

IS MY SPORT

DECA

SPORTS + ENTERTAINMENT
MARKETING CONFERENCE



ORLANDO | JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 1, 2026



Sports, Events, and Entertainment Management

Turn your sports and entertainment passions into a career @RIT

Employers seek our graduates taught by experts in hospitality and analytics, who experience a NCAA Division I sports campus at RIT. Our alumni have landed careers working with professional sports entities including:

- NBA
- Cleveland Cavaliers
- Indiana Pacers
- Sacramento Kings
- San Francisco 49ers
- Washington Commanders
- Boston Gardens
- T-Mobile arena in Las Vegas

and many more.



RIT
Saunders
College of
Business

rit.edu/business/sports



Minor in Sports, Events, and Entertainment Management

Carson Stoltzfus

**'25 (marketing and MIS)
Research and Development Intern
Rochester Red Wings | Rochester, NY**

"I gained a strong foundation that prepared me to contribute meaningfully to a professional sports organization like the Rochester Red Wings. I learned how successful sports organizations operate—emphasizing the importance of delivering high-quality experiences for both fans and employees. During my co-op, I applied this knowledge to customer feedback to better understand the fan experience and make each game more efficient and enjoyable for fans."



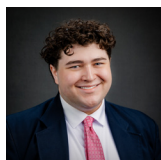
Welcome to DECA's Sports and Entertainment Marketing Conference!

When you arrived in Orlando, you took a huge step toward success. There's no better place to learn about the hottest industries in the marketing field than a city that is home to world-class professional and college sports and is also one of the world's premier destinations for family entertainment.

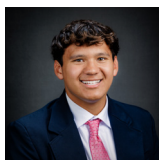
Whether you are planning a career in sports and entertainment marketing, competing in DECA's Sports and Entertainment Marketing competitive events or simply wanting to learn more about this exciting field, you are at the right place to connect with leading sports and entertainment marketing executives.

Thank you to Universal Orlando Resort™ and the local sporting organizations in the greater Orlando area for their contributions to make #DECASEM a success.

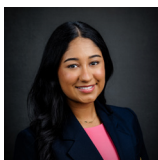
Enjoy this incredible experience!



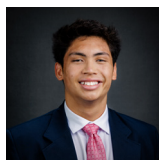
**ASHER
LEVENTHAL**
High School
Division President
@hsdecapresident



**CULLEN
WATANUKI**
Central Region
Vice President
@decacrvp



**HANNAH
HEIDARI**
North Atlantic Region
Vice President
@decanarvp



**MASON
ST. JEAN**
Southern Region
Vice President
@decasrvp



**PRAVEENA
MAHENDRAN**
Western Region
Vice President
@decawrvp

COMPETE + WIN

DECA QUEST

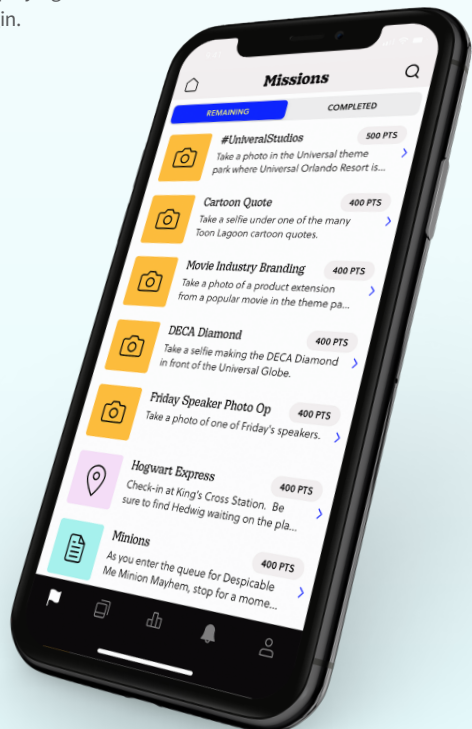
Track your participation in the conference through the GooseChase app and gain points towards awesome prizes while at #DECASEM. You'll also be able to complete fun challenges in the parks to gain additional points.

Complete as many missions as you can by 11:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 31 for your chance to win.

