



Event and Meeting Management Certificate Program

Learn to
**develop the “Big”
event for your
organization or client.**

Event and Meeting Management Certificate Instructor Biographies

Diana S. Barber, JD (juris doctorate), CHE (certified hospitality educator), CWP (certified wedding planner) is a practicing attorney and an educator/consultant who specializes in hospitality law; currently teaching undergraduate students at Georgia State University and University of North Georgia. Diana has extensive experience in hospitality legal matters, including event and meeting planning, having served as the associate general counsel (in-house attorney) for The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company for over 14 years and subsequently teaching hospitality students for 14+ years.

Tim Barrett, Certified Meeting Professional (CMP), is director of meeting and program operations for Destination South Meetings + Events, an award-winning event design, meeting planning, and destination management firm. He offers an events background of close to 20 years that includes experience in hotel, catering, and destination management work. Tim is active in several industry associations and is a 2002 graduate of this program.

Connie Bergeron, Certified Meeting Professional (CMP), is President of Site Selections Solutions, Inc., an on-property hotel and global sales company for groups and meetings. She has 22 years of experience with Sheraton hotels and eight years with an Atlanta-based meeting planning company sourcing and negotiating contracts for client conferences worldwide. She is a Platinum member of Meeting Professionals International (MPI).

Abby Freeman is a seasoned meeting planning and exposition professional, with a wealth of experience in corporate, healthcare and association meeting and event management – from continuing medical education programs to Board of Director retreats to multi-day annual conferences. Abby is the Managing Director for Atlanta-based meeting management company Mitchell Meetings. Prior to starting Mitchell Meetings, Abby worked in the physician education department at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and as the Director of Meetings for a large medical education company.

Abby is also an award-winning member of Meeting Professional International, Georgia Chapter, and serves as the President-Elect on the Board of Directors. MPI Georgia named Abby Chapter Leader of the Year in 2012 and Meeting Planner of the Year in 2009.

Lisa Kraus Gardner, Association Manager with Nardone Consulting Group (NCG). Lisa Kraus Gardner joined NCG in December, 2014. With a diverse background and over 23 years of experience in human resources and operations management, customer service training, specialized sales, sales fulfillment, event coordination, marketing, and business development, Lisa’s ability to “juggle many balls” allows her to provide multiple services and specialties for NCG’s partners and their members. In her current role, Lisa focuses her time on communications, marketing, event planning, and membership for the Environmental Bankers Association (EBA) and serves as the Chapter Administrator for the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Southeast Chapter. Lisa plunged into the hospitality industry when she joined the events education firm, Plan Your Meetings in 2007. She has been a member of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC) since 2008, chairing various marketing committees with both organizations. She is a new member of Georgia Society of Association Executives (GSAE) and Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA). Her business passions are customer service, handling the marketing, planning and execution of events, and developing programs that exceed customer expectations. Lisa’s savvy approach to marketing for meetings and events starts with developing the compelling reason why that event is relevant and important to prospective registrants, then building a platform of marketing arms to help convey the message, including website design, email marketing, and engagement through multiple social media platforms.

Four easy ways to register:

Phone: 706-542-3537 or

800-811-6640 (toll free in the U.S.)

Fax: 706-542-6596

E-mail: questions@georgiacenter.uga.edu

Online: [Click Here](#)





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Lee J. Howard is President of Lee J. Howard Entertainment, an award-winning special events entertainment production and consulting company. He began his career in entertainment as a composer, pianist, recording artist, and bandleader. In 1997, Lee J. established his company, which has produced talent for over 5,000 corporate and social events across the United States. He was President of the Atlanta Chapter of ISES (International Special Events Society) during the Atlanta Olympics, and is currently the Chair of the Roswell Cultural Arts Board. From teaching and consulting to producing and providing leadership, Lee J.’s commitment in all of his entertainment-related activities is to create experiences that open hearts and build relationships.

Adriel Jones, Certified Meeting Professional (CMP), is an Event Planner for Georgia State University where he coordinates training events for the State of Georgia government organizations. He has over 15 years of experience in event/conference planning and 22 years of experience in training and development in social services. Adriel holds a Master of Arts degree in Human Resources Management and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. The Illinois Council of Training awarded him the Excellence in Training Award. He is a 2002 graduate of the CMMC program and earned his CMP in 2004.

Gregg Lauer, Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) is Director of Global Events at Manhattan Associates, a leading supply chain software company headquartered in Atlanta. Past planning positions include Dun & Bradstreet Software and Per-Se Technologies. Gregg also has an extensive hotel background with several years in Convention Services. He most recently was Director of Catering and Convention services for over eight years at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta.

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