



# 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**, Juris Doctorate (JD), Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE), Certified Wedding Planner (CWP), is a practicing attorney and an educator/consultant who specializes in hospitality law; currently teaching undergraduate students at Georgia State University. 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 over 16 years. Her enthusiasm and passion for education is invigorating.

**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 planning meetings and events worldwide. He offers an events background of 20 years that includes experience in hotel, catering, and destination management work. Tim is active in several industry associations including recently serving as president of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) Georgia Chapter and is a 2002 graduate of this program.

**Connie Bergeron**, 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 MPI.

**Matthew R. Clouser** is an entrepreneur who has been in business for over two decades, employing hundreds of workers, and whose companies have excelled in the in Audio Visual, Theatrical Lighting, Technical Production, Meetings, Special Events, Convention, Concert, Motion Picture, and Association Industries. His company's designs have produced countless awards in the Audio Visual, Meetings and Events industries. Matt's clients range from Fortune 100 and 500 companies to Hollywood celebrities and everything in between. Matt is a member of MPI, ACVB, ISES, NACE, SITE and several other industry associations. He has served on the board with ISES and ACVB helping to develop the Atlanta meetings and events industry.

Matt gives back to numerous charities and organizations by donating time, resources and money to causes that help those that are struggling, less fortunate, or in need of medical support. In his personal time, Matt enjoys being a father, artist, photographer, musician, writer, investor, real estate developer, interior designer, extreme sports enthusiast, daredevil, and adventure seeker. He likes to travel as much as possible, experiencing the cultures and worldly places that have developed our humanity.

**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 President on the Board of Directors. MPI Georgia named Abby Chapter Leader of the Year in 2012 and Meeting Planner of the Year in 2009.

### Four easy ways to register:

Phone: +1-706-542-3537 or

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

Fax: 706-542-6596

E-mail: [questions@georgiacenter.uga.edu](mailto:questions@georgiacenter.uga.edu)

Online: [Click Here](#)



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**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 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, e-mail marketing, and engagement through multiple social media platforms.

**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 band leader. 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 International Special Events Society (ISES) 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**, 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**, CMP, is Events Director at Aptos, a retail technology company headquartered in Atlanta. Past planning positions include Equifax, Manhattan Associates, Per-Se Technologies, and Dun & Bradstreet Software. 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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