

HOST Summit Speaker Bios



Suzette Arnold, MPA, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia: Focus Group Session Leader

Suzette Arnold joined the Institute of Government in May 2017 and is currently working in the Governmental Training, Education and Development division. She is responsible for working with state, local and online training programs. She previously served as grants and contracts director with the Georgia Department of Labor and the Fulton County government. Suzette has 18 years of experience managing project-based teams in Georgia and New York and has expertise in social service programs involving homelessness, mental health, mental retardation, substance abuse, workforce development, housing and community development.



Neville Bhada, CEO Applied Strategies and Principles: Panel Moderator

Neville Bhada is the founder and CEO of Applied Strategies and Principles, a firm that specializes on the strategic planning, research and marketing needs of growing and changing organizations. Applied Strategies and Principles provides unique solutions with a customized approach through conversations, research, focus forums and more. Its experience with research, communication and education make it distinctively skilled to tackle issues facing firms as they grow and evolve into their next stage of development. Some of the entities Applied Strategies and Principles works with include The Florida Keys and Key West, Travel South USA, Texas Association of CVBs, Huntsville, Ala., Visit Central Florida, Monastery of the Holy Spirit, Tennessee Valley Authority, Auburn University, University of Georgia, Make a Miracle Peru, several Parishes in Louisiana, and the Eastern Black Sea of Turkey Tourism Development Authority. He currently instructs within the Hospitality and Food Industry Management program at University of Georgia as an instructor. Over the years, he has taught classes on tourism, hospitality, events and marketing to undergraduate and masters students. His background includes serving as the executive director for the Southeast States chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association, vice president of communications for Southeast Tourism Society and program director of WebMD and past president of Atlanta Metro Travel Association.

He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia in international business and a master's degree from Clemson University in travel and tourism. Some recent recognitions he received are 2019's Texas Travel Alliance's "Honorary Texan", "Outstanding Alumnus" by Clemson University and in 2021, Travel South USA's Ambassador of the Year.



Jason Bitar, Business Consultant, Small Business Development Center, University of Georgia: The Business of Hospitality

Over 30 years of experience as an entrepreneur and small business owner in the food service, consulting/mentoring, and creative innovation business. Prior to joining UGA SBDC, Jason created and developed unique and original food service concepts, started an idea incubator and a consulting business. He has developed deep knowledge and commitment to helping entrepreneurs bring their ideas to market. With his entrepreneurial experience, as an SBDC advisor and a SCORE mentor to small business owners, Jason is able to relate to entrepreneurs' concerns and frustrations and admires their determination, guiding them in starting and growing their businesses. His areas of expertise in the foodservice industry cover concept development, brand design, product innovation and development, marketing strategies, location selection, store design and construction, franchising, and strategic planning.

Jason has a BS degree in Industrial Management from Georgia institute of Technology and a master's degree in Marketing from Georgia State University. To expand his knowledge in innovation, Jason attended and received a Post Graduate Diploma in Innovation and Design Thinking (PGDID) from Emeritus, an MIT Management-Executive Program. Jason is fluent in English, Arabic and French.



Danny Bivens, Senior Public Service Associate, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia: Panel Speaker

Institute of Government in 2012. He has extensive experience in downtown development, planning and design. Danny specializes in working with local governments utilizing an asset-based, community development approach. Danny co-developed and manages the Georgia Downtown Renaissance Partnership, an initiative with multiple key partners: the University of Georgia, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), the Georgia Cities Foundation (GCF) and the Lyndhurst Foundation. His efforts through the Georgia Downtown Renaissance Partnership have led to the successful implementation of sustainable community redevelopment initiatives.

His previous experience includes 8 years with UGA's J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development. He co-developed the Cities and Downtown: Building Blocks to Recovery Initiative, a partnership between UGA, GMA, GCF and Georgia Cities. Prior to joining the Fanning Institute, Danny served as the program coordinator for the Georgia Historic Resource Survey Program, "Find It." There, he helped initiate a joint venture between the University of Georgia, the Georgia Transmission Corporation, and the State of Georgia's Historic Preservation Division to document Georgia's historic resources.



**Bynum Boley, PhD, Associate Professor of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, University of Georgia:
Tourism and the Economy**

Dr. Bynum Boley is an Associate Professor within the University of Georgia's Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management program. Dr. Boley's research focuses on sustainable tourism development and how the unique natural and cultural resources of communities can be protected, packaged, and marketed to jointly increase sustainability, resident quality of life, and a community's competitiveness as a tourism destination.



