We are delighted that your group has chosen the Taft Campus for your event. In order for the Taft Campus to meet your needs, you will need to provide us with certain information about your group. This booklet is intended to acquaint you with the Taft Campus and to provide you with some alternatives. The information checklist on page 2 lists those questions we will need answered following the timeline below. If you have any questions or other needs, please do not hesitate to contact us.

In addition to the information in this booklet, further resources can be found on our website at www.niu.edu/taft/conference.html by selecting the Coordinator Information button. To access the resources, you will need the password that is found on the letter you received acknowledging the receipt of your deposit. If you have misplaced the letter, please contact us for the password.

Planning Timeline

- **30 days after contract is received** — signed contracts and a 20% deposit due

- **5 weeks prior to event** — confirm services requested for event (meals, programming, snacks, meeting spaces, linens)

- **21 days prior to event** — provide firm attendance numbers, special dietary needs, vegetarian meal requests, linens needed and any audiovisual equipment needed
Information Checklist

To best meet the needs of your group, the following information is needed at least three weeks prior to your arrival at Taft. The sample registration form on page 9 shows some questions helpful in gathering the information needed in this checklist.

- **Number of participants:**
  - Adults:
  - Children (12 and under):

- **Number of linen sets needed:** _______________ (if previously arranged)

- **Special meal requests** (meal times, snack times):

- **Medical/dietary requests:**
  - **Number of Vegetarian meal requests** (specify type):
    - No red meat:
    - No meat; eggs and dairy okay:
    - Vegan:

- **Accessibility needs:**

- **Audiovisual needs** (TV/VCR, DVD, slide projector, LCD projector, podium, overhead projector, easel with notepads and markers):

- **Programming needs** (confirm days and times of activities already arranged for):
General Information

Clarification of terms: **Group Coordinator** refers to you, the coordinator for your group; **Conference Coordinator** refers to the Lorado Taft Field Campus Conference Coordinator, the person responsible for the administrative details of your event and **Taft Campus Host** refers to the Taft Campus employee working with your group throughout your stay, often the Conference Coordinator.

**Accessibility:** The dining hall, bathrooms, dormitory space and most classrooms are accessible for individuals with physical disabilities. Many natural areas, however, are not. Please call for further information.

**Alcohol:** The use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on the Taft Campus when any children are present. With adult groups, alcohol is permitted only in meeting rooms with the permission of the Conference Coordinator. Alcohol cannot be brought into the dining hall. Under no circumstances are persons under 21 years of age permitted to consume or possess alcoholic beverages.

**Audiovisual Equipment:** Taft Campus provides chalkboards, easels with notepads and markers, overhead projectors, podiums, slide projectors, LCD projector, TV/VCR combos, DVD player at no charge. Other equipment may be available at an additional charge. All requests should be made to the Conference Coordinator at the earliest possible time.

**Billing:** The final payment for an event is due after receiving a bill from the Accounts Receivable Department at Northern Illinois University. This bill will be generated based on the number of participants in attendance, the contracted per person rate and any additional services provided for the event. Prior to departure, the group coordinator or designee and the Taft Campus Host will meet to confirm the number of participants and additional services.

**Campfires:** There are several locations available for group campfires. To insure everyone’s safety, we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- Fires are limited to and are to be contained within existing locations.
- Seating areas (logs, stumps) must remain in their place.
- We have plenty of free firewood; just let us know ahead of time and we will make sure it is where you’ll need it.
- Burn wood only; no plastic, tin, or aluminum in fire.
- Never leave any fire unattended.
- Put out fire completely when finished. Outdoors: douse with water and spread coals. Indoors: spread coals and put screen back in place.
- Insure area is cleaned after use. If necessary, return in daylight to clean.

“We used the dining hall and Poley – also the beautiful surrounding area. It all added to a great retreat.”

-Illinois Classis Reform Church Women
**General Information (continued)**

**Cancellations:** After the signed contracts and deposit are submitted, a $50.00 processing fee will be retained for any cancellation. Should the event be canceled 0-60 days prior to the event, the entire 20% deposit will be forfeited.

**Cancellations by Northern Illinois University Groups:** Taft Campus reserves the right to charge the user group a service fee equal to twenty percent of the contracted amount should the event be canceled 31-60 days prior to the date of the event; 35% if canceled 11-30 days prior to the event; and 50% if canceled 0-10 days prior to the event. This charge will be made automatically through the University’s internal accounting system.

