ICCFA UNIVERSITY

2024 College Program

July 19–24
Emory Conference Center Hotel
Atlanta, GA



iccfa.com/university



Emory Conference Center Hotel at Emory University

1615 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30329
Phone: 404.712.6000
Toll Free: 1.800.933.6679
Fax: 404.712.6025

Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, ample meeting space, conference dining facilities, and well-appointed guestrooms, the Emory Conference Center Hotel is an all-inclusive venue that will provide the perfect backdrop for learning from the best in deathcare, connecting with colleagues from every area of the cemetery, cremation, and funeral service profession, and making the lifetime friendships that are the hallmark of the ICCFA University experience.

Room rate: $169/night

Secure your spot and reserve your hotel room at the 2024 ICCFA University today at *iccfa.com/university*



Chancellor's Letter

I have had the pleasure of seeing the University from all sides, first attending and graduating, then becoming a professor in several colleges, serving as dean of the College of Land Management & Grounds Operations for five years, and today I am honored to return as your ICCFA University Chancellor.

Why is the ICCFA University so life-changing and one of the most revered educational programs in our profession? The program is more than just a training seminar or conference—it is an EXPERIENCE. The experience starts from the moment you arrive and actually continues for the rest of your career. The professors and fellow students you share the week with will become lasting friends. The memorable conversations with fellow students during meals are enlightening. Everything you learn will alter the lens through which you view the profession from that point forward. This is a situation where the whole is much more than the sum of its parts.

ICCFA University boasts eight colleges in tune with our profession today:

- College of 21st Century Services – Dean Glenda Stansbury
- College of Cremation Services – Dean Clift Dempsey, CCrE, CCFE
- College of Hospitality & Customer Experience – Dean John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE
- College of Land Management & Grounds Operations – Dean Gino Merendino
- College of Leadership, Management & Administration – Dean Gary Freytag, CCFE
- College of Technology - Dean Nick Timpe, CSE
- J. Asher Neel College of Sales & Marketing – Dean Daniel Thomas
- Todd Van Beck College of Funeral Home Management – Dean Mathew Forastiere
- School of Graduate Studies - Dean Robbie Pape, CCFE

The ICCFA University returns to the Emory Conference Center Hotel at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. With state-of-the-art meeting rooms, excellent audio/visual technology, and fantastic dining spaces, the Emory Conference Center is a perfect location for the ICCFA University.

The ICCFA University is the ultimate educational opportunity in our profession. Everyone involved in the University is proud to continue this one-of-a-kind experience by which thousands have already enriched themselves, their firms, and ultimately their customers through superior, relevant and contemporary service. I encourage you to enroll in the 2024 session of the "U" to begin, or continue, your journey of professional development.

Jeff Kidwiler, CCE, CSE
ICCFA University Chancellor



All about the U

ICCFA University is a one-of-a-kind program designed by top experts in the cemetery, cremation, and funeral service profession. It offers a unique blend of intensive, practical classroom training and continual informal idea-sharing.

Quality Education

With on-campus housing and dining, ICCFAU offers a unique learning environment. Its eight colleges cover every area of management and operations, and classes are continually updated to include the latest innovations and techniques. Courses combine proven business theory with practical operational instruction, and the staff encourage ongoing participation and interaction.

Experienced Faculty

ICCFAU classes are led by top cemetery, cremation, and funeral service professionals. You'll receive practical, proven instruction from colleagues selected for their firsthand experience and knowledge of the daily challenges you face in your job. For a complete listing of faculty, see page 41.

Recreation & Networking

Students say one of the most valuable parts of ICCFAU is the opportunity to share ideas and fellowship with colleagues from every area of the cemetery, cremation, and funeral service profession.

Students from all nine colleges come together several times each day for breaks and to share. In the evenings, you can relax with fellow students in the lounge areas. Saturday is Student Night with an evening of fun and trivia. At the Sports Night on Monday, you'll find a good-natured rivalry among the students from all eight of the colleges.

Registration Procedures & Fees

Registration forms may be found on pages 45 and 46. Class sizes are limited and are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Registrations must be received by July 10. After this date, registration will be on-site only. Students whose registrations are received by June 21 will have their names included in the student directory.

Fees include all classroom training, materials and three meals a day starting with dinner on Friday and ending with breakfast on Wednesday, as well as refreshments during breaks and at the Sports Night on Monday.

Accommodations

The ICCFA discounted room rate is just $169 per night at the Emory Conference Center Hotel at Emory University. Students should make their own reservations. See page 2 for details.

Transportation

The closest airport to the Emory Conference Center Hotel at Emory University is Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (ATL).

FAQs

Who is eligible to attend ICCFAU?
ICCFA University is open to employees of all cemeteries, funeral homes, crematories, supplier companies, and related businesses. Prior college attendance is not required. In general, it is designed for students who are:

- Company owners and chief executive officers
- Managers seeking to develop additional skills and knowledge in order to improve their techniques and operations
- Managers who are interested in moving into new areas of responsibility
- Managers new to the cemetery and funeral service profession
- Staff interested in advancing into management positions
- Staff interested in improving their skills to better serve their employers and their client families
- Suppliers who want to network and gain a better understanding of their clients' challenges

How does the four-year undergraduate curriculum work?
The ICCFA University is held for five days each July. Undergraduate students enroll in one of the University's eight colleges and spend the entire five days learning about that area of the profession. Students who complete four colleges become ICCFAU graduates.

Do I have to attend for four years?
No. Some students enroll for one or two years, attending just those colleges that are most relevant to their career. However, many students do choose to go on to study for four years or more to broaden the scope of their knowledge.

Can I earn CE credits and certification points at ICCFAU?
Yes. Funeral directors can earn up to 25 CE credits, pending individual state approval. Please note that due to onerous and/or expensive filing requirements, the ICCFA no longer applies for continuing education credits in Pennsylvania or Virginia. ICCFA members applying for the Certified Cemetery Executive, Certified Funeral Executive, Certified Cemetery Funeral Executive, Certified Cremation Executive and/or Certified Supplier Executive designations through the association's certification program will earn a total of 18 points toward certification upon completion of each college.

What is the School of Graduate Studies?
The School of Graduate Studies allows ICCFAU graduates to return to the University and attend a specially curated course designed for C-Suite leaders and senior executives who are ready to drive collaboration, innovation, and growth while reaching the highest levels of leadership. This course is limited to 12 participants and will require an application to attend. Please visit iccfa.com/university to apply.

ICCFA Educational Foundation Scholarships

108 scholarships were awarded to the 2023 ICCFA University! The ICCFA thanks the following individuals and companies who contributed to the ICCFA Educational Foundation scholarship funds from 2023–2024:

Argent Trust Company
ASD - Answering Service for Directors
Batesville Casket Company Inc.
Carriage Services
ClearPoint Federal Bank & Trust
Coldspring
Gaffney Group
Bob Gordon Jr
Hillside Memorial Park & Mortuary
Homesteaders Life Company
Leaf Cremation
Live Oak Bank
Lotus Cremation
Matthews International
Memorial Classic, Inc.
Merendino Cemetery Care
Michigan Cemetery Association
Michigan Memorial FH/ Memorial Park
North Shore Memory Gardens Inc.
NorthStar Memorial Group
Park Lawn Corporation
Regions Bank
Roosevelt Investment Group
SCI/Dignity Memorial Fund
Adam J. Sheer
St. Hedwig Cemetery & Mausoleum
Vital Marketing, Inc. dba Crescent Memorial



College of 21st Century Services

Dean Glenda Stansbury, CFSP

How do you respond to a family who says, "We don't want a traditional funeral"? You'll learn how to go beyond tradition with innovative offerings and become certified as a funeral celebrant trained to provide meaningful alternatives to clergy-led services.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Student Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Celebrant Training

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

Celebrants offer an alternative to services provided by clergy for those families who are not affiliated with a church or who do not wish to have a traditional religious funeral service. They design services that are completely personal by incorporating those unique stories, songs, and experiences that defined the deceased. Celebrants schedule a special 'family time' meeting where the family can share memories, anecdotes and defining moments in the loved one's life. They then base the essence of the service on the remembrances of the family and encourage family and friends to participate. Celebrants develop a library of resources available for readings, music, ceremonies, and personal touches. They consult with the family to help them choose elements of the service that reflect their loved one. They are bound by a Code of Ethics for complete confidentiality in all dealings with the family.

Becoming a Certified Celebrant

After completing this college, students will be certified as celebrants. The training for celebrants as established by the InSight Institute seeks to provide the most comprehensive and sensitive training available for people who wish to develop this as a profession or to add to their current job description. It is important that a family knows they are being served by someone who understands the process and is prepared to offer the very best funeral possible.

What Does This Service Cost Families?

The celebrant fee is usually higher than the fees charged by clergy. They can range widely across the country from $200 to more than $800, depending on type of service, location, travel and other expenses. A celebrant spends approximately 10 hours preparing for each service, as well as the expenses of training and maintaining a resource library.

What is The InSight Institute?

