

# The Society Pulse

**Upcoming Meetings**

- NEC June 6-8
- Education Day July 20

**Board**

- President - [Virginia Hessels](#)
- 1st VP - [Colleen Flage](#)
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- Supplier Director - [Kelly Aleman](#)
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- Finance/Registration - [Marcia Teague](#), Candy Kaswinkel, Lauren Guidi
- Fundraising/Comm Svc - [Virginia Hessels](#)
- Membership - [Stephanie West](#) and [Shelby Sowder](#)
- Prog/Prof Dev - [Jo Ann Winn](#), Erica Chatman, Stephanie McBride, Emely McKitrick and Valkyrie Shah
- Scholarship/Awards - [Candy Kaswinkel](#), and Valkyrie Shah
- Communications - [Kelly Aleman](#), [Valkyrie Shah](#), Kaylee Brummett
- Elections/Bylaws/Procedures - [Colleen Flage](#)

**2017 Education Day**

SAVE THE DATE! Best Western Gateway Grand July 20, 2017. Speakers include Rob Coffman (Ethics and Judement..), Brett Kolmetz (Rates, Dates, Stay Patterns...), and Kay Tappan (Communicating Visually..).

TELL YOUR COLLEAGUES!! We're offering the deal-of-the-year! If you are not already a planner member, pay just \$55 and you will receive registration for Education Day AND a one-year membership to the Central Florida chapter (valid only for new members).

**National SGMP 2017 Save the Date**

SGMP NEC 2017 will be in Fort Lauderdale, Florida! June 6-8, 2017 at the Broward County Convention Center. More info can be found on our website. SGMP NEC 2018 will be in Norfolk, VA June 5-7, 2018.

**Thank You for Sponsoring**

Thank you to DoubleTree by Hilton for our evening February meeting. Dianne McDonald (AAA) gave a wonderful presentation on having meetings on a cruise!

Thank you to Hilton UF Conference Center for our March meeting. Our speakers, Rhonda Rogers-Bardsley (Your Social Planning, Inc.) and Elsbeth Russell (NAVVC/VetFolio), presented a helpful program entitled "How to Use Email and Social Media to Market Your Conference."

Thank you to the Gainesville Garden Club and Jason's Deli for our April meeting. Colleen Flage provided a fantastic, in-depth talk on livestream and in-person conferences.



**Welcome!**

*Please welcome our newest members:*  
 NaSheba Prentis-Renaissance Orlando Airport Hotel  
 Belkis Ramos-The Barrymore Hotel Tampa Riverwalk  
 John Oney-The Lakeland Center  
 Nancy Vargas-Bay Harbor Hotel

**Recent member certifications, awards, or recognition**

*If you have recently obtained any certifications, please let us know! We would love to share your accomplishments with our members. If you're interested in CGMP or CMP, please contact [Erica Chatman](#).*

## **Planner Highlight: *Kristin Zupancic*, Conference Coordinator at UF/IFAS Office of Conferences & Institutes**

**What is your role at your current company/organization?** I am a Conference Coordinator at the IFAS Office of Conferences & Institutes (OCI), which is a full service conference planning agency at the University of Florida. I work with clients from start to finish to handle the planning, logistics and onsite management of agricultural and natural resources conferences.



**What do you want our members to know about you?** I have been with OCI since February 2015 and graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Hospitality and Event Management. Before conference planning with OCI, I worked in wedding, special event and corporate event management.

**What made you join SGMP?** I joined SGMP to build relationships with other planners and suppliers, as having a strong network is extremely important in our industry. It's great to be able to reach out to a fellow member when starting the planning process for a new conference or meeting, whether it be for hotel meeting space, catering needs or anything in between.

**Something fun about you? (Favorite hobby, favorite vacation spot, etc.)** I love food, especially pizza and chocolate, and all animals! Outside of work, you can find me with my husband and family, pets (two dogs and a chinchilla), or relaxing outdoors.

## **Supplier Highlight: *Laurin Robinson*, Market Director of Sales for the Hilton Garden Inn, Homewood Suites, and Courtyard by Marriott**

**What is your role at your current company/organization?** I assist those who are traveling to Gainesville to securing clean, comfortable, and affordable hotel accommodations that exceed their expectations. Ultimately, my team and I are responsible for the revenue generation of all three hotels, including group blocks, locally negotiated corporate rates, national/global accounts, and meeting space rentals. With a total of 288 rooms and 3000 sq. ft. of meeting space across both Marriott and Hilton brands, we are a "one-stop-shop" for all things hotel related!



**What do you want our members to know about you?** I am proud to be the 18th member of my family to graduate from the University of Florida where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Tourism, Recreation, and Parks Management and a Master of Science in Business Management. Upon graduating, I moved home to Tallahassee, FL and gained experience working in food & beverage operations before transitioning to sales. Most recently, I served as the Director of Sales for 2 years at the Aloft Tallahassee Downtown, a 162 room hotel owned and managed by McKibbon Hospitality. In June 2016, I was blessed to be promoted and to relocate back to Gainesville as a Market Director for McKibbon Hospitality.

**What made you join SGMP?** During my career in Tallahassee, I was an active member of SGMP Florida Capital Chapter. Therefore, when transferring to Gainesville, Kelly Aleman and I connected and she invited me to attend the 2016 Education Day. I was immediately impressed by the size of the membership and of course how welcoming everyone was! I mostly enjoy the relationships cultivated by the monthly chapter meetings.

**Something fun about you? (Favorite hobby, favorite vacation spot, etc.)** I enjoy spending time with my two dogs and cat (all rescues) and aim to be outside as much as possible. My favorite hobbies include horseback riding, fishing, scalloping, and hiking. When I'm indoors, I try my hand at painting and DIY'ing in general.