

## Staff

The Event and Conference Services team provides outstanding service to its customers. We understand what it takes to conduct a successful event and are committed to providing you with an exceptional, stress-free experience.



### Terry Thompson

Director

502.852.0365

About Terry

### Tell us about your job.

I manage the team, and I'm responsible for coordinating with our marketing department and working with our sales manager to set our strategy and direction.

### When did you first begin working in the event field?

It's been my full-time job for 17 years, but I've been involved in event planning my entire career. Every job I've had has included an aspect of event management. Even in graduate school, when I worked in Career Services, I was responsible for organizing a their annual internship fair.

### What type of events have you worked on?

I've managed an annual barbecue association conference, which included a big barbecue festival for the public; a cheese competition with more than 1,200 artisan cheeses. Here, we do everything from retirement seminars for 20 people to big, multi-day conferences and training events for 300. We have events for schools, churches and religious groups, companies, university departments—it really runs the gamut.

### How has event planning changed over the years?

The food at meetings and conferences has changed a lot - so much has happened with special dietary needs. [People want] healthy options, gluten-free and vegan, and allergies are more common. We're fortunate to have caterers who can accommodate those needs.

### What do you think are the best selling points of your venue?

At a lot of venues, you rent the room and then have to rent tables and chairs, and [you] either put them up

yourself or pay the venue to do it. An event planner needs to get an AV company to bring in a microphone and projector and find a caterer. We do all that for you. My team works hand-in-hand with event planners from the day an event is booked until it's over, and we give them a single point of contact. We don't charge people for AV, Wi-Fi or event set up. Those are big expenses customers don't have when they come here.

## What's the most exciting part of your job?

Watching my team in action—we get incredibly outstanding marks for customer service. We have really strong, experienced, talented people. When I see how easily my team handles everything, and that they're great at it and provide incredible customer service, that's the best part for me.



### Donna Berger

Program Coordinator

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About Donna

## Tell us about your job.

I book meeting space for clients, place catering orders and design room schematics for their events.

## How long have you worked with the Event and Conference Services department?

I've been part of the University of Louisville Event and Conference Services team since 2008 and have also been the program coordinator for the Lifelong Learning program at the university.

## When did you first begin working in the event field?

I have been involved with corporate entertaining since about 1976. It really was just part of the job when I worked in various positions at Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation from 1970 to 2004. I worked for different vice presidents within the company, and they were in charge of corporate entertaining during the Kentucky Derby and the PGA, when it came to the Valhalla Golf Club in Kentucky.

## What is the most exciting part of your job?

I love hearing that the client is happy with their event outcome.

## What unique advantages do you feel UofL's Event and Conference Center offers, compared to other venues?

We offer great customer service. We are very affordable, and we provide many of the amenities at no extra charge—Wi-Fi access, parking, AV, set-up for your event and clean-up after the event, just to name a few things.



## Kimberly Blair

Program Coordinator

502.852.0690

### About Kimberly

## Tell us about your job.

If you're planning an event, I'm your go-to person for everything from setup to catering. We take pride in our designation as a "one stop shop." There's a lot of one-on-one communication with clients—ironing out the logistics and details of every event, large and small.

## When did you first begin working in the event field?

I have been planning events since 1984. I started in the travel business planning conferences both in and out of town for corporate clients. After selling my agency, I went to the Kentucky Exposition Center for 15 years and coordinated events such as UofL, UK, ESPN, and SEC Basketball games and tournaments; concerts; consumer shows; trade shows; conferences; livestock shows; and of course, the Kentucky State Fair.

## What type of events have you worked on?

I think I have worked literally every type show, from a heavy metal concert to a pigeon show. There is truly a show or event for every business out there. One of the most unusual events I've coordinated is the "Before I Die Festival"—yes, festival. It is a very unique event that explores different ways to prepare for death and dying.

## What is the most exciting part of your job?

Helping people have a successful event—no matter what it is. Putting all the moving parts together and having it be a success is exciting. You know you've done well when clients say "I love having my events at UofL because everything is so easy."

## Why do you think UofL's space is ideal to host events?

We are in a great location with easy access from just about anywhere in the county, but our campus is also in a beautiful green space that's quiet and calming. As far as our facility, we are continually working on upgrading our technology and AV equipment. We recently upgraded a few meeting rooms that had traditional screens and projectors to HDMI digital screens. We've also been able to help clients live stream their meeting for colleagues unable to attend in person.

We're always trying to come up with new offerings we think our customers will appreciate, and we have some of the lowest room rental rates in town. We include free Wi-Fi throughout the building and complimentary audiovisual equipment; which at other venues would be an additional charge. You get a lot of personal service here; we're hands-on, making sure you have a successful meeting. We don't just open the door and say, 'Here you go'—we're with you every step of the way.



## Lorraine Houghton

Sales Manager

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About Lorraine

### Tell us about your job.

I am the Sales Manager for UofL's Event and Conference Center. We have a good, constant renewal business; my primary job is to find new companies that have a need for our services. I get a lot of calls where someone says they just got an event assigned to them and don't know what to do. We walk them through everything to make sure they have a smooth event.

I've found that people appreciate the expertise and guidance we can lend. In most companies, there isn't an actual position that manages events; they usually throw it on an HR or accounting person or an executive assistant who is juggling so many other things. People appreciate the expertise and guidance we can lend.

### When did you first begin working in event planning sales?

I worked as a promotion writer and producer for local TV stations for 27 years. People kept saying I should be in sales. A good friend of mine told me the management company he worked for needed a new salesperson—someone fearless—and he wanted me to apply for the job. So I did and realized sales was a good role for me and in turn for the company.

My philosophy is honesty. I like to sleep at night, so I'm going to do what I say and say what I do. Honestly, if something isn't a good fit or is a waste of a client's money, I'm going to let them know.

### What is the most exciting part of your job?

Meeting new people every day—I love that. I love listening to people's stories; everyone has one.

### What does UofL's Event and Conference Center offer that's different from other venues?

The number one question people have is, "Do you have conference space? I thought it was classrooms for students." Even people who have lived in Louisville their entire lives say they had no idea this space was here. They're amazed. Especially compared to other options in the area, it's very affordable to rent meeting space here.

Our team is exemplary. We hear all the time, 'You took great care of us, so we'll be back.' We have an extreme amount of knowledge—not just from being here, but from past experiences at other employers.

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## Kim Williams

Program Coordinator



502.852.1936

#### About Kim

### **Tell us about your job.**

I wear many different hats. I'm in charge of our set-up crew, our custodial staff and the catering staff. I also help out with the sales department. My day involves constant change.

### **When did you first begin working in the event field?**

I have many years of sales in my background. I was an account coordinator and manager for cosmetic lines, and I've done public speaking at large events. I also had a small catering business with a partner. Coordinating catering here is the same type of event planning I did before. I get to dabble in all the things I love—planning events, working with food, and making people happy.

### **When type of events have you worked on?**

We work with small groups and large groups, but it all focuses on one thing: They want their event to be flawless. It does not matter if they're spending \$50 or \$10,000, it all boils down to the fact it needs to be perfect. We try very hard to accomplish that.

### **What is the most exciting part of your job?**

The constant change is exciting. I get bored very easily, so it's a good fit. We take the stress out of planning an event. You come in and can actually enjoy yourself.