The InSight Institute has one mission: helping people help people. This has evolved over

the years, expanding from grief care books and seminars to include celebrant training and certification. Founder Doug Manning is a best-selling author, sought after speaker and a grief expert relied on by the media. His first book, A Minister Speaks About Funerals, was self-published in 1978, and in 1979, he wrote his best-selling book, Don't Take My Grief Away From Me. In 1983, Manning wrote When Love Gets Tough: The Nursing Home Decision. With the success of that book, he made the commitment to change careers and founded InSight Books as his publishing and seminar company. InSight Books now publishes more than 40 products by Manning and select authors. The InSight Institute is the training arm of the company.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night - Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Celebrant Training (continued)

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP; Kathy Burns

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Essentials of Public Speaking Basics (Pt I)

Carol Little

- What is a presentation?
- Principles of liking

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Essentials of Public Speaking Basics (Pt II)

Carol Little

- Principles of authenticity
- Body talk

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Essentials of Public Speaking Basics (Pt III)

Carol Little

- Vocal techniques
- Group presentations and feedback

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Essentials of Public Speaking Basics (Pt IV)

Carol Little

- Practice makes permanent

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Summary Panel/ Q&A Best Practices with Firms Utilizing Celebrants

Glenda Stansbury, CFSP

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate









Save the Date

October 15-17, 2024
St. Anthony Hotel
San Antonio, TX
iccfa.com/fall



ICCFA Leadership Summit



College of Cremation Services

Dean Clift Dempsey, CCrE, CCFE

Cremation doesn't have to mean "no service" or "no memorialization." You'll discover how to better serve families, improve cremation operations, and increase your company's cremation-related revenues. You'll also earn three types of certifications: operator, administrator, and arranger.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Student Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Clift Dempsey, CCrE, CCFE

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Operator Certification- All-Day

Poul Lemasters, Esq.; Larry Stuart Jr.

In this training session, you'll learn how to operate a crematory retort properly and effectively and limit the liability for you and your company. This extensive training curriculum includes: · Explanation of professional & incinerator terminology · Discussion on the principles of combustion and incinerator criteria & design · In-depth look at the basics of operating cremation equipment and their general maintenance and how to troubleshoot common problems · Overview of cremation and its impact on the environment · Examples of standard crematory forms and the importance of record keeping · Proper steps for identification · Exposure control, and liability concerns and risk management.

10:30 AM–11:00 PM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Operator Curriculum (continued)

Poul Lemasters, Esq.; Larry Stuart Jr.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Operator Curriculum (continued)

Poul Lemasters, Esq.; Larry Stuart Jr.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Operator Curriculum (continued)

Poul Lemasters, Esq.; Larry Stuart Jr.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night - Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Hospice Relationships

Pierce Dempsey

Don't miss out on your funeral home's biggest referral network! By the end of this session, you will be able to create and maintain a successful hospice program using your company's current resources. Pierce will teach you the ins and outs of hospice and how to create a program from scratch.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

What Will and Will Not Work in 2024 for Getting More Cases

Welton Hong

It's common knowledge that many funeral homeowners and directors are still struggling to understand internet marketing and how to leverage its possibilities. Welton Hong breaks down the fundamentals of online marketing and why certain techniques work better than others, depending on what you want to accomplish. Need to drive at-needs? Search optimization and pay-per-click advertising work wonders. For preneeds, social media is quite effective. For both, you need a website that converts well, a pristine outline (driven by review quality and quantity), compatibility with mobile devices and plenty of high-grade content. You also need to be prepared to adjust your plans in tandem with the dynamic nature of online marketing. Funeral homes that stay up to date with the changes (and act on them) have a huge advantage in their local markets.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–5:00 PM

Bus Tour: Real World Look at All Aspects of Cremation Providers

Clift Dempsey, CCFE; Chad Eubanks

This tour will provide a real world look at all aspects of cremation, with a stop of Leaf Cremation to tour their crematory and cemetery grounds, and Arlington Memorial Park to view the impressive cremation memorization they have installed at their cemetery.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Administrator Curriculum: Cremation & Crematory Risk Management: Go Ahead. Don't Bother. I Dare You!

Jim Starks, CFuE, CCrE

Jim Starks is President of J. Starks Consulting, consultants in the deathcare profession in funeral home & cremation risk management. Jim will wow you with a riveting, real world presentation on operations and compliance. Failure to properly manage the risk of providing cremation services and/or operating a crematory is an invitation for disaster.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

The Art and Science of Converting the Cremation Price Shopper

Nicki Wiedeman, CSE

It's a competitive world out there in death care when it comes to price shoppers. Death Care Professionals often presume consumers are interested in cremation because of price. In this course we will we learn that we can't make assumptions. We will discover the art of conversing with a cremation consumer. There is also the science behind the discussion. Certain technical elements must be included in your chat. The phone is our friend if we approach the cremation consumer in the right way.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Reducing Your Liability to Add to Your Bottom Line

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

This seminar will focus on the Cremation Authorization Form and educate the arranger on why each section is critical. Participants will not only learn the importance of each section and

learn how to explain the sections to the family. There will also be examples of lawsuits that have cost providers millions.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Pet Cremation

Lauren Blevins, CCFE

Figuring out which way to begin when starting a pet cremation program can be difficult. Lauren will share some examples of do's and do nots from experience of starting a pet program with a funeral home as backbone. We will also discuss how running the successful pet program can have positive effects on your funeral home or crematory.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Cremation Myths Debunked

Néctar Ramírez

So many families who choose cremation are selecting no services. There is a misunderstanding of the cremation consumer, which is leading to an abundance of direct cremation policies In this module we will take a deep dive into the psychology of the cremation consumer and gain a better understanding of their needs and wants. With that understanding we will tailor our presentation of products and services to maximize the probability of a service, higher policy value and family satisfaction.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Know Your Cremation Consumer

Doug Gober

Doug Gober is one of our industry's most motivational speakers. He will share ground-breaking research on what today's cremation consumers are looking for and what you can do to meet and beat their expectations.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

The Sky's the Limit: Getting Creative with Cremation Families

Angelique Simpson

Cremation continues to grow as the choice for many families. As funeral professionals, we need to become experts in addressing this growing preference. This seminar is designed to provide you with inspiration and best practices to understand today's consumer and serve the needs of cremation families, from the initial phone inquiry to the details of a memorable life celebration.

You will learn to:

- Adapt and even thrive in change
- Understand the values and consumer motivations of five generations of families
- Communicate the value of your services
- Engage callers through discovery questions
- Partner with the family to create unique ceremonies

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

The End of Direct Cremation and Why it Matters

Angelique Simpson

In this provocative session we will look at what could be the end of how we see direct cremation. We will discuss "the how and why" we got to this place where we are now with cremation. What are the true costs of cremation, and does it really matter to our bottom line? This discussion is about how we present options to families so that they can make an informed decision. It is also about how we, the funeral service professionals, think about families that choose cremation and how we can best help them during this difficult time. The questions we ask, and then answers we get are only a small part of the real picture. In this session, we will break it down into simple "can do" bite sizes so that we can better serve those who need us most.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Course Wrap-Up

Clift Dempsey, CCrE, CCFE; Jim Starks, CFuE, CCrE

This open forum will revisit areas of importance that were covered in the three certification designations this week allowing students to:

- Share their problems and solutions
- Clarify topics covered
- Ask questions on implementation
- Build future networking with fellow students and faculty
- Better understand what ICCFA has to offer for cremation

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate









College of Hospitality & Customer Experience

Dean John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE

The College of Hospitality & Customer Experience is designed to give students a foundation in funeral home/cemetery hospitality and catering management. Topics range from basic event planning to interpreting financial budgets, leadership, and catering team management.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

How CX Strategy Helps Scale Company Growth

John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE

While this is a newer college at ICCFAU, the concept of being hospitable has a long and rich tradition in and out of funeral service. Historic names like Marriott, Hilton, and Ritz have made hospitality and customer service the foundation of their empires. In this kick-off class, John Bolton will walk students through the foundations of hospitality in the funeral industry and define the importance of creating an experience for the families you serve.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

A Beginner's Guide to Building World Class Hospitality

Darin Drabing

So you want to entertain? Seems like everyone's doing it! You've read the articles about post-service receptions, buffet lines, hors d'oeuvres during visitations, and guests drinking beer, wine, and cocktails in the lobby? You're concerned your business is falling behind. You don't have any extra space and you can't afford to build a new building, but how do you catch up, where do you start, and is it even something you should do? Relax. You can do this and we can help. Join us for a look at the basics required to join the 'party'. In this interactive session, we will probe the important issues, challenge long held beliefs, and find creative answers to the questions that are required to move your business to the next level.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Who Are You Serving: Building the Personas

John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE; Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

Customers are now driving the business bus and we as an industry are lagging behind. Everything about the traditional business model is changing due to the demand of customers. Customers have more information at their fingertips and have a true sense of how they want to celebrate a life. In this session, John Bolton and Lori Salberg Bolton will outline the key strategies for developing a successful customer experience model and how these strategies should drive your hospitality model moving forward.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

CX Journey

Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

Through our rich history of service, we have developed a picture of who we serve in our minds but, more and more, our customers are not always who we think they are. Are we targeting the right people in our businesses? Who are the consumers that want a different kind of funeral service including hospitality? Lori Salberg Bolton will walk you through developing customer personas and how you can relate those personas to growing your hospitality business.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night – Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

CX Journey Workshop

Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

Since the Customer Journey is so important in driving revenue through Customer Experience, Lori will lead a hands-on workshop so students can actually create a customer journey specific to their location and their customers. By the end of the workshop, students will be able to take the information back to their operations and lead a journey workshop for their staff.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Beyond the Service and Where to Begin

Lauren Blevins, CCFE, CPLP

As we progress inside our shifting industry that's moving toward a hospitality mindset, how do we begin? Implementing a new way of doing business can be the most challenging part of the process from catering to specialized services. Lauren Blevins will provide clear how-to steps and share how she started as well as what she learned from some of her winning solutions and ideas that flopped. Embracing change will not only affect our personal lives but can have a profound impact on our businesses if our teams believe in it.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Creating a WOW for Your Families

John Gouch Jr.

