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Trojan Connects 2026 Overview

What is Trojan Connects?

- <u>WHAT:</u> USC's global alumni networking week brings Trojans together for career development opportunities

- <u>WHEN:</u> February 9-12, 2026

- <u>WHERE:</u> In person or online

- <u>WHO:</u> Eligible USC alumni and USC school/unit representatives

- <u>WHY:</u> Survey results from 2023 reported Trojans are eager for career support

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WORLDWIDE USC ALUMNI NETWORKING WEEK
February 9 - 12, 2026

Why Host an Event?

✅ **Proven Benefits for Event Organizers**
- Expand your network: In 2025, Trojan Connects brought thousands of alumni together worldwide, with 20+ events hosted and 15+ industries represented.
- Broader reach: University-wide promotion helps your event connect with far more Trojans than individual efforts alone.
- Smooth process: Organizers consistently praised the planning as "very smooth and well-supported."

👏 **What Past Organizers Say**
- "Trojan Connects provides clear value as to why to sustain career-based networking events!"
- "University-wide advertisement reaches a lot more people than I would have within my school! We got wide school representation in attendees."

🌐 **Your Impact as a Host**

By stepping up as an event organizer, you'll:
- Strengthen Trojan networks in your region or industry.
- Offer meaningful career connections for fellow alumni.
- Showcase your leadership and Trojan pride.

Event Organizer Eligibility & Requirements

Who can be an event organizer?

To organize a 2026 Trojan Connects event:

- You must be a degreed USC alumnus/alumna or represent a USC school/unit
- You agree to uphold Trojan Family values and the university's code of conduct

Don't want to do this alone? We encourage you to partner with an alumni board/committee or join forces with other alumni in your area.

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Event Format Requirements

All events (virtual and in person) must take place between Feb. 9-12, 2026, and align with at least one of three Trojan Connect focus areas:

- Connection & Belonging – Help alumni build professional connections across the Trojan Family.
- Industry Trends & Hot Topics – Discuss emerging trends impacting your field or the workforce at large.
- Career Development – Share strategies, tools and resources for professional growth.

Virtual Events:

- Must be recorded
- Zoom link can be provided upon request

In-Person Events:

- Domestic or international locations welcome
- Consider local restaurants, coworking spaces, your office or Trojan-owned businesses

Suggested Event Formats:

- Networking event with facilitated activity
- Panel discussion or keynote speaker
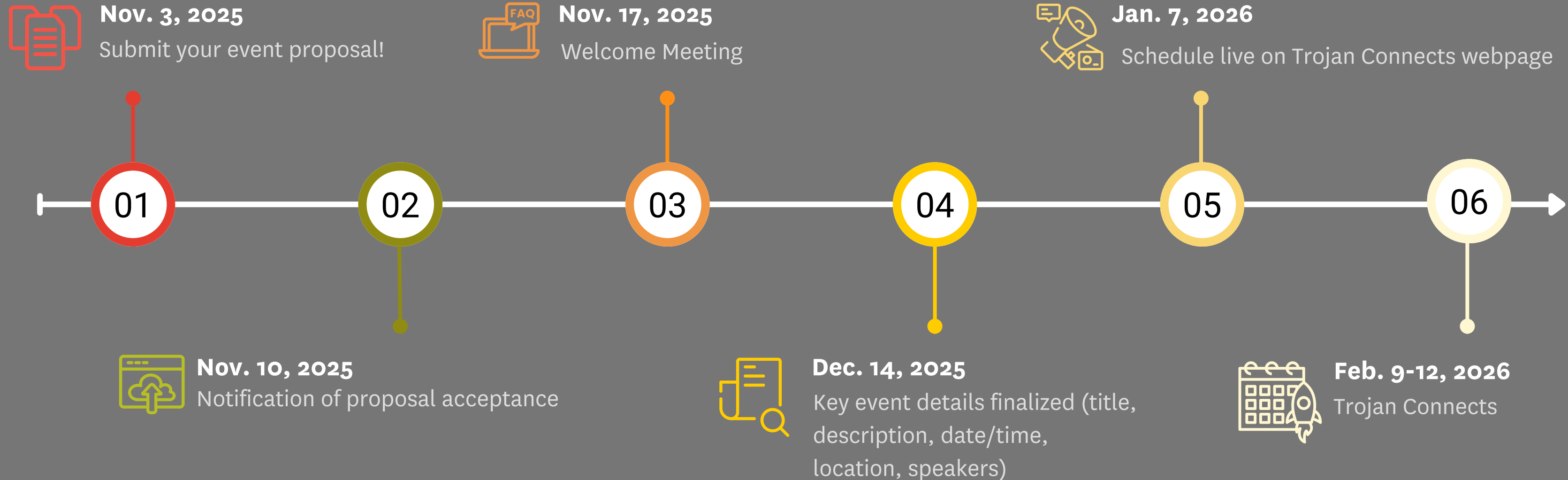- Mentoring session (roundtable discussions or speed networking)

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Event Organizer Responsibilities & Timeline

Submitting Your Event Proposal

Before submitting your event proposal, we suggest you:

- Choose your event topic and goal(s)
- Connect with fellow Trojans to co-host or provide assistance
- Pick an event date and time that works best with your schedule and target audience
- Determine if your event will be virtual or in person
- Select your event model (e.g. networking activity, panel discussion, etc.)
- Begin sourcing venues (if applicable)
  - We highly recommend free or low-cost venues: employer workspaces, Trojan-owned businesses or USC spaces
- Identify potential speakers and/or mentors (if applicable)

NOTE: Each year we evaluate the submissions for a diverse range of topics. Submitting a proposal does not guarantee acceptance. Accepted proposals from prior years can be submitted and evaluated again this year.