**Candles:** For fire safety reasons, Taft Campus does not allow the use of candles in any meeting rooms or dormitories.

**Chaperones:** Taft Campus requires an adult group representative to supervise participants at all times.

**Check in/Check Out Times:** Check in time during the school year is Friday at 2 PM. Our school program could still be taking place until 2 PM, so we ask for the safety of the school participants and conference programs, that participants wait to arrive until 2 PM. During the summer months, the check in time is flexible. Check out time depends on the arrival of the next group. We ask that all participants vacate their dorm by 9 AM on the day of their departure, in order for our maintenance staff to prepare the dorms for our next group. Storage space for luggage is available for groups under a covered shelter near Heckman Dorm. You are welcome to utilize your meeting rooms until your departure.

**Damages:** The group and/or its members will be held financially responsible for any damages or loss to Taft Campus property as a result of improper use of the facility. Damage or loss charges will be based upon repair and/or replacement costs.

**Deposits:** Groups are required to submit a 20% deposit, along with their signed contracts, in order to guarantee a reservation. The deposit is based on the per person rate and the projected attendance number.

**Dormitories:** There are three dormitories (Clarkson, Grover, and Heckman) accommodating up to 162 people at Taft Campus. Page 11 shows the floor plans and capacities for each of the dorms. Both wings of Clarkson are handicap accessible. All of the dormitories have air conditioning and central heat.
**General Information (continued)**

**Food Services:** Meals are served in a dining hall that overlooks the Rock River. This vantage point offers quite possibly the finest view found anywhere along this scenic waterway.

Typically, meals are served family style. This quaint manner of service allows a participant from each table to obtain food platters from a central counter and to clear the table at the end of each meal. It’s commonly referred to as the “hopper system”, in reference to the style of meal service utilized by the Taft Campus Environmental Education Program.

Occasionally, buffet style will be used to accommodate group’s needs. Depending upon the size of your group, it is possible for others to be sharing the dining hall with you.

Meals at the Taft Campus have developed a reputation for home-cooked quality. Most food items are prepared from scratch, with an emphasis on balance, wholesomeness and flavor.

Menus are done on a group-by-group basis with a goal to incorporate food items most conducive to the collective taste of all participants. The group leader is welcome to give input or collaborate with our Food Service Director, Andy Colbert, on the overall menu. Andy has over 30 years of experience in food service and has a degree in nutrition. He is also certified as an Executive Chef by the American Culinary Federation.

If your group has specific needs, please contact us at least three weeks in advance. However, if there are multiple groups on campus, we cannot guarantee your requests. Our staff willingly accommodates all medical-related dietary requests. The kitchen also provides an alternative protein if your group has vegetarians.

Please give us prior notification on medical and/or vegetarian needs. We ask that vegetarian requests be classified as either: a) no red meat; b) no meat at all, egg and dairy ok; c) vegan.

Generally, breakfast is at 8:00 a.m., lunch at 12 Noon and dinner at 5:30 p.m. Changing the start time of a meal, up to one-half hour (either way) is possible if arranged prior to your arrival.

Some groups assist in table setting by sending a few individuals to the dining hall prior to each meal. Under the direction of the Taft Campus Host, these people will set tables for the group.

Five minutes before each meal is served, an old-fashioned dinner bell will be rung, signifying that people may begin entering the dining hall. Please encourage your group to be punctual for the meal.

Bon Appetit!

**Laundry:** A washer and a dryer are located in Lower Heckman and are available at no cost for use by participants. Detergent is not provided.

**Linens:** While most groups bring their own linens, sets are available for an additional charge. Requests for linens should be received at least five weeks before the event, with the exact number of sets needed provided three weeks before the event. All beds have pillows without pillow cases and a vinyl mattress cover provided. We will provide pillow cases, 2 flat sheets, blankets, wash clothes and towels for each set of linens requested.

*“The food was excellent as always. We have been coming to Taft for 22 years and the dining staff always provides delicious dishes.”*  
- Delta Kappa Gamma
General Information (continued)

Meeting Rooms: Each group will be assigned meeting space based on needs. All of our meeting rooms are air conditioned and heated for your comfort. A listing of the meeting rooms, capacities and furnishings, as well as diagrams of typical room arrangements are located on pages 12-13. Please let us know if there is a different room arrangement that better meets your needs. Certain meeting rooms have an Internet connection on a T1 line. A network card is necessary to access the Internet. Taft Campus does not have any computers available for guest use.

Natural Areas: Each year over 11,000 people use Taft Campus. In order to insure the beauty of the campus for all participants, we ask that everyone stay on existing paths and refrain from picking flowers or plants. Garbage cans are provided along various paths and in every classroom and dormitory for trash disposal. Please help keep Taft Campus beautiful by encouraging participants to respect the area and dispose of trash in appropriate places.

Office Services: During your stay, we offer fax and copying service for a nominal fee.

Parking: Parking for all group participants and staff is restricted to the parking lot. Only authorized vehicles are allowed beyond the parking lot. Contact the Taft Campus Host should there be a need for any vehicles to get closer to a building.

Pets: For the safety of participants and staff, no pets are allowed on Taft Campus. We can recommend different kennels around the Oregon area.