No event center? No funeral home? No formal reception area? NO PROBLEM! In this informative and interactive class, learn how we take our graveside services to another level. We will discuss the idea behind graveside catering, equipment needed for a successful program, and how the concept helps generate leads for future business.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Hospitality Workshop

Lauren Blevins, CCFE, CPLP;
John Gouch Jr.

These two experienced experts will lead students through a hands-on workshop to outline and present an actual food and beverage event for their cemetery or funeral home. Students will pick from a variety of catering events so Lauren Blevins and John Gouch Jr. can walk them through the planning, budgeting, and implement phase of each event.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Risk Management

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

Consumers demand more and more from businesses and it is no different in deathcare. Providing a funeral is just the first step. As providers today, we are offering more from catering and receptions, to travel, and even lodging. However, offering all these services comes with an entirely new set of risks. Do you need a license to serve food? If alcohol is available, then who is responsible? Does your insurance cover events outside of the funeral? Not knowing or understanding these as well as many more issues could cost you more than a bad review on Yelp!

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Let's Do CX!

Clift Dempsey, CCFE, CCrE

Providing exceptional customer service is one thing, but what about exceptional customer experiences? During this session, we will explore different types of experiences for the cremation customer and follow a step-by-step process on how to properly explain those options. If you want to enhance your cremation offerings, increase revenue and be the #1 cremation expert in your area, this is for you.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Employee Engagement

Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

Employee engagement can be defined as the extent to which employees feel committed and connected to their employer and to the work that they do. It is linked to terms like job satisfaction and employee morale. Employee engagement impacts and is impacted by overall well-being and happiness. Engaged employees care about their work and company. Why is this important?

It is estimated that the employee engagement rate costs US employers $500 billion per year. In 2023, US Employee Engagement stood at 33%. That means 67% or a staggering 2/3 of employees are not engaged. In fact, job hiring sites like Monster and Indeed estimate that 95% of workers are looking for a new job. Additionally, 45% of employees have side hustles to earn more money or fulfill other interests.

It is critical that your business has a dedicated strategy for employee engagement to increase performance and retention, saving on the heavy costs of re-hiring and training. In this course we will explore one strategic plan for developing and maintaining employee engagement. You will understand the components of Growth, Appreciation, Measurement, and Execution to design a unique Employee Engagement GAME plan for your organization. By the end of this session, you will have an outline of your GAME plan along with a detailed strategy for at least one of the components.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Technology's Role in CX

Nick Timpe, CSE

It's no secret that in today's world, technology plays a defining role in the customer's experience. How does this translate to our profession? Can we transform our processes and adapt our people to serve families in a digital way? Will we miss out on those critical moments of service that have been the hallmark of what we do? The data - and the world around us - shows that the modern consumer has adapted to digital. In this session we will review examples and principles from leading firms to see how technology can be applied into funeral service to transform the experience of the families in our care.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Successful Cemetery Events 101

Phil Zehms

Location events can go far beyond our traditional Memorial Day or Christmas Candlelight services. Phil Zehms will walk you through the basics of putting together a successful community event, from creative idea generation, setting a budget, creating timelines, event promotion, staffing, event follow up and ROI.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Cemetery Event Workshop

Phil Zehms

In this hands-on workshop, students will actually come up with a creative event idea, set a budget, plan the event, and generate an ROI statement to justify the event. When they return to their location, they will have a specific program ready to go!

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Elevate CX: Developing Exceptional Customer Experiences

Lawrence W. Michael

Join us for an enriching seminar, "ElevateCX," where we delve into the intricacies of customer service excellence in the cemetery and funeral profession. Explore the power of a compelling Customer Service Value Statement, defining our commitment to enhancing every customer interaction. Uncover the principles of our Customer Bill of Rights, establishing the "Always and Nevers" in words and actions. Learn to set service standards, identify defects, and create opportunities to WOW customers. This seminar is a roadmap to transform your customer service approach, ensuring lasting impressions and building enduring customer relationships. ElevateCX is not just a seminar; it's a journey towards delivering unparalleled customer satisfaction.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Putting it all Together: Your Recipe for Success

John Bolton, CCE, CCrE, CSE, CXE; Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

John Bolton and Lori Salberg Bolton will put the icing on the cake to help students develop a strategic CX plan and how the resulting programs from that plan will create a top-notch hospitality program.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Building Success from the Ground Up

Doug Gober

If you were starting over beginning with a blank sheet of paper, a big pile of money, and no preconceptions, what kind of business would you design to serve 21st century funeral customers? How would it compare to the funeral home/cemetery of today? Doug Gober will look at all the elements that would make up the new funeral and cemetery business, including facilities, staffing, products, and services plus the capital required to put it all in place. He will examine what we can learn from the funeral home or cemetery of tomorrow and how we can put it to work in our businesses today.

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate





College of Land Management & Grounds Operations

Dean Gino Merendino

Exceptional cemetery service starts with grounds and operations department. Without effective land management and a commitment to an attractive, well-maintained property, there will be no sales or service. Attendees will learn how their grounds management team can succeed and continuously improve internments, landscaping, buildings, grounds maintenance, and exceptional client experience and satisfaction.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Gino Merendino

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Exceptional Cemetery Maintenance – Experience the Difference!

Gino Merendino

A cemetery's maintenance operations, procedures, and resulting outcomes are the defining experiences for families that enter our gates. What is exceptional cemetery maintenance and why does it matter? We'll kick off our week together with high energy and a dynamic look at what we are doing to enable meaningful experiences at our cemeteries and share collective ideas on how to improve our efforts.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Creating a Committal Service that Everybody Talks About

John Gouch, Jr.

Successful cemeteries create great community events that bring visitors into the cemetery and have them leaving in awe. John Gouch Jr.'s cemetery has that experience designed into every committal service performed. He will share his step-by-step process so you can exceed customer expectations and create a buzz in your community for every funeral you service.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:30 PM

OSHA Panel Discussion

Jeff Kidwiler, CCE, CSE; Poul Lemasters, Esq.; Gino Merendino

Employee safety is critical, especially for those who work on cemetery properties. This panel

goes beyond compliance and focuses on the health and safety of employees in the age of pandemics, expensive workers compensation and lawsuits.

3:00 PM –3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Applying Technology to Cemetery Operations

Nick Timpe, CSE

Smooth cemetery grounds operations are critical to providing a high level of service and care to families. In this session we will explore the intersection of operations and technology. Equipping and empowering team members with the right technology can streamline work orders, automate communication across teams, make records and maps accessible from the field, enable staff to serve families on the fly, provide accountability for work quality, ensure follow-up to the families in our care, and more. We will review practical steps that you can take to leverage technology for your firm.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night – Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

6:30 AM–7:15 AM

Breakfast

7:15 AM–11:15 AM

Train the Trainer

Learn how to share your knowledge and experience so your staff can be as proficient as you are in operating equipment. Utilizing a backhoe, this class will use the same master of motion principle used by Michelangelo and Leonard da Vinci to minimize training time for your employees.

11:15 AM–12:00 PM

Cemetery Tour

Chad Eubanks and Gino Merendino

Students will take a tour of the beautiful Arlington Memorial Park Cemetery which has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community, while maintaining its small-town charm. The picturesque grounds cover 122 acres of rolling hills, mature trees, and two sparkling lakes. It is truly breathtaking.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Cemetery Sustainable Practices

Dave Barnett

For almost three decades, Dave Barnett oversaw Mount Auburn Cemetery's transition toward more environmentally friendly practices in landscape design and maintenance – from lawns to gardens to trees, including an almost zero-waste landscape materials recycling program. This has attracted many new purchasers of interment space – including those interested in green burials. Barnett will share examples of how the Cemetery has transformed turf maintenance and many other practices to reduce both costs and carbon footprint – to the benefit of both Mount Auburn and the globe.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Creative Cemetery Development

Dave Barnett

In 1990, Mount Auburn Cemetery management thought they would be out of burial space in 10 years, but a comprehensive master planning process resulted in a number of non-traditional concepts for future development of new interment and memorialization space for both casket and cremation. Now more than 30 years later, Mount Auburn continues to create new interment space to meet ambitious annual revenue goals by sustaining the innovative development of a diverse mix of new inventory that responds to evolving client interest and trends while at the same time ensures that preservation and enhancement of the landscape takes precedence. Dave Barnett will share examples of both large-scale and small-scale projects, many with very little development cost, that can be adapted to cemeteries of all sizes and budgets.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Healing Grief

Phil Zehms

Lack of compassion is usually caused by a lack of understanding. Learning more about grief and bereavement allows us to be more empathetic.