Russ Cook, EdD, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia: Focus Group Session Leader

Before joining the Institute of Government in 2015, Russ Cook worked in the public school arena for 40 years as a teacher and administrator. He has served local boards of education through his tenure as a Georgia school superintendent, a regional director with the Georgia Department of Education, and the executive director of a Regional Education Service Agency. Cook has managed and developed projects involving local boards of education through his roles as advisor, facilitator, and trainer. In 2009, he led a regional team of superintendents, board members, school system leaders, and teachers to broker a school facility construction project involving the approval of 13 boards of education in Northeast Georgia. He has served as president of a statewide professional organization and as liaison to numerous agencies, public/private associations, and professional organizations.



Rosanna Cruz-Bibb, PhD, Archway Partnership, Hart County Archway Professional, University of Georgia: Panel Speaker

Rosanna Cruz-Bibb currently serves as the Archway Professional in Hart County though she has served the UGA Archway Partnership in various roles since 2012. The Archway Professional serves as a Public Service and Outreach faculty member charged with connecting higher education and other resources to address community identified needs and challenges. Rosanna has a PhD in Mass Communications specializing in public relations from the UGA Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication and an MPA from the UGA School of Public and International Affairs. Her experience in public relations, nonprofit, and local government work has helped her specialize in community-based relationship building initiatives in Archway communities throughout her tenure with the Archway Partnership.



**Bryan Fluech, Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, Associate Marine Extension Director,
University of Georgia: Tourism and the Economy**

Bryan Fluech has served as the Associate Marine Extension Director for the University of Georgia Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant Program since December 2015. He is responsible for providing leadership and coordinating Marine Extension activities across the state with academic, management, industry, and community partners. His extension programs specifically focus on marine fisheries, and coastal tourism with the goal of promoting the economic, cultural, and environmental health of Georgia's coast. Bryan has over 16 years of experience as a Sea Grant Extension Agent in Georgia and Florida, where he has engaged diverse stakeholders to conduct applied research, outreach, and extension programming. Prior to working for Sea Grant, Bryan's career included teaching middle and high school science, working as naturalist, and conducting field work in freshwater and coastal wetlands. Bryan has a B.S. in Biology from the University of Tennessee and a M.Ed. in Secondary Science Education from the University of Florida.



Mark Jaronski, Deputy Commissioner, Tourism: Morning Keynote

Mark Jaronski serves as Georgia Department of Economic Development Deputy Commissioner for Tourism. In this role he oversees the state's official destination marketing organization, Explore Georgia, which works to advance the state's tourism industry that in 2019 generated nearly \$69 billion in total economic impact and supported 484,000 jobs. Through its home office in Atlanta, 9 visitor information centers, and network of representatives across the globe, Explore Georgia inspires travel to and within the state.

Jaronski is a 28-year travel and tourism industry leader who has worked on iconic travel brands and destinations, serving as CEO of Select Registry Distinguished Inns of North America prior to his current role and Vice President of Global Communications for Visit Orlando, the official tourism association for Central Florida before that. He is a veteran of The Walt Disney Company, where he served in a variety of roles over 20 years, including Brand Manager of Walt Disney World theme parks and Director of External Communications for Disney Parks Worldwide at company headquarters in Burbank, California.

He serves on the Board of Directors for the U.S. Travel Association, Travel South USA and Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Sharon Kane, Agribusiness and Community Development Economics, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, University of Georgia: Panel Speaker

Dr. Kane has performed a variety of economic research in both the private and public sectors, with areas of expertise including research design and project development, economic data analysis, creation and implementation of customized statistical tools, economic impact studies, and community research projects. Prior to joining the University of Georgia, she was an economist for a Fortune 500 corporation, focusing on econometric analysis and economic education.



Glenn Kruse, Area Director, Small Business Development Center-Gwinnett, University of Georgia: The Business of Hospitality

Mr. Kruse is the Area Director for the UGA SBDC in Gwinnett. He brings over 35 years of management experience including executive management in large and start-up companies. His areas of specialization are business and market development, program management, strategic account planning and general management.

Mr. Kruse has worked in small businesses that focused on site leasing, Wi-Fi 'HotSpots', corporate network management and accounting software solutions. He has experience working in the healthcare, hospitality, telecommunications, utility markets and with internet-based services including Software as a Service (SaaS).



Craig Landry, PhD, Professor of Agriculture and Applied Economics, University of Georgia: Closing Remarks Speaker

Dr. Craig Landry is a natural resource economist with expertise in non-market valuation, coastal resources management, and experimental economics. His research agenda includes assessment of individual decision-making under risk & uncertainty; risk management, insurance, and mitigation for natural hazards; dynamic optimization models for studying coupled human-natural systems; modeling of recreation demand, including beach going and recreational angling; experimental economics for assessing non-market valuation methods and willingness to pay for public goods; among many other topics.