- Download the **GooseChase** iOS or Android app.
- Choose to play as a guest, or register for a personal account with a username and password of your choice.
- Search for and select the “**DECA SEM Conference 2026**” game, or search by game code **FTW6SW**.
- If you're playing as part of a team, create your team or select your team from the list if it's already been created. If you're playing individually, enter your name to begin.



goosechase





CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28

- 8:00 AM

Bus to Disney Transportation Center
Pre-Registration Required
- 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Registration
- 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Cabana Bay Beach Resort™
- 6:30 PM - 11:30 PM

Shuttle to Universal Cabana Bay Beach Resort
Pre-Registration Required

THURSDAY JANUARY 29

- 8:30 AM

Loews Royal Pacific Resort, Oceana Ballroom 1-6
Doors open at 8:30 AM
- 9:15 AM

Sports & Entertainment Marketing Presentations
Including Universal Orlando™ executives and featured guest speakers
- 12:30 PM

Lunch (On Your Own)
- Marketing GooseChase in the Park (On Your Own)

FRIDAY JANUARY 30

- 8:30 AM

Loews Royal Pacific Resort, Oceana Ballroom 1-6
Doors open at 8:30 AM
- 9:15 AM

Sports & Entertainment Marketing Presentations
Including Universal Orlando™ executives and featured guest speakers
- 12:30 PM

Lunch (On Your Own)
- Marketing GooseChase in the Park (On Your Own)

SATURDAY JANUARY 31

- 8:00 AM

Bus to Disney Transportation Center
- 6:00 PM - 10:30 PM

Shuttle to Universal Cabana Bay Beach Resort
Pre-Registration Required

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1

- Morning

Departure

THURSDAY

NATHAN BURGER

Director of Group Sales, Orlando Magic

Nathan Burger is beginning his tenth season with the Orlando Magic. Nathan specializes in creating legendary moments at the Kia Center and is responsible for managing and developing the Ticket Sales Department. Originally from Indianapolis, Nathan began his career with Pacers Sports & Entertainment for eight seasons before moving to Central Florida. He actively volunteers with Junior Achievement, the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, and the Orlando Magic Youth Foundation. In his spare time, Nathan likes to play golf, read, and travel the world with his wife, Jen.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Describe factors used by businesses to position corporate brands.
- Identify customer touch points.
- Explain the role of customer service as a component of selling relationships.
- Explain key factors in building a clientele.
- Describe the impact that digital communication is having on selling.
- Describe the use of target marketing in professional selling.

MY NOTES

THURSDAY

ETHAN KHLOR

Corporate Partnerships Manager
Florida Citrus Sports

Ethan Klohr was born and raised in the Central Florida area, growing up in Clermont and going to school in Gainesville at the University of Florida. Graduating in 2019 with a degree in Sport Management, he did a few internships in college and post-grad in hospitality and sports (including a summer internship at the Loews Portofino Bay Hotel on the Recreation team).

Currently, he works full-time at Florida Citrus Sports as the Corporate Partnerships Manager where he has played a vital role in several world-class events held at Camping World Stadium and around the country, including the annual Pop-Tarts Bowl and Cheez-It Citrus Bowl, Florida Blue Florida Classic, Camping World Kickoff, and FC Series.

In his free time, he loves listening to music and plays drums in an alternative rock band, loves staying active and playing sports, and loves supporting his favorite pro (Rays, Bucs, Magic, Lightning) and college (Gators) teams.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Describe the nature of the event industry.
- Describe the nature of event management.
- Identify resources needed for an event.
- Identify factors affecting attendee satisfaction with events.
- Identify risks to successful event execution.
- Describe current issues and trends in the hospitality and tourism industry.

MY NOTES

THURSDAY

NICOLE WILLS

Senior Editor, Discover Universal
Parks & Resort Blog

Nicole Wills is the Senior Editor for the Discover Universal Parks & Resort Blog. A graduate of the University of Central Florida and University of Florida, she has experience in content strategy, brand storytelling, and project management. Previously, she worked in higher education marketing for UCF's College of Arts and Humanities and on the agency side of the industry. When she isn't working, she's usually writing, watching a movie, or writing about watching a movie for her Substack newsletter, Girl at the Movies.



