

## **So You Want to Throw a Wanton Mechanics**

*(Or: The document I wish someone had handed me a month ago)*

On the Wanton Mechanics committee and have no idea what you're supposed to do? Well, fear not—this document is intended to help guide you through the hoops and paperwork necessary to make your event a success. Please note that I've attempted to make this guide as exhaustive as possible, but if you have a concern not addressed below, please do seek out an answer to allay your fears; don't assume it's not an issue since I didn't mention it. And of course, if you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at [pilgrim@uoregon.edu](mailto:pilgrim@uoregon.edu).

### **I. Introduction**

The tradition of Wanton Mechanics has been held longer than many department members can recall. Don't let this be the first year it failed to come together because you were too lazy and/or uninformed to make it work. No pressure, though—the fact that the event has lasted as a tradition is a testament to the fact that you have a lot of things going for you: staff and faculty who want to help you make it work, students who will soon be excited to bring their acts to fruition (hopefully), and with any luck, a team of Wanton committee members eager to do their part. Get your act together with plenty of time to spare, and you'll have nothing to worry about.

That said, there are a handful of pitfalls, each with their own set of associated paperwork that should be dealt with sooner rather than later. Your two main hurdles will be the University of Oregon Catering Services and the alcohol situation, each of which will be discussed at greater length below. After detailing these issues and pointing you to the necessary paperwork, I'll point out a few other logistical considerations to finish up this guide.

### **II. Event Overview**

Wanton Mechanics is typically held near the middle of April, on a Friday night between around 7-10 p.m. It typically takes place in the Agate Hall Auditorium, which is a good space for such an event, but the acoustics make it very difficult to understand people's speech (in my opinion). Many of the hoops you'll have to jump through are a result of the fact that Agate Hall is on-campus, so if you know of a better off-campus space (and dare break with tradition), it may be worth looking into. The event is typically open to the public, which typically consists of grad students, faculty, and friends/significant others, as well as a handful of physics undergrads. We typically announce our expected attendance at 50-75 people.

### **III. UO Catering**

If you're holding an event on campus at which food will be served, you're going to have to talk to UO Catering. Traditionally, Wonton Mechanics is a potluck but with enough pizza brought in to keep everybody fed. For certain liability reasons, UO Catering isn't cool with potlucks on campus, so don't tell them that part. Certainly, there would be benefits to ordering the bulk of the food through UO Catering: Between the delivery and the servers and the setup and clean-up, their job effectively makes yours easier.

That convenience comes at a very high cost, however, and even if you opt out of the services they sell with the food, the food itself is quite expensive—I believe \$6-7 a plate was as cheap as their offerings get. You can do better than that, and you probably want to avoid the hassle of dealing with the University any more than necessary. But first, you need to convince the University that you can do better.

If you intend to buy food from somebody other than UO Catering, you need to fill out the University of Oregon Catering Waiver Form, which you may find on their Web site ([catering.uoregon.edu](http://catering.uoregon.edu); currently, this form is located at [catering.uoregon.edu/pdfs/outsidecatering.pdf](http://catering.uoregon.edu/pdfs/outsidecatering.pdf).) Under "Reason for Request," you'll need to indicate somehow that UO Catering's costs are prohibitive (which will probably be the case for you, too), and that the non-university caterer listed at the bottom of the form is offering you a discount of some sort. This discount is the key to getting your waiver approved—it may take the form of one or two pizzas (out of the ~20 you'll want to order) being offered for free, or some other sort of bulk discount rate. Talk to your desired food provider and tell them that your huge order is contingent upon this requirement being met, and they'll likely find a way to oblige. While you have them on the phone, go ahead and make sure they have a catering license or certificate of liability insurance—chances are the UO has the latter document on file anyway, but it's worth checking. Also, note that this waiver must be submitted at least 15 working days prior to your event date.

For what it's worth, in 2010 we went with Papa John's pizza, which worked out pretty well. They offered us our 23 pizzas at roughly \$10/pizza. You may have a harder time getting that price in the future, but pizza is still likely to be the most cost-effective and convenient choice. But do whatever you want.

How much food should you get? As it turns out, that question is a good segue into ...

#### **IV. Booze, the University, the OLCC, and You**

First, to answer the question I left hanging, here's how our food needs were determined. The University needs to approve your request to serve alcohol, which they will do on the condition that you also serve enough food. Evidently, the requirements are that each person get 2.5 to 3 slices of a 14" pizza; the University then multiplies this by the maximum expected number of attendees to get the total food required. For us, we listed a maximum expected attendance of 75, for which we would need 23-28 14" pizzas. We

got 23. I'm not sure how many were actually in attendance, but we didn't have leftovers, so if you can fit it into the budget (don't forget the tip!), opt for more food.

So, on to the alcohol considerations. As you might expect/have heard, this is where most of the pain and paperwork is likely to arise. First, in order to serve alcoholic beverages on campus, you will need to submit the University of Oregon's Request for Permission to Serve Alcoholic Beverages form. This form is available online through the Office of Risk Management ([riskmanagement.uoregon.edu/node/20](http://riskmanagement.uoregon.edu/node/20)) and is currently located at [http://riskmanagement.uoregon.edu/sites/riskmanagement.uoregon.edu/files/uploads/Alcohol%20Request%20Form\\_Interactive\\_Eugene\\_Mar10.pdf](http://riskmanagement.uoregon.edu/sites/riskmanagement.uoregon.edu/files/uploads/Alcohol%20Request%20Form_Interactive_Eugene_Mar10.pdf). On this form, be sure to indicate that the event will be open to the public, but that there is no charge for alcohol, food, or admission; that donations will not be accepted; and that the event is not for fundraising purposes. Also note that you need to find a staff or faculty member who is willing to be the "designee" (read: the adult who will take responsibility for us all). Submit this document to the Office of Risk Management, Room 1, Johnson Hall, well before your event date.