Programming Opportunities: Taft Campus staff may be available to provide programs for groups for an additional fee. Options range from hikes to crafts and team building to history lessons. Descriptions of our programs are on page 10.

Except in cases of severe weather, most programming sessions will take place outside. Participants are encouraged to plan accordingly by having the appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear for the season.

Programming Opportunities (Off Campus): In addition to the programs offered by Taft Campus staff, the following opportunities exist in the Oregon or neighboring areas:

- Nash Recreation Center (815) 732-3101 (5 minutes drive) (gymnasium, racquetball, indoor swimming pool, weight room)
- Mini Golf & Go Carts - Summer Fun Recreation (815) 732-7004 (15 minutes)
- Horseback Riding - White Pines Ranch (815) 732-7923 (20 minutes)
- Eagle Point Farm (815) 225-7473 (30 minutes)
- The ’Pride of Oregon’ Riverboat 1-800-468-4222 (10 minutes)
- Canoe Rentals - TJ’s Bait & Canoe Rental (815) 732-4516 (5 minutes)
During your stay, the campus’ 141 acres are yours to use. Consider holding a session outside or including time for a hike into your schedule.

General Information (continued)

**Quiet Hours:** Quiet hours are in effect from 11:00 PM to 8:00 AM daily. Group activities taking place while quiet hours are in effect must be confined to a specific classroom. Participants should be reminded that members of the Taft Campus staff have permanent residences on campus and many of the paths are next to these residences, so it is important to be quiet while walking across campus.

**Refreshments/Snacks:** Taft Campus can provide refreshments and snacks for groups. Some groups choose to have an evening snack, others prefer mid-morning rolls and juice while others select continuous coffee, tea and fruit. Arrangements need to be made with the Conference Coordinator in advance.

**Recycling:** All newspaper, office paper, cardboard, aluminum cans, glass and plastic items are recycled at Taft Campus. Recycling bins are located in all meeting rooms and dormitories.

**Severe Weather:** In the event of severe weather, Lower Heckman Dormitory is used as a shelter. Once participants make it to Lower Heckman, they should go to a location away from windows, into either the large meeting area or bathrooms. In the event of a tornado, participants who are unable to make it to a building should lay down in a low area. A member of the Taft staff will inform the group leader during any severe weather and at its conclusion.

**Smoking:** Smoking is not allowed inside any of the campus buildings. Ash receptacles are placed outside the entrance to meeting rooms and dorms.

**Souvenirs:** Taft Campus postcards, insulated mugs, water bottles, and t-shirts are for sale at the Taft Campus Office during your stay. Arrangements can also be made to charge any items to the group’s bill.

*NOTE:* This planning workbook is provided for information only and does not alter or modify the contract.
Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, any Taft Staff member will assist you. All of the program staff and Conference Coordinator are certified in First Aid, CPR and AED.

Medical please stop by the office during office hours. After Office hours, please check at the Office Door for the location of the Taft Host on duty during your stay.

Hospital the nearest hospital is KSB Hospital in Dixon. The phone number is (815) 288-5531. We can provide you with a map and directions. Please notify the Taft Host before going to KSB.

911 Ogle County has enhanced 911 which will locate where you are calling from. If you use a campus phone, you have to dial 9 first, then 911.

Severe Weather in the event of severe weather, go to Lower Heckman. Try to stay away from any windows. If you cannot make it to Lower Heckman, go to:

- A bathroom in your dorm.
- A bathroom in your meeting room.
- A low lying area away from any structures.

The office has a weather alert radio that will alert us about any severe weather.

Fire in case of a fire, go to either Eagle’s Nest or the Dining Hall (whichever is furthest from the fire) and take a head count. The Taft Host will take charge of the situation and determine when the area is safe to return to.

Emergency Phone Number: The emergency number for the Taft Campus is (815) 732-2111. During the evening and throughout the weekend, calls are answered by a voicemail system. Therefore, callers should remain on the line, rather than push an extension number, and at the end of the welcome message, the phone will ring across the campus allowing a Taft Staff member to answer the call. Any emergency phone calls will be delivered to the group coordinator immediately.
Sample Registration Form

Name: ______________________________________________________________
Address:  ____________________________________________________________
Phone #: ______________________

for minors:
Parent/Guardian Name: _________________________________________
Phone #: (day) ____________________ (evening) ____________________

Allergies:  ___________________________________________________________
Medical/Dietary Needs:  ________________________________________________
Vegetarian:  _____ no  
            _____ yes (specify: __ no red meat  __ no meat; eggs/dairy okay  __ vegan)
Accessibility Needs:  _____________________________________________________

NOTES:

Asking about accessibility and dietary needs on your registration form allows for better accommodations.
Bird/Nature Walks

Guided daytime explorations of the campus can be tailored to fit the group’s needs.