What is the most interesting fact you've learned so far?
Share it with @decainc and use **#DECASEM**.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Describe factors used by businesses to position corporate brands.
- Explain the use of storytelling in marketing.
- Describe the nature of copy strategies.

THURSDAY

STEPHEN KUBIAK

Head of Social Strategy and Content,
Universal Destinations and Experiences

Stephen Kubiak is Head of Social Strategy and Content for Universal Destinations and Experiences. In his role, he manages the social teams for Universal Orlando Resort and Universal Studios Hollywood and owned social media strategy for North America.

He has been with Universal since 2019 and previously worked for VISIT FLORIDA, CBS News, and the United States Air Force. He's a combat Veteran, Eagle Scout and father of three, who remembers when CityWalk was just a parking lot.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Explain the use of social media for digital marketing.
- Implement digital marketing campaign.
- Maintain day-to-day content on social platforms.
- Leverage social networks for customer engagement.
- Monitor user-generated content.
- Describe the role of customer voice in hospitality and tourism branding.

MY NOTES

FRIDAY

SWOOZIE

YouTube Personality

sWooZie is a filmmaker, storyteller and full-time YouTuber whose videos have earned over a billion views across the world. By blending cinematic storytelling, humor and authenticity, he built a personal brand that resonates across generations and platforms. His content shares lessons on creativity, branding and building a career through storytelling.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Explain the nature of effective communications.
- Determine personal vision.
- Explain the concept of “product” in marketing communications.
- Explain the use of video/images for digital marketing.
- Demonstrate appropriate creativity.

FRIDAY

ERIN MURPHY

Feature Producer, American
Football | EA Sports

Erin Murphy is a Feature Producer at EA Sports with over five years of experience across mobile quality verification, brand marketing, and development. She currently leads all in-game messaging for Madden NFL and College Football, helping connect players to live football content and experiences.

Erin holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Ave Maria University. She is also involved in coaching for Special Olympics and enjoys playing and watching sports.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Assess personal interests and skills needed for success in business.
- Explain the nature of corporate branding.
- Identify company's brand promise.
- Implement digital marketing campaign.
- Employ communication styles appropriate to target audience.

MY NOTES

FRIDAY

KATE THOMAS

Senior Director, Resorts Marketing
Universal Orlando Resort

Kate Thomas is the Senior Director of Marketing at Universal Orlando Resort, where she is responsible for developing brand strategy and marketing programs designed to increase hotel demand and ensure guests have an elevated and seamless experience while visiting the world-class entertainment destination.

Kate began her career at the front desk of Loews Royal Pacific Resort in 2002, during college. Over the past 20+ years, her career has held various roles in several hotel companies in the areas of Guest Service Operations, Human Resources Recruitment, Executive Administration and Marketing. Throughout this time, she has had the privilege of opening 10 hotels and countless new guest experiences, including digital transformation and immersive entertainment activations, and participating in global advisory boards to help evolve the way the hotel industry approaches marketing and sales initiatives.



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Explain the nature of destination marketing.
- Describe factors affecting travel and tourism marketing.
- Describe reasons that people choose destinations.
- Describe factors influencing customer willingness to travel to a destination.

MY NOTES

FRIDAY

FREDDY FLYNN

Sr. Director of Youth & Event Sales
Universal Orlando Resort

Freddy Flynn is known as the Whatcha Why Guy — a coach who helps college students and young professionals discover their purpose and organizations create true alignment.



For 22 years, he has coached sales and leadership professionals in the highly competitive Orlando convention market. Over that time, Freddy discovered that success at school, on teams, and in organizations comes down to two simple daily questions:

“What’s important to them?” ...because real connection begins with understanding what others are trying to accomplish.

And, “Why’s it important to you?” ...a reminder that purpose must always guide our actions.

These two questions are the heart of Freddy’s talks: “What’s Important...to You?”

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Identify ways to segment hospitality and tourism markets.
- Determine event-related activities to engage participants.
- Enlist others in working toward a shared vision.
- Describe connections between company actions and results.

MY NOTES

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