In this session, we will explore the journey of grief. Discover the ways in which our mourning traditions emerged, how our profession has evolved, and the ways in which we can assist our families in moving toward healing.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Sustainable Tree Care Practices for Cemetery Landscapes

Doak Morasco

From trees and songbirds to turfgrass and flowering plants, cemetery grounds evoke feelings of peace, place, and purpose. Yet, caring for these landscapes requires thoughtful planning and technical know-how. In this session, we'll share best management practices that promote healthy trees and sustainable landscapes. We'll also discuss how "being green" relates to today's consumer and how you can promote your "green assets" to attract new customers. Takeaways include:

- Tree care Best Management Practices that promote safe, healthy, and sustainable landscapes.
- The environmental and economic benefits of a healthy tree canopy.
- How green space contributes to quality of life, including health and overall wellbeing.
- Opportunities and threats to healthy trees and landscapes.
- Ways to leverage and promote your landscape to grow your business.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Caring for Heritage: Lessons from Managing Veteran Trees at a Historical Memorial Park

Josh Gevertz

As modern-day stewards of historic cemeteries, landscape maintenance is often a balance between providing quality service to families in the present while also conserving and restoring assets from the past. The trees of old memorial parks are an important but challenging part of this long-term management, as they may significantly define the character and heritage value of the landscape, while also potentially posing serious hazards as aging living beings in our parks. In this session, Cypress Lawn's Arboretum Director will share lessons and strategies in caring for old, veteran trees throughout this 132-year-old cemetery of the San Francisco Bay Area. Topics of discussion will include tree risk assessment, methods of proactive tree service, wood reclamation, and the hopeful story of companion tree planting. Furthermore, this session will showcase the potential for tree storytelling, the reimagining of memorial parks as "outdoor museums" and leveraging the vision of cemeteries as meaningful places of trees.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Modern Cemetery Development

Gary Freytag, CCFE

Customer needs continue to evolve and cemeteries must adapt their product offerings to meet these preferences. Cemeteries must also balance aesthetics with density and revenue generation. Gary Freytag has traveled extensively through North America to see the most effective design concepts in a variety of markets. He will share Spring Grove's long-term approach to cemetery development and how its approach has evolved to embrace several common principles that appeal to the needs of the cremation customer.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Cremation: Changing the Face of Traditional Memorialization

Erin Schwanitz-Vogt

In this presentation, Erin Schwanitz-Vogt, Vice President of Memorial Sales at Coldspring, explores the imperative of promoting permanent memorials in the face of the surging popularity of cremation in the United States. With projections indicating that 80% of Americans will choose cremation by 2035, Schwanitz-Vogt underscores the need for cemetery professionals to connect with families and educate them on the enduring benefits of permanent memorization. The overview emphasizes the healing, tradition-honoring, legacy-establishing, and community-building aspects of permanent memorials, advocating for a thoughtful, neutral approach in discussions with families. The presentation also delves into creative space utilization, understanding the impact of a well-maintained and cared for property, the importance of embracing community engagement strategies, and the power of building strong relationships with funeral

directors to ensure comprehensive support for grieving families. Ultimately, the presentation positions the promotion of permanent memorials as both an industry responsibility and a meaningful contribution to the well-being of communities.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Graveside Safety

Gino Merendino

Students will review OSHA regulations for excavating graves, cemetery hazards, and accident prevention. Students will receive a USB drive with documents on gravesite safety, which you can take back to train your entire maintenance staff to help fulfill your OSHA training requirements. The USB comes with a user guide, instructor notes, student handouts, and a quiz for completion certificates.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Cemetery Liability Issues

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

This session will address a broad range of potential liability issues related to cemeteries and land management. We'll examine risk and liability in a number of different contexts and from the perspective of various parties. The session will stress disclosures and procedures designed to prevent or mitigate liability.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Internal Relationships

Gary O'Sullivan, CCFE

How valuable is it to your organization to have all departments working in harmony? Some experts suggest it is extremely valuable not only to customer satisfaction, internally and externally, but to your bottom-line profitability. In this session you'll learn the keys to developing effective internal relationships to help you drive a positive, productive organization.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Wrap-Up

Jeff Kidwiler, CCE, CSE;
Gino Merendino

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate











College of Leadership, Management & Administration

Dean Gary Freytag, CCFE

The cemetery, cremation and funeral service profession is changing, and so are the skills needed to manage and lead effectively. Attendees will receive solid, relevant, results-focused training targeted at today's required core competencies.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Gary Freytag, CCFE

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Become a Leader Worth Following!

Darin Drabing

In this introductory session, we'll explore the many facets of leadership including the journey of an individual contributor to supervision, the skills necessary for the effective practice of management, and the artistry displayed in becoming a leader worth following. We will discover the motivations that drive us toward success and those that may stand in our way. We will learn to embrace the responsibilities of followership and to harness our energies and emotions into productive behaviors that can transform your employees and your organization.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Community Outreach: Setting Your Company Apart

Gary Freytag, CCFE

Are you doing everything you can to build your company's ties into the community? Is your organization the first one families think of in a time of need? Spring Grove Cemetery gets between 20,000 and 30,000 visitors per yar – for reasons other than funerals and burials. This course will explore the variety of ways Spring Grove builds its presence and positive awareness, including everything from grief programs, events and tours, to car shows, Segway's and Facebook.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

A Case Study in Leadership

Gary Freytag, CCFE

This course will challenge the class to take on a leadership crisis taken from real life events. Students will team up to recommend viable solutions to the CEO while dealing with human resource, legal, and operational repercussions.

This course will help evaluate and benchmark your leadership effectiveness and help you develop your leadership ability.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Beyond the Numbers

Bob Gordon, Jr., CCE

There is a lot more to managing and leading a successful team than just a title, its what you do. In this face-paced interactive program participants will review top tactics to increase their effectiveness and success. Both seasoned and new managers will gain strategies they can put into action right away.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night - Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Communication and the Art of Effective Feedback

Carol Little

We all know that powerful communication is essential to strong leadership but what is powerful communication and how can you effectively deliver feedback so your team will actually receive and benefit from it? Carol Little brings 15+ years of experience as a Certified Master Trainer and Public Speaker to these questions to help you improve the way you communicate with your team. In this workshop, she will discuss:

- The essential elements of feedback
- How, when, and where to deliver feedback
- How to address problems and get your team to buy into the solutions
- The "Feedback Sandwich"—What it is and how to serve it up

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

First Let's Kill All the Lawyers!

Gary Freytag, CCFE

How often do you wish you could take Shakespeare's advice before dealing with difficult employee situations? As an employer/manager, are you at wits end with HR matters disrupting day-to-day operations? Do you have an employee handbook? Are its policies and procedures helping or hindering you from dealing appropriately with bad behavior? Are you unknowingly undermining your company culture? As an employer/manager it's important to have a basic understanding of how to react when you are confronted with different HR situations. This interactive session will present HR scenarios that will help you to think on your feet and exercise prudent judgment while keeping you out of court.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Trust as a Manager

Ashley Freeman, MBA

New managers are typically promoted for their individual contributor skills, but six out of ten of them receive no formal training on how to manage people. In this session, we cover the most important and foundational interpersonal skill for a cohesive and productive team – building trust – with practical application tips you can apply to your team to enhance engagement and productivity.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Navigating Difficult Conversations

Ashley Freeman, MBA

We all have that one conversation we know we need to have but have been avoiding. This session is a call to action that provides practical tools for that conversation so that you can move forward successfully through it while diffusing defensiveness, resulting in enhanced relationships and improved communication in both your personal and professional life.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Leadership & Communication – Own it!

Robbie Pape, CCFE

Are you deliberate in how and what you communicate? During this session, Robbie Pape will help us become aware of our 'communication comfort zones' using the DISC Assessment. This session will provide you with communication basics, an understanding of the habits that hold us back, and the immense power that choice has in our lives both professionally and personally.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Our Greatest Assets

Mark Brown, Shawn Nicholson

We've all heard and believe the statement that "employees are a company's greatest asset". As managers and employers, are we doing the things to retain and develop those assets? Are we embracing our competitive advantage and providing the encouragement, incentives and opportunity for our employees to be an integral part of the company's mission?

This course will introduce you to the latest trends, best practices and tools to assist with developing a work culture that is conducive to achievement and engagement. Topics will include performance management, hiring practices, retention, morale and the importance of consistent policies and procedures.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Using Your Strengths to Prevent Burnout

Ashley Freeman, MBA

When was the last time you felt truly alive after work? In this session, you will define what your strengths are, learn how to apply them in your life and work, and understand research-based methods for using them to feel fulfilled and fueled even after the busiest and most draining days.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Crafting Your Career Purpose Statement

Ashley Freeman, MBA

Most of us have a loose understanding of our ideal career path, but what if you could clarify your career purpose into a single statement? This interactive and reflective session walks you through the components that make up a career purpose statement and leaves you with a draft statement to share and refine with colleagues and loved ones so that you can find more joy, fulfillment, and energy in your everyday career journey.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Funeral Home and Cemetery Accounting: Keys to Affecting Your Bottom Line

Bill Williams Jr.