With the University off your case, you now have the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) to deal with. This end is simplified by the fact that you're not accepting any form of money or donations in direct or indirect exchange for alcohol, so you do not have to submit an OLCC Temporary Sales License (TSL) Application or a Plan to Manage Special Events. What you do need to do is make sure that somebody with an OLCC Service Permit will be present at all times that alcohol is being served. These permits are good for five years, so if you can find somebody who already has one (such as Ian Pilgrim or Mike Taormina), you might be able to rope them into doing it. But if you want to pick one up for yourself to save them the trouble, that's pretty straightforward.

For all information regarding OLCC service permits, visit [http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/service\\_permits.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/service_permits.shtml). The gist of it is as follows: Fill out the Service Permit Application, submit it with \$23 to the OLCC, and take a class. The Service Permit Application may be found at [http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/docs/service\\_permits\\_and\\_server\\_ed/service\\_permit\\_application\\_form.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/docs/service_permits_and_server_ed/service_permit_application_form.pdf). You will need to get an "authorized signature" to submit the application; to be on the safe side, just go down to the OLCC office in Eugene (down Country Club Road) and have somebody there sign it (they'll just need to verify your identity). They'll take your application and your money, and you'll be done with that. Your receipt will serve as your temporary permit until they mail you the real one.

In order to get the real permit, though, you'll need to take an Alcohol Service Education class within 45 days of submitting the application. Technically, your temporary permit will work regardless of whether you take the class, but you should probably take the class just to be legit about it. The easiest way to find a class is to go to [olccclass.com](http://olccclass.com) and find a class being held in Eugene or online. Doing a class in Eugene is easy—registration is painless, and you spend three hours in the back room at Papa's Pizza Parlor learning how to spot fake IDs and cut people off and such before taking an easy multiple-choice

test. The class costs you another \$25 (cash or check); your receipt from this class, along with your receipt from the OLCC, together constitute your full permit (until you get the real one in the mail), so be sure to have these handy when you're actually serving alcohol.

So now that you're properly authorized to serve alcohol, you'll probably want to get some alcohol. A keg (15.5 gallons) is a good amount for Wanton. We bought a few smaller kegs (17.25 gallons worth) and it was gone by the end of the night (including the after party). Ninkasi Brewing is a good way to go with this. Depending on whether you get one 15-gal. keg or a few smaller ones, this volume of beer will probably cost you between \$132-150 (according to current prices). Unfortunately, you can't reserve a keg with Ninkasi; your choices are limited to what they have on hand when you pick it up. So, if you have your heart set on a given brew, it may be worth picking up the keg a few days before Wanton if you can get it, and keeping it in a fridge in the meantime. Also, keg deposits are \$60 and tap deposits are \$45.

The budget for Wanton Mechanics typically sets aside about \$200 for alcohol, so round this out with a few bottles of wine or something. Trader Joe's is a pretty good choice for this, with a good selection of wines for under \$4, including the perennial favorite Three Buck Chuck. I picked up 7 bottles (try to get a reasonable mix of reds and whites), and I don't believe we had any left over, so plan accordingly.

Also keep in mind that there is a maximum to the amount of alcohol the University will allow you to have. As best as I can tell, the University allows each person three drinks, since our maximum anticipated attendance was 75 and we were told we could serve 225 drinks (where a drink is 12 oz of beer or 5 oz of wine). This may also depend on the duration of the event, though, so don't make assumptions about this figure unless your details are exactly the same as ours. To be safe, just be sure to submit your Request for Permission to Serve Alcoholic Beverages early; these guidelines will be set forth upon its approval.

## **V. Further Logistics (in no particular order)**

Be sure to reserve Agate Hall early! This should be the first thing you do. The building manager's name is Jima, and he's generally very eager to help (not least of all because it means free beer for him). Another good friend to make early on is Stan Micklavzina; he and the demo room kids have a long tradition of eagerly helping with Wanton.

Of course, another good first step is to find a professor willing to serve as MC for the night. Also, recruit somebody to serve as beer boy/girl for the night, whose job it is to make sure that the MC always has a drink in hand.

It should be obvious that advertising to physgradlist is a good idea, but be sure to advertise to the faculty, too! Making fun of professors is no fun if they're not there to see

it. Word of mouth is a good way to do this, as well as writing an e-mail for the faculty listserv, which you can then get your MC or Bonnie to pass on.

Keep in mind that it's traditional for the Wanton Committee to put together an act, which in my experience is typically the final act of the night. You're on your own to figure out what to do.

Don't forget to pick up some basic supplies for the night—cups, plates, napkins, utensils, non-alcoholic beverage options, etc. Costco is a good way to go for these sorts of things.

The night of the event, start getting everything together about two hours before you expect people to show up. It always takes a bit longer than you'd expect, even when you take this rule into account. Also keep in mind that Agate Hall needs to be clean and empty by the time you leave that night.

## **VI. Concluding Remarks**

As long as you take care of things early, especially as regards the University and the OLCC, it's hard for Wanton Mechanics to not be awesome. You'll be a lot less stressed about the process if you get things taken care of early—a month or more prior to the event would be great—and keep in mind that things will only be difficult if you find yourself racing against the calendar. So relax, don't worry, and have a great Wanton!