Crafts

Provides participants an excellent opportunity to take part of their Taft experience home with them in the form of a craft item they made.

Large Group Games

Also known as “New Games,” these activities emphasize cooperation among all participants. They are designed to be fun, challenging and can help aid in the breaking down of barriers within the group.

Native American

A variety of activities, including Native American games and fire making, are available to give participants a greater understanding of Native American life.

Night Hikes

Acquaints participants with the outdoor environment at night. Activities may focus on increasing awareness, creating or enhancing understanding of nocturnal activities or environment, or increasing group cooperation and interaction.

Orienteering

Using a map and compass, participants will learn how to find specific points around campus. An overview of map reading and compass use is included in this activity.

Pioneering

Using the Taft Campus log cabin as a setting, participants have the opportunity to learn about the life of early settlers. Candle making, carding wool and outdoor cooking are several activities available.

Teams Course

In groups of 10-15 people, participants take part in activities designed to develop teamwork, community building and problem-solving skills among individuals. The groups will be led through a series of ground-level outdoor elements or obstacles, each with a set task that can only be accomplished by all members of the group working together.
**Dormitory Floor Plans**

**Heckman Dorm**
Capacity: 72 people in large rooms
12 people in instructor rooms

**Grover Dorm**
Capacity: 20 people in common area
2 people in instructor room with private bathroom

**Clarkson Dorm**
Capacity: 56 people in common areas
4 people in instructor rooms with private bathrooms

In Heckman Dormitory rooms 05 and 07, 105 and 107, and 106 and 108 share bath and toilet facilities located between these rooms. All other rooms have their own bath and toilet facilities.

“What a value. We wouldn’t be able to stay in such a great ‘outdoor’ atmosphere and eat like we did anywhere else. Taft is beautiful!”
- Camp Crop-A-Lot

**Note:** Number in parenthesis indicates the number of people each room can accommodate. All beds are bunk beds.
### Meeting Room Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Room Dimensions</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blackhawk</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18' x 28'</td>
<td>Wall-Mounted Chalkboard, Tile Floor, Handicap Accessible, Air Conditioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft Shop</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15' x 24'</td>
<td>Moveable Chalkboard, Concrete Floor, Many Craft Utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eagle’s Nest</strong></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>23' x 29'</td>
<td>Fireplace, Tile Floor, Wall-Mounted Chalkboards, Piano, TV/VCR, Restroom, Handicap Accessible, Air Conditioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hillside</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22' x 41'</td>
<td>Wall-Mounted Chalkboard, Tile Floor, TV/VCR, Air Conditioned, Internet Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heckman Lounges</strong></td>
<td>——</td>
<td>12' x 12'</td>
<td>Lounge-Type Seating, Tile Floor, Air Conditioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poley</strong></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>25' x 33'</td>
<td>Fireplace, Tile Floor, Variable Lighting, Moveable Chalkboards, TV/VCR, Restroom, Handicap Accessible, Air Conditioned, Internet Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rockview</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25' x 40'</td>
<td>Wall-Mounted Chalkboard, Tile Floor, TV/VCR, Air Conditioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science Lab</strong></td>
<td>88</td>
<td>20' x 39'</td>
<td>Wall-Mounted Chalkboard, Sink, Tile Floor, TV/VCR, Great Room for Crafts, Air Conditioned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We used Poley, Hillside, Eagle’s Nest, Blackhawk, Rockview, Craft Shop, and Science Lab. All were in great condition.”

- Illinois DNR
Typical Meeting Room Arrangements

Informal
Front of Room

Auditorium
Front of Room

Classroom
Front of Room

Board
Front of Room

Square
Front of Room

Circle
Front of Room

Key:  c = chair  = table  = podium

Please let us know if there is a different room arrangement that better meets the needs of your group.
Where Are We

Taft Campus can be reached from I-39 or I-88.

The Lorado Taft Field Campus can be reached from I-39 and I-88.

- If traveling north or south on I-39, exit #104 on Rt. 64 west 16 miles to Oregon, take River Road right one and one-half miles to the Lowden State Park and Taft Campus entrance.

- If traveling west on I-88, exit onto I-39 north five miles to exit #104 on Rt. 64 west 16 miles to Oregon, take River Road right one and one-half miles to the Lowden State Park and Taft Campus entrance.

- If traveling east on I-88, exit at Dixon on Rt. 26 north to Rt. 2 in Dixon. Take Rt. 2 north 18 miles to Oregon. Take Rt. 64 in Oregon east across the Rock River. Left on River Road one and one-half miles to the Lowden State Park and Taft Campus entrance.

- If traveling south on Rt. 2 to Oregon, left on Rt. 64 across the Rock River. Left on River Road one and one-half miles to the Lowden State Park and Taft Campus entrance.