Profit is all about increasing revenue and decreasing expenses but what are the standards against which you can benchmark yourself? How often does your company truly analyze its expenses? Do you sometimes wonder whether there are line items you should be taking a keen look at but are missing? In this session, we will examine critical expense items, including how to manage them, ideal ways to reduce them, and industry norms to benchmark against them.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Business Law: A Funeral Home and Cemetery Legal Outlook

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

As a manager, you are called upon to make many decisions but do you know if your decisions are legally sound? Are you aware of common hiring and firing legal issues and how to avoid them? Do you know how to handle HR issues so that you are paving the way for a good legal foundation versus creating a lawsuit? When it comes to recordkeeping, do you know what to document and what to avoid? Gain the knowledge, the legal knowledge, to understanding the legal risks, and, more importantly, the steps to avoid legal pitfalls that run with the day-to-day job of management. From customer complaints to demand letters, this will not only help cover the basics but it will also help CYA.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Your Marketing & Branding Mantra: Building Customer Loyalty

Doug Gober

When people hear your company's name, what thoughts or emotions are evoked? In this class, we will learn about how our actions and interactions can positively impact the development process of lasting customer loyalty. Doug Gober will pull together a variety of key branding considerations and apply them directly to cemeteries, crematories, and funeral homes. We will examine each potential point of customer contact within your business and delve into how each of these impact our existing and potential customers. Discover how this integrated branding concept can help you differentiate yourself in your marketplace.



3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Corporate Culture: How Strong Is Your Foundation?

Gary Freytag, CCFE

Corporate culture is difficult to define but critical to an organization pursuing excellence. How do organizations define and build a positive culture? Are you a "Me" or a "We" company? How does culture help guide every employee in their day-to-day decision making? This class will delve into the key elements of building a positive, self-sustaining culture that supports the business and improves employee engagement. We will examine how leaders through their decisions and actions can nurture or undermine culture.



4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception



Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Corporate Culture Continued / Best Practices / Q&A

Gary Freytag, CCFE



10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate



College of Technology

Dean Nick Timpe, CSE

The College of Technology will provide practical strategies for attendees to apply technology at their firms for improving operations and better serving their families.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Nick Timpe, CSE

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

New Technology in an Old Profession

Nick Timpe, CSE

Our profession is perhaps the oldest that exists – how can modern technology help better serve families, and what can I expect out of this school? This session will provide a roadmap for the coming week and provide real life examples of technology making the difference in the level of service provided to families. Students will share their learning goals for the week.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

People, Process, Technology: Solving the Right Problem

Jason Cavett

We have all heard it before - "Do you want to grow your organization? Increase your revenue? Drive new sales? Well, use XYZ Software and you will see results!" A piece of software, by itself, is just another get rich quick scheme and often results in organizational frustration, split fiefdoms of technology, and failure to achieve the desired goals. This session will cover an approach to organizational growth that creates a bed of solid rock on which to advance, grow, and expand. Rather than throwing technology at the problem or goal, you will walk away with a plan for developing an organizational environment where your tools support and enable your growth.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Embracing Change: Strategies for Helping Staff Continually Improve and Adapt to New Technology

Olga Piehler

As the rate of change and technological innovation continues to exponentially increase

in all aspects of our lives, it is imperative for leaders to become fluent navigators and facilitators of change. This course will cover a neuroscience perspective to change facilitation and the top reasons change gets stuck. Attendees will be provided with tools to help identify the most common types of resistance to change (external and internal) and techniques to overcome resistance for the adoption of change in a sustainable way. The course will also address the concept of unlearning and its role in change acquisition. Participants will learn how to incorporate unlearning goals into their change-design process to achieve desired outcomes.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Strategic Planning for IT Resources

Christina DiBari

How does a business, regardless of size or available resources, decide how to allocate their technology dollars? Every business has different initiatives and goals. In this class, we will talk about how to prioritize those IT projects and discuss a framework for your IT investments. We will focus on three key challenges that most businesses face: collaboration and document management, disaster recovery, and mobile solutions.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night - Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

21st Century Recordkeeping

Tim Kolasa, Nick Timpe, CSE

What can realistically be expected from technology when it comes to running your cemetery or funeral home? What should be pursued first? What can be done in-house and what should be purchased? This session will review off the shelf industry options for records systems, mapping solutions, report builders, as well as DIY tools for the same.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Customer Experience and Client Follow-up: Surveying for Results

Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

As our interactions with consumers change through the adoption of technology it is critical to maintain the high level of service and customer experience that marks our profession. In this class we will evaluate approaches and strategies for maintaining a high level of customer experience, survey for consumer feedback, and how to use that feedback to continue improving your organization.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Virtual Tours, Customer Surveys, and Reports Lab

Nick Timpe, CSE, Tim Kolasa, Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

This lab is a hands-on opportunity to build your own virtual tours, surveys, and reports. Students will be instructed on 3D filming technology for building virtual tours of their property and facilities. We will review the strategy and process of surveying customers, and how to report on that data.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Implementing and Managing Technological Innovation

Gary Freytag, CCFE

Competing in today's business environment requires constant innovation, but what does this look like from a management perspective, and how can you "manage up" to effect that change with your company's leadership? What kind of stats do your decision makers look at, and what influences their decisions? This class will examine justifying new investment, common implementation challenges, balancing the needs of people with systems, and the unintended consequences of technological innovation from a management perspective.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

What Will and Will Not Work in 2024 For Getting More Business

Welton Hong

It's common knowledge that many funeral homeowners and cemeterians are still struggling to understand internet marketing and how to leverage its possibilities. This class breaks down the fundamentals of online marketing and why certain techniques work better than others, depending on what you want to accomplish. Need to drive at-needs? Search optimization and pay-per-click advertising work wonders. For pre-need, social media is quite effective. For both, you need a website that converts well, a pristine online reputation (driven by review quality and quantity), compatibility with mobile devices and plenty of high-grade content. You also need to be prepared to adjust your plans in tandem with the dynamic nature of online marketing. Funeral homes and cemeteries that stay up to date with the changes (and act on them) have a huge advantage in their local markets.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Digital Workshop: Mastering Your Online Presence

Welton Hong

In this interactive lab session, dive deep into the practical side of digital marketing tailored for funeral homes and cemeteries. We will equip you with the skills and insights needed to effectively manage your Google Business Profile and craft compelling social media content aimed at generating valuable pre-need leads.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Why Digital First Impressions Matter: Also Known as, "You Spent $1MM on Your Cemetery Entrance but Your Neighbor's Kid Built Your Website"

Jason Cavett

As our culture continues to evolve through generational, regional, and societal changes, more people are getting their first - and sometimes only - impression from your website. What considerations should you take when presenting your funeral home or cemetery online? How do you capture the attention and, more importantly, the trust of families who are making huge decisions at emotional times? How do you prompt them to engage with your organization? This session explores design considerations, usability, and a family-focused approach.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Lab: Live Website Evaluations

Jason Cavett, Nick Timpe, CSE

This morning we learned the critical elements for a successful and impactful website. Today we will use these skills for live evaluation of actual websites in our profession. Students will work in groups to evaluate funeral home and cemetery websites, report their critique to the group, and then hear professional feedback from professors.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

"Technology Makes It All Easier – Including the Risks of Liability" A Legal Look at Deathcare Technology

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

It's so simple. In today's technology world, with a click of a button you can do anything. Buy a casket -click. Schedule a funeral – click. Write a bad review of a funeral business – click. But with all that technology brings us, it also brings new risks. While every business will have some risks, what about new risks with new technology. How does a business protect itself from technology it may not even understand? How does a business secure itself from cyber threats? How does a business provide and gather information through its website without creating a risk to itself or consumers? The truth is that technology is great step forward – but you can't just move forward and think that new technology is free from risk management. This class will help identify technology in deathcare as well as the ways you can reduce the risks.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Implementing and Automating Your CRM to Maximize Sales Efficiency

Tim Kolasa

With so many moving parts in the sales process and marketing outreach, how can you connect all of the dots to ensure that prospects are not falling through the cracks? How can your CRM help keep leads warm and move through the sales funnel? This class will cover practical steps to launching a new system for your team, as well as how your sales process, follow up, scheduling, analytics, and more can be automated.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

AI is Only Human, Its Brief History and How it Can Benefit You!

Micah Spicer

AI has to start somewhere. It needs a spark to give it life. Like Johnny 5 in Short Circuit, it needs input. It can't dream and it can't imagine on its own. It needs Human interaction and thought to begin to enable you and become useful. It's a tool to be used to improve your life and the lives of those around you. When used correctly it can enhance, optimize, grow, and sustain your business and your lifestyle! In this class you will learn about how human AI really is, its brief history and meteoric rise (it's here to stay BTW) and how you can use it to your benefit.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Builders of the Matrix: AI Lab

Micah Spicer

In this next hour we will apply what you have learned about AI. You will get hands-on experience as we work through real world issues and experience the myriad of outcomes associated with varying degrees of Human input.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Where to Go From Here? Transforming Your Organization

Nick Timpe, CSE

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate











J. Asher Neel College of Sales and Marketing

Dean Daniel Thomas

The principles of sales and marketing don't change; only technique and application do. Learn how to take the tried-and-true principles of cemetery and funeral sales and apply them within today's highly mobile, multi-cultural, high-tech, information-driven marketplace.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Daniel Thomas

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Welcome and Class Outline

Daniel Thomas

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Discovering Your Secret Numbers and How to Use Them Daily

Mitch Bennett

Do you know exactly how many salespeople you should have? Are you sure? Of the people you have, what activities and outcomes should they be achieving every day? If your salespeople ask "how can I earn more?", do you just say "make more sales" or do you have a method to show them exactly what they need to improve to make their sales and income more controllable? If not, this is the class you must attended.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Raising the Bar: Applying Technology to Family Engagement

