



## *From the Dean's Desk*

UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management has more than 10,200 alumni and from that group of hospitality leaders, 14 have stepped up to volunteer to serve on the **Dean's Alumni Advisory Board (DAAB)**. The 47<sup>th</sup> *communique From the Dean's Desk* introduces you to the **DAAB**. This group of alumni is making an impact across many facets of the hospitality industry from being entrepreneurs in their own businesses to holding unique positions created to match their skills.

Founded in 2019, the DAAB focus on student experience through direct connection with students, as a resource for faculty, and in an advisory capacity with the Rosen College Executive Council. This group makes times to engage with students in their classes and during P.R.E.P. Connect conversation and internship lecture series. Many of them have also taken on the role of mentoring students to usher them through the challenges of finding the right path in their careers and lives.

The newest board member is **Kennon Adkinson '08**, Senior Catering Manager for the largest Sonny's BBQ franchise group in the chain. He also holds the very important role of "Chief Kindness Officer" for the corporation. For insights into entrepreneurship, **David Buckalew '05**, Owner, Buckalew Hospitality, **Jason Raimondi '00**, President/Founder, JOR Hospitality Solutions, **Dennis Levy '10**, Owner, Levy Hospitality and **Kristin Wilson '07**, Owner, Our DJ Rocks and My Photobooth Rocks, can all deliver varied information on events, managing luxury brands, synergy of various departments and personnel and bringing the tunes and the pics to the party.

The brother and sister board members **Brittany Manzie '09**, Corporate Reputation Management Attachè, Paramount Hospitality Group and **Marco Manzie, Jr. '11**, VP of Business Development, Paramount Hospitality Group, grew up in the lodging business, and know what it's like to work a variety of jobs to move up the ladder. **Shamir Kanji '07**, VP Investments, Xenia Hotels & Resorts and **Francesco Spinelli '15**, Sales Manager, The Breakers Palm Beach, are also in lodging; one can speak to the financial side of the business and the other about luxury brands.

Then there's **Rick Powell '10**, Owner/Operator, Chick-fil-A -Mt. Dora, who works around some of America's favorite chicken sandwiches, and can address what it's like to work in an industry that has made a science out of customer service. **Emily Smith '13**, Florida Director for Sales and Events for Tavern Restaurant Group, is also on the food and beverage career path, and on the events and catering side as well. **Steve Cokkinias '18MS**, Sr. VP Market Development, FMGLearning, took his hospitality knowledge into financial planning, a very people-centric business that's all about building relationships. He can share insights on working outside the traditional hospitality industry. **Alexis Johnson '05, '10MS**, Executive Director, USTA Florida Foundation, uses her two degrees in sports, taking a swing for the courts of the largest tennis association in the world. Last but not least there's **Dominique Greco '11**, Nighttime Economy Manager, City of Orlando. What does the nighttime economy manager do? In her job, Greco manages relationships for bars, clubs and entertainment venues, all businesses that operate after dark, in a role that was created specifically for her expertise in hospitality. You may read the complete biographies of the DAAB members [HERE!](#)

The DAAB meets formally two to four times a year, but Rosen College can count on them on numerous occasions to make time for the future leaders of the hospitality industry who may one day be working alongside them. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a board member or want to refer an alumni to join, please reach out Susan Boucher, Alumni Engagement Officer for UCF Rosen College at [susan.boucher@ucf.edu](mailto:susan.boucher@ucf.edu). We are extremely proud of all our alumni and grateful that they are willing to give back of their time, their talents and their treasures.

Charge On!



*Youcheng Wang*

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UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management

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Rosen College of Hospitality Management

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