‼️ **Event proposals are due by Nov. 3, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. (PDT)**

USC Alumni

2026 Trojan Connects Event Proposal Form

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to organize a Trojan Connects event – USC's Annual Alumni Networking Week! The purpose of meaningful professional connections, share expertise, and explore today's career trends.

Trojan Connects 2026 will take place during February 9–12, 2026.

Requirements to host a Trojan Connects event:
1. Organizers must be a degreed alumnus/alumna of the University of Southern California or represent a USC school/department.
2. All events (in-person or virtual) must take place between February 9–12, 2026 and align with at least one Trojan Connects focus area
   a. **Connection & Belonging** – Help alumni make professional connections across the Trojan Network
   b. **Industry Trends & Hot Topics** – Discuss emerging trends impacting professionals in your field or the workforce at large
   c. **Career Development** – Share job search strategies, tools, and resources for alumni career advancement
3. If approved, organizers must finalize key event details (title, description, date/time, location, and speaker(s) if applicable) by Decem...

Submission Deadline: Monday, November 3, 2025 at 11:59 PM (PDT)
Event approval notifications will be sent by Monday, November 10, 2025.

NOTE: Each year we evaluate the submissions for a diverse range of topics. Submitting a proposal *does not* guarantee acceptance. Accep... submitted and evaluated again this year.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Simone Jackson, Director of Alumni Career Engagement at simonej@usc.edu for assistance

Organizer Information

Planning Your Event

As an event organizer, here are a few things you can expect to do before your event:

1. Confirm your speakers (if applicable)
2. Work with USCAA staff to secure your venue and get venue contracts signed and deposits paid
3. Send staff headshots, bios, etc., for the organizer(s) and speaker(s) (if applicable)
4. Promote the event via personal outreach (email and social media)
5. Build your on-site volunteer team, if applicable (e.g. check-in, photos, speaker management, emcee, etc.). USCAA can help you source volunteers!

!!! Key event details (date, time, location, description, and speakers if applicable) must be finalized by Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025

Funding Your Event

For in-person events, USCAA operates on a "break-even" model — meaning ticket sales should cover event costs. However, if ticket sales do not fully cover costs, USCAA will work with the event organizer and the venue to cover the remaining balance.

- We highly recommend free or low-cost venues: employer workspaces, Trojan-owned businesses or USC spaces
- Net-positive income goes back to the organizing USC unit to support future alumni career engagement programs
- Virtual events hosted on USC Zoom are free
- Consult with USCAA staff regarding speaker fees

Your event organizer resource folder includes a budget tracker to help you stay organized!

What to Expect — Day of Your Event

In-Person Programs

- Be present at the event
- Arrive early for setup
- Meet with your volunteers and/or speakers (if applicable)
- Make closing announcements highlighting upcoming programs and share information that will be included in the follow up (e.g. survey and photos)
- Clean up venue and keep all receipts (if applicable)

Virtual Programs

- Log on at least 20-minutes prior to event to test technology and adjust platform settings as needed
- Meet with your volunteers and/or speakers 15-minutes prior so they can test technology and go over the program timeline
- Make closing announcements highlighting upcoming programs and share information that will be included in the follow up (e.g. recording, resources, survey and photos)

What to Expect — After Your Event

After your event, please send the following information:

- Event Attendee List
- Reimbursement requests (if applicable) with a photo of the receipt and a screenshot of the charge on your account
- Link to event photo gallery for inclusion in follow-up email
- Event recording (if applicable)
- Resources (e.g. slides, worksheets, etc.)

Late February

- Participate in debrief call with USCAA staff
- Send thank you note or email to speakers and/or volunteers

USCAA Resouces & Support

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USCAA Will Provide the Following Support:

Registration Management
- Creates event registration page
- Manages ticket sales
- Provides guest lists three days prior
- Troubleshoots registration questions

Additional Support Tools
- Hosts Event Organizer Welcome Meeting (will be recorded)
- Provides Event Organizer Resource Folder via Google Drive
- Hosts Trojan Connects debrief call to collect feedback

Marketing Assistance
- Provides social media toolkits
- Sends event promotion emails
- Sends follow-up emails to all attendees

Event Guidance
- Creates and manages Zoom rooms (per request)
- Reserves space on campus for events (if available)
- Supports venue sourcing (if applicable)
- Processes venue contracts and payments (if needed)
- Sends USC-branded swag kits to organizers
- Makes name tags, event signage and slide templates (as needed)
- Supports volunteer recruitment and management (as needed)

Next Steps

1. Visualize your Trojan Connects event
2. Contact local Trojans to help organize the event
3. Submit your event proposal! The deadline is Nov. 3, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. (PDT)
4. For more information, email Simone Jackson, director of alumni career engagement at simonej@usc.edu

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Thank You and Fight On!