Nick Timpe, CSE

It's common knowledge that many funeral home oWe live in a new world, and we must reinvent how we engage families. More than ever before, families are engaging with us online and have an entirely different set of expectations. In this session, you will learn proven approaches to applying technology to meet the new consumer's demands. You will learn how to engage first-time visitors to your website better, streamline remote arrangement meetings, and improve your virtual aftercare follow-up.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Learn the Six Most Powerful Ways

to Influence Your Prospects to Buy

Andrés Aguilar

Selling is more psychological than it is logical. In this session, you will learn what these six powerful tools are. You will also learn the principles of why they work and how to use them in a positive way to influence people to buy from you. This is a session you don't want to miss.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night - Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Coaching and Communication Techniques to Keep Your Team Positive and Productive

Patrick Downey, CCE

Learn how to implement a weekly meeting coaching and communication system to stay connected with every member of your sales team and build a "Top Gun" proactive team culture within your sales organization.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Prospecting Made Easy and Effective: The Key to Your Sales Success

Mitch Bennett

It was once said, "Nothing happens until somebody sells something." To sell something you must have people to sell to. The key to success in any sales organization is ensuring your people are in as many selling situations per day as possible. That is why the phrase is now, "Nothing has a chance to happen unless you are in a selling situation." How does that happen? Prospecting. If your sales team detests prospecting, this session will teach you how to make prospecting fun and productive. Yes, FUN and PRODUCTIVE.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Sales Leadership

Andrés Aguilar

Leadership is a key component for any sales organization. This class will explore the aspects of good sales leadership.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

What a Lawyer Can Teach Me About Sales

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

Seriously? Everyone thinks that lawyers are there when things go wrong, and probably would never compare the world of a lawyer to the world of sales - but the two worlds have a lot in common. In fact, there are probably a few things a lawyer can teach you about sales! There are the obvious items such as HR and general employment issues. But go a little further and consider the regulatory and licensing side of sales. How about the general world of advertising – not only by mail, but by telephone and online? Now let's jump into all those contracts and forms that are used in every sale you make. And - wait for it - how about ethics? I know you are curious what a lawyer can teach about ethics. You can quickly see that lawyers are more involved in sales than you may have thought. This seminar will cover the spectrum of law and sales – ranging from the day-to-day legal issues all the way to tips and tricks a lawyer can share to help with anyone's sales.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

The Heart of the Sale: Objections and Closes Workshop

Patrick Downey, CCE

One of the most common areas of frustrations for salespeople is how to overcome objections and close a sale. In this class we will discuss strategies to help overcome common objects and close sales.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

1:00 AM–12:30 PM

Why Systematic and Compelling Pre-Need Presentation is Critical to Influence Today's Consumer

Kyle Aler

Do you have an effective pre-need presentation or do you just wing it? When dealing with today's savvy consumer, winging it is no longer effective. Customers want you to explain your selling proposition in a methodical and logical method. If you don't have a systematic process by which to accomplish this, you will after this session. You will learn the critical elements and the tools you need to make a compelling and convincing pre-need presentation that will help you make more sales.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

The Nuts and Bolts of an Effective Lunch and Learn Program

Kyle Aler

How do you create an effective lunch and learn program? This session will give you practical tips on creating an effective lunch and learn program. From large combination companies to stand alone cemeteries or mortuaries, everyone can benefit from these programs.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

The Process of Service and Opportunities Through an Effective Aftercare Program

Payton Thompson

Perhaps one of the most under-utilized opportunities we have to build stronger relationships, provide more service, and drive more pre-need sales is effective aftercare.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

The Follow-up Formula: Lead Nurturing from First Contact to Close

Erin Creger

Discover tools and techniques that transform initial interactions into lasting relationships, guiding client families seamlessly through the process of making their pre-arrangements. Learn the art of personalized follow-up, leveraging insights from each touchpoint to tailor your approach.

From the first point of contact to the final close, and beyond, this session will give you a comprehensive framework to cultivate leads, build trust, educate families, and maximize conversion rates.

Uncover the secrets to developing compelling follow-up scripts and strategies that connect with your families and move toward a positive outcome for all. Whether new to sales, or refining your skillset, you will learn how to cultivate your approach to lead nurturing and follow up, ensuring families feel peace of mind knowing they have been carefully guided and educated through the decision-making process.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Unlocking Success: Adopting The Entrepreneurial Mindset in Preneed Sales

Rahsaan Brown

Discover how adopting an entrepreneurial mindset can elevate your sales game, whether you're a seasoned agent or just starting your journey in preneed sales. From autonomy and independence to customer-centricity and continuous learning, we'll explore the key traits that drive success in both domains. Get ready to unlock your potential, overcome challenges, and pave your path to prosperity in preneed sales. Don't miss out on this transformative session that will leave you inspired and empowered to take your sales career to new heights!

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Cremation Myths Debunked

Néctar Ramírez

So many families who choose cremation are selecting no services. There is a misunderstanding of the cremation consumer, which is leading to an abundance of direct

cremation policies. In this session, we will take a deep dive into the psychology of the cremation consumer and gain a better understanding of their needs and wants. With that understanding, we will tailor our presentation of products and services to maximize the probability of a service, higher policy value, and family satisfaction.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

What Will and Will Not Work in 2024 For Getting More Business

Welton Hong

It's common knowledge that many funeral home owners and cemeterians are still struggling to understand internet marketing and how to leverage its possibilities. Welton Hong breaks down the fundamentals of online marketing and why certain techniques work better than others, depending on what you want to accomplish. Need to drive at-needs? Search optimization and pay-per-click advertising work wonders. For pre-need, social media is quite effective. For both, you need a website that converts well, a pristine online reputation (driven by review quality and quantity), compatibility with mobile devices and plenty of high-grade content. You also need to be prepared to adjust your plans in tandem with the dynamic nature of online marketing. Funeral homes and cemeteries that stay up to date with the changes (and act on them) have a huge advantage in their local markets.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served.





Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Closing Thoughts: Golden Nuggets

Daniel Thomas

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate





Todd Van Beck College of Funeral Home Management

Dean Mathew Forastiere

Too many managers consider "creativity" someone else's department. In funeral service, creative management is the key to differentiation.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Mat Forastiere

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Course Introduction & The "Why" of Funeral Service

Mat Forastiere

Overview of the College of Funeral Home Management. Including introductions of student participants and a round table discussion on "WHY" funeral service is so important and the value it brings to the communities and families we serve. This is a launching off session that sets the table for the valuable information and topics to come throughout the course.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Workshop - Your "WHY" & Personal Value Statement

Mat Forastiere

In this workshop students will be challenged to define their own "WHY" as funeral professionals. They will also learn how to create and communicate their own personal value statement.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Value Communication: Arrangement & Presentation Skills

Mike Watkins

Now more than ever the ability of arrangers and sales counselors to effectively communicate value in the many services, ceremony options, and memorial merchandise is critical. Mike will provide key concepts for communicating value and engage students in a breakout session where they will collaborate, and draft value communicated presentations of their own.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Your Team – Leading, Coaching, and Directing

Mat Forastiere

The most valuable asset in any funeral business is the team of employees that serve our communities daily. In this session students will be presented with leadership best practices, coaching and scheduling tools.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night – Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Thanatology – Theory & Application

Dr. C. Lynn Gibson

In this two-session course, we will delve into death, dying, and bereavement. Dr. Gibson will explore the concepts as well as best practices for application in your businesses and while serving families.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Thanatology – Theory & Application (Continued)

Dr. C. Lynn Gibson

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Cremation Risk Management

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

Poul has customized this program specifically for the school of Funeral Home Management. He will provide best practices for firms to mitigate their risk exposure and ensure you, your employees, and the families you serve are protected.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Forecasting & Key Performance Indicators

Mat Forastiere

During this session, students will be exposed to annual forecasting and the difference between forecasting and creating budgets. An introduction to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and a methodology on how to turn the information obtained into action plans.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Crematory & Prep Room Management Part 1

Lauren Blevins, CCFE, CPLP

This two-session course is not a crematory operator or embalming seminar. Rather, students will be presented with proven policies, procedures, and practices to assure safe and prudent crematory and prep room management. This course will cover topics from proper handling, recording, and tracking of human remains to inventory and cost management.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Crematory & Prep Room Management (Continued)

Lauren Blevins, CCFE, CPLP

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Embracing People Seeking Information

Mike Watkins

Michael will share best practices for engaging and informing people seeking information (shopper calls). So often this is the business' first impression and attention creates obligation.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Continuous Care – Customer Relationship Management

Mike Watkins

Michael will share best practices for continuous engagement with customers and families before, during and after the loss. In a relationship business, managing relationships generationally is key to serving families generation after generation.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Engaging Hospice

Jennifer Flaum

Learn how to create organic, meaningful, sustainable relationships with hospice caregivers and referral sources by developing an in depth understanding of the role of hospice caregivers, how to best meet their needs, communicate your role and create an outreach plan that is effective and long lasting

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Continuous Care, Community Outreach and Support

Jennifer Flaum

Caring for families and our communities is essential in funeral services. Learn how to use programming for continuous care as outreach tools, supporting both families we serve, professionals and the community.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Grass Roots Marketing

Phil Zehms

In this lecture session, Phil Zehms will present on the development and application of a comprehensive grass roots marketing plan. He will share proven strategies and provide a framework for developing your own grass roots marketing plan.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Creating a Grass Roots Marketing Plan

Phil Zehms

In this workshop session, Phil will lead students in developing their own grass roots marketing plan, specific to their business, it's goals, and the community it serves.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

Conclusion and Wrap-Up

Mat Forastiere

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate



SAVE THE DATE

DEAD Talks

FEBRUARY 4–6, 2025

PARK MGM

LAS VEGAS, NV



School of Graduate Studies

Dean Robbie Pape, CCFE

The School of Graduate Studies is designed for C-Suite leaders and senior executives who are ready to drive collaboration, innovation, and growth while reaching the highest levels of leadership. Limited to only 12 participants, this intimate and highly interactive program will be conducted by industry leaders and leading non-industry professionals and will offer fresh insight and learning to empower you to improve the performance of your operations and lead your organization more effectively. To apply for the program, visit iccfa.com/university.

