

## Class Schedule

### 10:20 AM—11:40 AM

**HB 207—Hospitality Management & Leadership**

Location—M200

Professor Jeff Elsworth

**Alumni Guests: Richard Farrar (BA '73) and  
Jacob Dondzila (BA '12)**

**HB 273—Hospitality Business Analytics**

Location—E230

Professor James Kim

**Alumni Guest: John Theuer (BA '83, MBA '83)**

**HB 346—Hospitality Managed Services**

Location—N021

Instructor Tim Mehlberg

**Alumni Guest: Curtis Lease (BA '91)**

**HB 489—Hospitality Business Strategy**

Location—N105

Professor Bonnie Knutson

**Alumni Guest: Alison Wallace (BA '97)**

### 12:40 PM—2 PM

**HB 273—Hospitality Business Analytics**

Location—E230

Professor James Kim

**Alumni Guests: Brian DeMeester (BA '98)  
and Rhyan Begay**

**HB 302—Hospitality Managerial Accounting**

Location—N106

Professor MiRan Kim

**Alumni Guest: John Theuer (BA '83, MBA '83)**

**HB 358—Hospitality Entrepreneurship**

Location—N103

Professor Jeff Elsworth

**Alumni Guest: Curt Hilliker (BA '88)**

### 3 PM—4:20 PM

**HB 280—Introduction to Event Management**

Location—N021

Instructor Tim Mehlberg

**Alumni Guest: David DuBois (BA '78)**

**HB 337—Hospitality Information Systems**

Location—M200

Professor Lu Zhang

**Alumni Guests: Brian DeMeester (BA '98),  
Rhyan Begay, and Jennifer Thorn (BA '96)**

thank  
you

Thank you for participating in Alumni  
Engagement Day! We look forward to  
seeing you at our next School event!

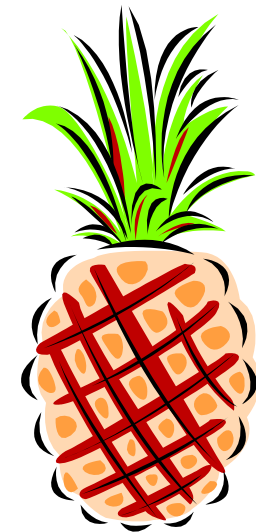
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The School of Hospitality Business  
Broad College of Business  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The School of  
Hospitality Business  
presents:

# Alumni Engagement Day



Thursday,  
September 21, 2023

**Rhyan Begay**

*Rooms Director, FireKeepers Casino Hotel*

Rhyan has an extensive history with FireKeepers Casino Hotel having served as an Executive Host and Yield Manager. As Rooms Director, she oversees catering and sales, front desk, guest services, and Quality Inn & Suites (owned by FireKeepers).

**Brian DeMeester (BA '98)**

*Executive Housekeeper, FireKeepers Casino Hotel*

As the Executive Housekeeper since February 2023, Brian is responsible for the support and direction of the Environmental Services (EVS), Housekeeping, and Laundry team for the 453-luxury room hotel and 111,000+ sq. ft. casino. Prior to FireKeepers, Brian was the Executive Housekeeper for Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids for seven years and Director of Housekeeping at The H Hotel in Midland for seven years.

**Jacob Dondzila (BA '12)**

*Director of Rooms, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Washington, DC*

Jacob is a results-oriented hospitality professional possessing exceptional administrative, managerial, and organizational skills. He is an innovative achiever who can deliver optimal solutions to maximize guest satisfaction while ensuring proper and profitable business operations.

**David DuBois (BA '78)**

*CEO/President/Publisher, The Exhibitor Group*

David is most recently with The Exhibitor Group and prior to he served as President and CEO of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) since 2012. He is an experienced President with demonstrated history working in the non-profit organization management industry. He is skilled in catering, budgeting, food/beverage, hotel management, and hospitality.

**Richard Farrar (BA '73)**

*Principal of The Farrar Consulting Group*

Richard worked 37 years with Marriott International prior to establishing his own consulting firm. He was Vice President of Owner and Franchise Services, responsible for openings, marketing, and communications. In 2007 alone, his department opened or converted 140 new Marriott Lodging Properties. In addition, Richard was responsible for facilitating or sponsoring conferences, meetings, and training and orientation sessions with the Marriott owner and franchise community. He now leads Farrar Consulting Group which specializes in all aspects of sales and marketing in lodging.

**Curt Hilliker (BA '88)**

*President, Commercial Solar Arizona*

Curt leads the Commercial & Industrial Solar Team. Commercial Solar Arizona helps companies transition to renewable forms of energy using the most technologically advanced solar PV and energy storage equipment available. They serve regional, national, and global clients in manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, multi-family, and chemical/semiconductor industries.

**Curtis Lease (BA '91)**

*Regional Vice President, American Dining Creations*

Curtis is an experienced operator and leader with demonstrated history working in the hospitality and dining services industry. He is a creative professional focused on helping transform workplace dining through custom dining options, culinary innovation, and an emphasis on health and wellness. Skilled in hospitality management, food/beverage, catering, budgeting, operations management, and driving business growth.

**John Theuer (BA '83, MBA '83)**

*Chief Financial Officer, Simms Restaurants and Partake Collective*

Former CFO with Pizza Studio, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, and Eureka! Restaurant Group. A 30+ year industry veteran, John most recently was part of the executive team that guided the sale of Coffee Bean to a trio of private-equity firms led by Advent International. Prior to that, he was CFO of Panda Restaurant Group Inc., parent of the Panda Express chain.

**Jennifer Thorn (BA '96)**

*Area Director of Sales & Marketing, Kimpton Hotels of New England*

Jennifer has over 20 years of hospitality experience with specialties in independent luxury hotel and resort sales, marketing, branding, positioning, partnerships, public relations, revenue management, and group and transient leadership.

**Alison Wallace (BA '97)**

*Area Director of Sales, Hiltons of Chicago*

An experienced Area Director of Sales with a demonstrated history of working in the hospitality industry. She is a strong sales professional skilled in sales, account management, marketing strategy, tourism, and meeting planning.