made for everyone attending the event to know where classes are and how to plan their day. Also make sure troll will have copies of the map and Collegium Schedule. One or more should be taped to the table or wall, and a stack available to be handed out.

To help in organizing what classes will be in what room you can choose a theme for the whole Collegium or have individual themes for each of the tracks. This will help when it comes to the organization and placement of what kind of classes will best fit where. The best thing to do is start enlisting help from individuals who have knowledge of the different arts in your area.

This will help you with the nuances of each of the different art forms and what their needs will be. The most important thing to consider is which classes can and cannot be done where the Collegium will be. For example, as most collegiums happen at schools alcohol, cooking or things that use fire or weapons of any kind are usually strictly prohibited. So before you schedule a class that you are not 100% sure of, ask your Seneschal and the site Event Steward. You must really pay attention to this as failing to address this could be grounds for removal of everyone, and not being allowed back at that site ever. If these real world rules are not respected the managers of the site may even call authorities in the worst case scenario. This is not meant to scare you but to convey how important it is to pay attention to every detail. If other classes such as alcohol classes are going to be held offsite, clear directions about when/where/how to get to those other places should be available.

When setting times for when each class in the Collegium schedule consider the following suggestions; start the day with enough time to set up everything, then a short time later to open the event so everyone can start paying to get in the event at the exchequer Table/troll, then a short time after that open the tables to sign up for classes [I do not have preregistration for classes as it is my experience that some will not make the event or decided to take another class all together]. Schedule an hour break for lunch as a midday break, if lunch can be included in the site fee, make sure that everyone knows this and where it will take place. Have maps of local areas and restaurants to everyone can get out for meals if they are not included, or they just wish to go out. Then allot enough time at the end of the day, for a Court if planned, and to take things down and clean up.

You will most likely get the most teachers by emailing each potential teacher personally and asking them if they could teach, or better yet finding them and having a face to face conversation to ask them to teach. If you feel you cannot do this easily find someone who can. It has been my experience that most have offered to teach in the past at some point and have been turned away for whatever reason. Every teacher will need to feel that you truly need their assistance.

Get a Staff together to help make sure everything is being taken care of and to take care of you, as you will mostly like forget to do so at some point. You will need lots of help in assisting those that are signing up for classes. By getting a lot of help this will also reduce the probability of you making lots of mistakes. To help the day go by as smoothly as possible, when you are on site get as many tables as necessary stretched out end to end in a convenient area and place the class sign in sheets in order of the time each class is happening, in class room order, all down the length of the tables you have set up. This will help everyone know where on the table they need to look for what class is happening when. As a suggestion I would make the youth classes stand out a little so that everyone will know right away from a distance what it is. Some youth and children classes sound like so much fun, or someone will read the name and not notice that it is for youth and try and attend. Most of the teachers do not mind, but some plan on only teaching youngsters. I personally do not allow anyone to sign up for class unless they have paid site fee. After a class is almost done time wise, take that specific class signup sheet off the table to reduce confusion. Trust me when I say make signup sheets for all of the classes, if the teacher has a

class limit or not. If someone does not get to sign their names for class they want to take, you will get some very upset and irritated people.

Along with all the class sign in sheets, make a sign in sheet for all the teachers you have teaching that day and place it on the end of the table nearest you, or the place everyone pays, so that you know if the teacher was able to show up or not and you can let everyone know it is canceled if they were not able to make it. Anything you can do to keep everything flowing and organized, the happier everyone will be. Make sure you have enough supplies on hand; Pencils, Clipboards, general extra office supplies etc. Also check to see if there is copier on site that you can use.

At most Collegiums there will be a Court, one at the beginning and/or one at the end, so make sure the Herald/s know you need to relay important information, as they do not always assume you do. When you get a chance to speak in Court this will be the time to give any updates, any changes, and to thank everyone who helped.

Organize and keep track of everything that pertains to the A&S Completion and keep it on hand to reference in case anyone asks a specific question about the A&S Competition. No need to try and remember everything, you have enough things to do.

In conclusion I would like to remind you that all that I have written here is meant to be helpful, not rules to follow. I have done a lot of Collegiums large and small and even though every event is a learning experience I tried to relay things that I have learned and I hope you can use.

Have fun, don't run yourself ragged, and if you always try and do your best everything will always work out one way or another.

Written by my hand this 11th day of November 2010.

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