Friday, July 19

2:00 PM–5:30 PM

Registration & Check-in

4:30 PM–5:00 PM

Orientation

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM–7:00 PM

Dinner

Saturday, July 20

8:00 AM–8:45 AM

Breakfast

8:45 AM–9:00 AM

Introductions

Robbie Pape, CCFE

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Servant Leadership

Dave Brown, Southwestern Consulting

What leaders want is to have an organization of motivated, productive team members. However, most leaders have never been taught how to truly be servant leaders. Instead of understanding that their role is to serve the people in which they are entrusted and knowing how to lead by putting others first, most leaders are overly focused on driving results. Consequently, they unintentionally create cultures with low morale, high turnover, and decreased production. .

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Navigate for Leaders

Dave Brown, Southwestern Consulting

Statistically, if you're like most leaders you lead others well when they are the same behavioral profile as you. But that also means that you are potentially improperly leading as much as 75% of your team. Because leading properly is not about leading people the way you want to be lead; it's about leading people the way they want to be lead. Yet the vast majority of leaders have never had any formal education or professional psychology training about how to identify, understand, and relate to people they lead who are of opposing behavioral types to themselves. As a result, each day relationships are damaged, team camaraderie is weakened, and millions of dollars are lost in potential sales.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Cemetery Leadership Mastery: Navigating Sales, Administration and Grounds

Larry Michael

Navigating Sales, Administration and Grounds offers a comprehensive overview of key aspects crucial for effective cemetery leadership. This course equips professionals with the necessary skills for successful cemetery leadership, emphasizing communication, sales proficiency, administration efficiency and grounds management. Participants will gain insights into leadership strategies, prioritizing effective communication as well as the development and importance of service standards. The Sales module covers engaging and supporting sales teams, implementing sales programs to increase lead generation. Administration topics include reporting and tracking methodologies, ensuring efficient operations. The Grounds section delves into cemetery development, fostering relationships with grounds teams and implementing checklists for streamlined processes. This course ensures a well-rounded understanding of cemetery leadership essentials, preparing participants to excel in the cemetery profession.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Effective Board Management: Getting Things Done Through Good Governance

Darin Drabing

How does a business, regardless of size or As a C-Suite leader, it is often difficult to navigate the world of Board of Directors to have an effective, cohesive organization. Join Darin as he guides you through the ins and outs of effective Board of Directors Management. The class will study the best practices of Board selection, organization, committee structures, deliverables, for profit vs non-profit, the need for diversity and much more.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Student Night - Trivia

College vs. college! Join your classmates to see which College walks away with bragging rights as the 2024 Trivia Champions!

Sunday, July 21

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Staying on the Right Side of the Grass – and Lawsuits

Poul Lemasters, Esq.

We all 'hear' the story about someone who had a lawsuit, but somehow never hear the details. Did they really get sued, or just threatened? Was it even a lawsuit or was it something else? Did they just settle? What did the insurance company do? What is the process of an issue that may or may not become a lawsuit? As a leader of my company - what role do I play?

This course will provide a detailed look into several deathcare situations that can become a bigger issue, if you don't handle them correctly. From a subpoena to a demand letter; a state regulatory matter to a federal OSHA violation; a customer complaint to a bad viral online review; this course will use real examples to:

- Analyze several issues, all based on actual lawsuits and claims;
- Discuss the cause of the underlying issue;
- Identify the steps involved in each claim, from initial response to settlement;
- Discover steps to prevent issues from happening; and
- Create plans to implement practices into your business.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Built To Last - Developing a Strategic Plan to Carry Your Organization Through the 2030s, Part I

Bob Gordon, Jr.

In an era of rapid technological advancements, evolving consumer preferences, and unpredictable global dynamics, organizations must chart a resilient course to thrive in the 2030s and beyond. Join us for an insightful session where we explore the essential elements of building a sustainable strategy that withstands the test of time. From harnessing innovation to fostering adaptability, we will delve into practical approaches for future-proofing your organization against emerging challenges and seizing opportunities on the horizon. Discover how to cultivate a culture of innovation, leverage digital transformation, and cultivate strategic partnerships to navigate the complexities of tomorrow's business landscape. Whether you're a seasoned executive or a high potential manager, this session will equip you with actionable insights to steer your organization towards enduring success in the decade ahead. A pre-work packet will be sent out to all attendees. This is an interactive two-part session come prepared, stay engaged through the session and leave with more clarity on your path forward.

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Built To Last - Developing a Strategic Plan to Carry Your Organization Through the 2030s, Part II

Bob Gordon, Jr.

In an era of rapid technological advancements, evolving consumer preferences, and unpredictable global dynamics, organizations must chart a resilient course to thrive in the 2030s and beyond. Join us for an insightful session where we explore the essential elements of building a sustainable strategy that withstands the test of time. From harnessing innovation to fostering adaptability, we will delve into practical approaches for future-proofing your organization against emerging challenges and seizing opportunities on the horizon. Discover how to cultivate a culture of innovation, leverage digital transformation, and cultivate strategic partnerships to navigate the complexities of tomorrow's business landscape. Whether you're a seasoned executive or a high potential manager, this session will equip you with actionable insights to steer your organization towards enduring success in the decade ahead. A pre-work packet will be sent out to all attendees. This is an interactive two-part session come prepared, stay engaged through the session and leave with more clarity on your path forward.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Innovative Strategies for Funeral Homes and Cemeteries: Mastering Digital Marketing and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 2024

Welton Hong

In an era where traditional approaches are rapidly evolving, this comprehensive session offers a dual focus on the cutting-edge of digital marketing and AI innovations tailored for funeral home and cemetery professionals. Discover the keys to navigating internet marketing effectively, learning which online tactics yield the best results for both at-needs and pre-needs. We'll explore the indispensability of search optimization, pay-per-click advertising, social media engagement, and the creation of a high-converting website. Additionally, delve into how a robust online reputation, mobile compatibility, and quality content can significantly impact your business.

Transitioning to AI's groundbreaking role, understand how artificial intelligence redefining lead generation, sales strategies, and marketing methodologies in the death care industry is. We will cover practical AI applications that honor the profession's sensitivity while enhancing efficiency and delivering personalized client experiences. This session is designed to equip funeral home and cemetery leaders with the knowledge to leverage these technologies, ensuring they remain competitive and responsive to market dynamics in 2024 and beyond.

5:30 PM–6:30 PM

Dinner

Monday, July 22

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

The Invisible Force – How Organizational Impacts People and Profits

Gary O'Sullivan, CCFE

In today's competitive business landscape, the difference between a thriving and merely surviving business often comes down to an element that remains unseen yet has a fundamental impact on the company's people and profits. That unseen force is the company's organizational culture. By coming to a deeper understanding of how organizational culture impacts a business, leaders can more effectively harness its power to drive innovation, improve employee engagement, enhance customer satisfaction, and significantly impact financial performance.

In this session, we will investigate the metaphorical 'invisible force' of organizational culture, illustrating how it can silently shape the destiny of your company through its influence on employee engagement, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and ultimately, profitability. You will also learn about the between cultures formed by design and those that arise by default. With a blend of persuasive statistics and actionable insights, this presentation promises to equip you with the essential tools needed to define, design, and drive a positive and productive culture.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Effective Communication?

Robbie Pape, CCFE

This session will allow students to look at their communication style from a different perspective and gain insight as to why it may be

making their relationships more difficult instead of smoother. Effective communication is at the heart of every interaction and yet it so often falls short and creates frustration, the need for rework and often, in our profession, a failure at our one shot to serve with excellence. What is in your communication blind spot? Are you willing to look?

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

The Answer is in the Numbers: A Survey of CANA Cremation and Consumer Research

Barbara Kemmis

CANA statistics have tracked the growth in cremation and reported the reasons why cremation is the new tradition, but what happens after the decision to cremate? This session presents ground-breaking research on consumer behavior and attitudes toward cremation. Attend and gain strategies to better meet the needs of today's cremation families. Using straightforward exercises, this interactive session will identify strategies to remain profitable in today's market.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn national, provincial, and state statistical trends.
- Identify strategies to remain profitable in today's market.
- Identify strategies to meet the needs of cremation families.
- Identify knowledge and attitudes toward cremation memorialization.
- Rethink professional and personal assumptions about cremation.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

Designing a G.A.M.E. Plan for Employee Engagement

Lori Bolton, CSE, CXE

Employee engagement can be defined as the extent to which employees feel committed and connected to their employer and to the work that they do. It is linked to terms like job satisfaction and employee morale. Employee engagement impacts and is impacted by overall well-being and happiness. Engaged employees care about their work and company. Why is this important?