His research has been published in the American Economic Review, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, Land Economics, American Journal of Agricultural Economics, and Marine Resource Economics. He has served as review panelist for the National Science Foundation, EPA, and NOAA Sea Grant programs and was a lead author for the National Climate Assessment chapter on Rural Communities. Dr. Landry holds Master's degrees from University of Georgia and University of Maryland - College Park. His PhD is in Agricultural and Natural Resources Economics from the University of Maryland - College Park.



Donnie Longenecker, RLA, MLA, ASLA, ULI, Senior Lecturer, College of Environment & Design, University of Georgia: Panel Speaker

Donnie Longenecker is a landscape architect, entrepreneur and educator. During his time as lecturer at CED he has taught almost every course in the BLA curricula. Over the last few years, his design studios have focused on helping organizations and municipalities with big dreams and small budgets. He also teaches professional practice and construction documentation. In addition to his responsibilities as Senior Lecturer, he is also Coordinator for CED Continuing Education Programs. Each year, the Landscape Short Course and Georgia LARE Review provide continuing education and exam prep for over 150 registered and aspiring landscape architects.



Dan Remar, PhD, Assistant Professor of Hospitality and Food Industry Management, University of Georgia: Tourism and the Economy

Daniel Remar, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Hospitality and Food Industry Management. He earned his PhD in Hospitality Management from University of South Carolina, Master of Liberal Arts in Gastronomy from Boston University, and Bachelor of Science in Communications from Boston University. Prior to his appointment at University of Georgia he was an Assistant Professor of Hospitality Management within the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics at University of New Hampshire. Dr. Remar's teaching emphasis is on Food and Service Management, Restaurant Operations and Food Production Management, and International Food, Beverage and Culture. His research focus is on restaurant consumer demands, attitudes, and pricing strategies, with an emphasis on local and sustainable food. Most recently he was awarded a Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to assess the potential for the development and promotion of a consumer market for underutilized fish species in restaurants and foodservice. In addition to presenting his research at various hospitality research conferences, he has been published in the Journal of Foodservice Business Research, International Journal of Wine Business Research, and International Journal of Hospitality Management.

Dr. Remar has extensive industry experience in the restaurant management sector of the hospitality industry. He has held both front and back of the house management positions for various restaurant and catering establishments throughout the US and was consultant to Sodexo USA at University of South Carolina. He also once served as a chef/owner apprentice at Le Clos Saint Roch in Maussane-Les-Alpilles, Provence, France – a Michelin One-Star restaurant. Dr. Remar is designated as a Certified Hospitality Educator by the American Hotel and Lodging Association and maintains his ServSafe Certification with the National Restaurant Association.



Eric Robinson, MPA, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia: Focus Group Session Leader

Eric Robinson has been with the Institute of Government since 2006. He currently serves as a Public Service Associate providing management and leadership development instruction to state and local government elected and appointed officials as well as other customized training and planning retreat facilitation. His previous experience includes serving as director of the Georgia Senate Research Office, where he provided research and information to Senate officials and addressed inquiries from constituents and other organizations. He is currently a member of the University Council of the University of Georgia.



**John Salazar, PhD, Coordinator of Hospitality and Food Industry Management, University of Georgia:
The Business of Hospitality and Closing Remarks**

John Salazar, Ph.D., is the Coordinator of the University of Georgia Hospitality & Food Industry Management Major and an Associate Professor of Hospitality Management. Prior to this appointment he was a Tenured Full Professor in the Department of Hospitality Management at the University of South Carolina Beaufort and Director of the University's Lowcountry and Resort Islands Tourism Institute. He has also been a hospitality management faculty member and tourism research director for The University of Tennessee and also held faculty positions at Southern Illinois University and University of South Alabama. Dr. Salazar's research focuses on hospitality human resource management, destination management and marketing, and festival and event management. He has conducted research for companies such as Marriott Hotels and Resorts, Point Clear Holdings Hotels and Resorts, Radisson Hotels, Country Club of Detroit, and Philadelphia Country Club. He has also conducted research for local, state, and regional tourism agencies throughout the U.S as well as the U.S. Department of Transportation.

He is the author of over 80 peer-reviewed publications, proceedings and presentations, has been awarded more than 180 grants and contracts totaling over \$1.1 million in funding. Dr. Salazar has also served as past Chapter President of the Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association, and also Director of Research for the Southeast, Central and South America Federation of the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education for 2012-13. Dr. Salazar teaches Hospitality Management, Hospitality Finance, Hospitality Strategic Management, Hospitality Marketing and Sales, and Destination Marketing.