

SSDS WORKSHOP POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

I. Purpose of document

This document serves as a collection of policies that SSDS adopted at its regular business meetings and practices that SSDS developed in the course of its experience in organizing dance events and workshops. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the SSDS Event/Workshop Roles and Responsibilities document, which outlines practical considerations and detailed tasks associated with a dance event. Event organizers and volunteers should make their decisions on the “nuts and bolts” of any dance event in the context of these overall policies and guidelines. Event organizers must bring any questions or conflicts about either the policy or roles and responsibilities documents to the SSDS Board before committing SSDS resources in any way.

II. Organizer’s responsibility

A. Policy adopted April 29, 2001: Anyone organizing a workshop on behalf of SSDS must regularly attend SSDS business meetings and take the lead with organizing details such as scheduling, set-up, volunteers, etc. The workshop organizer also must keep the SSDS Board informed of all material workshop developments.

B. The organizer takes part in all aspects of planning the event and reviewing the event at the SSDS board meeting immediately following it. Before committing SSDS resources or making decisions on behalf of SSDS, the event organizer must ensure that he/she and the SSDS board have the same understanding of the event’s scope and purpose. For accountability and communications purposes, one person is the contact between the event and the SSDS Board.

C. Normally the event organizer presents a workshop or event proposal at a regular SSDS business meeting at least two months before the proposed starting date of the event. Organizers also must present progress reports for approved events at each subsequent SSDS business meeting. In order to avoid micro-managing events and give organizers sufficient flexibility, implementation of changes recommended during business meetings takes place among the event organizers.

III. Choosing instructors

A. SSDS has a general philosophy in favor of using the same instructors on a repeat basis for workshops (see minutes of meeting July 1, 2001). The advantage of this philosophy is that the instructors know the area and level of dancing, people plan on the event and even associate a city with a particular instructor, and dates become easier to coordinate. SSDS is always open to different qualified instructors, however.

B. Contract and negotiations.

1. A sample draft contract is attached.
2. Rely on SSDS members with experience and dance contacts to negotiate the best rate. The SSDS Board must approve negotiated rates. The SSDS Board may approve a cash bonus for extra effort by instructors during workshop events.
3. In cases where instructors negotiate a rate that includes profit-sharing, note the

following workshop cost policy adopted April 29, 2001: The value of time of SSDS volunteers who are not compensated with cash discounts (i.e., free workshop or admission to dance) is figured into SSDS calculation of workshop expenses. This policy is true of all workshops.

C. Social dancing. Social dancing by instructors is important to SSDS workshops. Contracts may have a clause requiring instructors to be available for social dancing, or the SSDS Board may determine to award a cash bonus to instructors who increase their social dancing. At an absolute minimum, the instructors must be available and visible during the workshop weekend dances. See minutes of meeting July 22, 2001.

IV. Scheduling

A. Conflicts policy adopted April 29, 2001: SSDS aims to avoid regional scheduling conflicts as much as possible. The first step in any workshop planning is checking for regional conflicts. SSDS will use every effort to schedule workshops and other major events around regional workshop weekends, but SSDS cannot schedule around monthly band dances. SSDS will give as much advance notice as possible of SSDS events to regional event organizers. Scheduling decisions will be made on a case by case basis with heightened awareness of scheduling conflicts.

B. The decision whether and when to schedule a workshop or dance event must be made with a sensitivity to the event's impact on local dance instructors.

V. Volunteer compensation. SSDS as a not-for-profit organization depends on volunteers to perform all of its work. SSDS normally compensates volunteers with one free workshop. Dance door-duty volunteers normally receive free admission to the dance in exchange for working a half-hour shift. While the maximum compensation that any volunteer may receive characteristically is one free workshop, additional non-monetary compensation may be granted at the event organizer's discretion and with SSDS Board approval. Volunteers may not participate in the workshop or dance shift they are working. The event organizer must provide a list of all workshop volunteers to the SSDS Board, which will publicize the list twice annually in recognition of volunteers' efforts.

VI. Workshop pricing. Set workshop prices with the goal not of making an excess income for SSDS but of covering expenses and keeping workshops affordable. SSDS expects to price its workshops competitively with other regional events. The event organizer must present to the SSDS Board for approval an overall price structure that is consistent with the goal of the event.

VII. Workshop content

A. Workshop organizer must coordinate workshop content with instructors. Lesson content normally should be designed with the social dance floor – not competition – in mind.

B. Marketing. The workshop organizer and chairs, working in conjunction with SSDS's marketing coordinator, must be sure that the content and required skill level for all workshops is accurately disclosed. This "truth in advertising" policy partly is intended to eliminate situations

where students are in classes above their skill level, a frustrating experience that reflects poorly on SSDS.

C. SSDS has a goal of reinforcing lesson material with review classes, practice sessions, and the use of video notebooks. See minutes of meeting July 1, 2001. SSDS is creating a standard practice of teaching review courses, making sure that workshop attendees get a more favorable rate or that the cost of the class is included in an all-in weekend pass. Part of the instructor's job may be to teach material to local instructors so that they can teach review classes. See Review class policy (attached).

D. Private lessons. In the event where there is more demand for private lessons with a workshop instructor than available time slots, the event organizer must keep a list of students weighted in favor of people who have purchased an all-in weekend pass and in favor of local (Syracuse area) dancers who have contributed to the workshop. A first-come-first-served list is not adequate. See minutes of meeting August 4, 2002.

E. Distribute SSDS workshop evaluation form to all attendees. Sample form is attached.

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