It is estimated that the employee engagement rate costs US employers $500 billion per year. In 2023, US Employee Engagement stood at 33%. That means 67% or a staggering 2/3 of employees are not engaged. In fact, job hiring sites like Monster and Indeed estimate that 95% of workers are looking for a new job. Additionally, 45% of employees have side hustles to earn more money or fulfill other interests.

It is critical that your business has a dedicated strategy for employee engagement to increase performance and retention, saving on the heavy costs of re-hiring and training. In this course we will explore one strategic plan for developing and maintaining employee engagement. You will understand the components of Growth, Appreciation, Measurement, and Execution to design a unique Employee Engagement GAME plan for your organization. By the end of this session, you will have an outline of your GAME plan along with a detailed strategy for at least one of the components.

7:00 PM–10:00 PM

Sports Night

Join your ICCFAU colleagues for a friendly game of bowling or cornhole! Appetizers, salad, pizza, wings, and dessert will be served.

Tuesday, July 23

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:30 AM

Applied Finance in Deathcare

Gary Freytag, CCFE

Regardless of what role you have, understanding finance is critical to assessing the health of your organization. Finance drives both current decision-making and long-term planning. Should we build a new reception facility? Is my cemetery endowment large enough to maintain the grounds? How well am I managing critical resources? This class will take students through financial analysis as applied to cemeteries and funeral homes. It will teach how to understand financial statements, critical ratios, financial modeling, cash flow, return on investment, portfolio theory, and business valuation.

10:30 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Finance Workshop

Gary Freytag, CCFE

Part two of the Finance model will apply the theories introduced in applied finance to analyze the very different real-world problems faced by cemeteries and funeral homes.

CEMETERIES

- How much does it cost to maintain the grounds?
- Am I making money operating the cemetery?
- Are my goods and services priced appropriately?
- Should I be in-sourcing or outsourcing functions/
- Is my endowment invested for the long haul?

FUNERAL HOMES

- How can I tell what is appropriate workload for a funeral director?
- What is my business worth?
- Can I afford to expand my operation or facilities?
- Why should I sell pre-need funerals if I lose money?
- If I am profitable, why am I always short on cash?
- How can I finance an acquisition? .

12:30 PM–1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

Leadership and the Power of Strong Leaders Starts from Within

Jay Dodds, CFSP

Leadership is a powerful ideal and being a strong leader takes skill and self-understanding. Understanding your personal skills, traits and characteristics is the first step of strong leadership. Great leaders/managers possess a balanced level of both leadership and managerial traits. What exactly are these tendencies and what distinguishes the two varying disciplines. We will dissect both sides of the coin and clearly define what skills are necessary to be a great leader, but also a strong manager. Like the Yin and Yang, a strong leader must have strong managerial tendencies to lead from a position of strength and clarity.

3:00 PM–3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM–4:30 PM

Recap Conversation with Commitments

Robbie Pape, CCFE

In this next hour we will apply what you have learned about AI. You will get hands-on experience as we work through real world issues and experience the myriad of outcomes associated with varying degrees of Human input.

4:30 PM–5:45 PM

University Graduation

5:45 PM–7:15 PM

Graduate Reception

Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Wednesday, July 24

8:00 AM–8:55 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM–10:00 AM

College Wrap-Up and Evaluations

Robbie Pape, CCFE

10:00 AM–10:30 AM

Presentation of Certificate







Save the Date!

2025 ICCFA ANNUAL CONVENTION

APRIL 30 – MAY 3, 2025
MANDALAY BAY RESORT & CASINO
LAS VEGAS, NV

One-day Cremation Operator Registration

The ICCFA offers a one-day registration for those who wish to attend only the Crematory Operator Training Certification on Saturday, July 20. The cost to attend this one-day option is **$600 per person**. This includes:

- Admission to the Friday night reception and dinner
- The all-day crematory operator training and certification on Saturday
- Breakfast, lunch, and refreshment breaks on Saturday

If you require housing, please contact the Emory Conference Center Hotel and say that you are with the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association event.

Registrant Information

Please fill out ONLY if you are registering for the one-day cremation operator training program. All other applicants should use the form on pages 45–46. One form per attendee; please make copies of this form for multiple attendees.

Name

Nickname (for badge)

Title

Company

Address

City | State/Province

Country | Zip/Postal Code

Business Phone | Cell Phone

Email

Emergency Contact Name | Emergency Contact Phone

Is this your first ICCFA University? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please indicate if you are a member of ☐ JFDA ☐ PLPA

☐ If you have a disability OR dietary restrictions that requires special accommodations, please check here and attach a statement of your needs

Indicate if you are a (check all that apply): ☐ CCE ☐ CFuE ☐ CCFE ☐ CCrE ☐ CSE ☐ CPLP

Indicate if you are a military veteran or active duty:

☐ Air Force ☐ Army ☐ Coast Guard ☐ Marine Corps ☐ Navy ☐ Active Duty

Payment

☐ Check (payable to ICCFA)

☐ Credit Card: ○ Visa ○ MC ○ AmEx ○ Discover

Credit Card #

Exp. Date

Security ID # (3-digit # on back of card OR 4-digit # on front of AmEx)

Name on card

Card billing address/ZIP

Email address to send receipt

Signature

Cancellation Policy: Registrants cancelling their registrations prior to June 20 will receive refunds. All cancellations must be made in writing and will be subject to a $100 cancellation fee. **No refunds after June 20.**

Return form with payment to: ICCFA Meetings Department • 107 Carpenter Drive, Suite 100 • Sterling, VA 20164 • Phone 703.391.8400 • Fax 703.391.8416

2024 ICCFA University Registration

July 19–24 • Emory Conference Center Hotel at Emory University

Class sizes are limited so act now to reserve your spot! Registration must be received by July 10. After this date, registration will be on-site only. Please fill out both sides of this form or register online at ***www.iccfa.com/university***. Due to the high volume of applications, paid registrations will be processed first.

Registrant Information (Please print)

Name

Nickname (for badge)

Title

Company

Address

City | State/Province

Country | Zip/Postal Code

Business Phone | Cell Phone

Email

Emergency Contact Name | Emergency Contact Phone

Is this your first ICCFA University? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please indicate if you are a member of ☐ JFDA ☐ PLPA

☐ If you have a disability OR dietary restrictions that requires special accommodations, please check here and attach a statement of your needs

Indicate if you are a (check all that apply): ☐ CCE ☐ CFuE ☐ CCFE ☐ CCrE ☐ CSE ☐ CPLP

Indicate if you are a military veteran or active duty:

☐ Air Force ☐ Army ☐ Coast Guard ☐ Marine Corps ☐ Navy ☐ Active Duty

College Selection (Please indicate first and second choices)

1st	2nd	I will be attending:
☐	☐	College of 21st Century Services
☐	☐	College of Cremation Services
☐	☐	College of Hospitality & Customer Experience
☐	☐	College of Land Management & Grounds Operations
☐	☐	College of Leadership, Management & Administration
☐	☐	J. Asher Neel College of Sales & Marketing
☐	☐	College of Technology
☐	☐	Todd Van Beck College of Funeral Home Management

School of Graduate Studies requires a separate application. Please visit iccfa.com/university/ to review the application to apply.

Cancellation Policy: Registrants cancelling their registrations prior to June 20 will receive refunds. All cancellations must be made in writing and will be subject to a $100 cancellation fee. **No refunds after June 20.** Registrations received by June 20 will be included in the attendee directory.

Housing Reservations

Students should make their reservations directly with the Emory Conference Center Hotel. To receive the discounted room rate of just $169, identify yourself as part of the ICCFA group. We do expect the room block to fill up quickly, so make your reservations early.

Cancellation Policy: Registrants cancelling their registrations prior to June 20 will receive refunds. All cancellations must be made in writing and will be subject to a $100 cancellation fee.

Registration Fees*

Registrations must be received by June 20

College of 21st Century Services; College of Cremation Services; Todd Van Beck College of Funeral Home Management; College of Hospitality & Customer Experience; College of Land Management & Grounds Operations; College of Leadership, Management & Administration; J. Asher Neel College of Sales & Marketing; or College of Technology	$2,150
Subtotal	$ _____
Additional Meal Package (for guests not attending ICCFAU) _____ meal @ $1,250 each	$ _____
Subtotal	$ _____
ICCFA University Polo Shirts _____ shirts @ $50 each	$ _____
Please indicate type and size: ☐ Student ☐ Alumni ☐ Professor ☐ Dean ☐ Graduate (2024 graduates receive a complimentary shirt) ☐ Men's (select size S-3XL) ___ ☐ Women's (select size S–3XL) ___	
Subtotal	$ _____
Total Due to ICCFA	$ _____

* Fees include all meals from Friday's dinner through Wednesday's breakfast, as well as the receptions and refreshments during breaks and the Sports Tournament. Fees cover a 20% service charge and a 9.25% tax on all food service.

Payment

☐ Check (payable to ICCFA) ☐ Credit Card: ○ Visa ○ MC ○ AmEx ○ Discover

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Security ID # (3-digit # on back of card OR 4-digit # on front of AmEx) _____

Name on card _____

Card billing address/ZIP _____

Email address to send receipt _____

Signature _____

Return form with payment to: ICCFA Meetings Department • 107 Carpenter Drive, Suite 100 • Sterling, VA 20164 • Phone 703.391.8400 • Fax 703.391.8416

2024 ICCFAU Faculty

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Sandy Springs, GA

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