ELIZABETH A. WHALEN, PH.D.

Associate Professor and Program Director, Tourism and Hospitality Management
Department of Sport and Hospitality Management | College of Behavioral and Health Sciences
Middle Tennessee State University | MTSU Box 0559 | 1301 East Main Street | Murfreesboro, TN 37132
615-904-8296 | Elizabeth.Whalen@mtsu.edu
ORCID: 0000-0002-8948-7323 | Web of Science | ResearchGate | LinkedIn

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Hospitality Administration December 2018
University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College
Dissertation: Avatar Profile Design: Evaluating the Impacts of Avatar Design on Source Credibility and Community Engagement
Advisor: John T. Bowen, Ph.D. | Committee: Juan Madera, Ph.D.; Cristian Morosan, Ph.D.; Seyhmus Baloglu, Ph.D.

M.S., Hospitality Management May 2012
University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College
Professional Paper: Hotel Selection Attributes and Behavioral Intentions for Generation Y Travelers
Advisor: Ki-Joon Back, Ph.D.

B.A., Cultural Anthropology, Summa Cum Laude April 2009
University of Pittsburgh
Certificates: Asian Studies; Global Studies | Minors: French; Chinese

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE)
American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI)

Certified Hotel Industry Analytics (CHIA)
STR and American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Middle Tennessee State University

Program Director, Tourism and Hospitality Management August 2021–present
Led the Tourism and Hospitality Management program since 2019; Program Director since 2021

Associate Professor (tenured) June 2024–present

Assistant Professor August 2019–June 2024
Department of Sport and Hospitality Management (2026–present); Department of Health and Human Performance (2019–2026)
Graduate faculty: M.S. in Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Management; Ph.D. in Human Performance (Leisure and Sport Management)

University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College

Program Director, Executive Master's Program in Hospitality Management January 2018–May 2019

Interim Program Manager, M.S. in Hospitality Management November 2018–March 2019

Executive Director, AH&LA Information Research Center September 2014–September 2015

Lecturer June 2012–December 2018

Belhaven University, School of Business

Course Developer and Instructor (contract) Summer/Fall 2018; Summer 2019

RESEARCH PROGRAM

My research examines how tourists, guests, and other consumers make decisions when information is uncertain, social, or mediated. I study how source credibility, message framing, online communities, and the design of physical and digital environments shape trust, risk perceptions, and behavior, and I apply these insights to hospitality operations, destination stewardship, and tourism and hospitality education.

Research Areas

- **Consumer decision-making and risk perception.** How travelers, guests, and planners weigh risk, value, and loyalty in choosing destinations, accommodations, and brands.
- **Credibility, persuasion, and message framing.** How the source and framing of information influence trust and behavior, from avatar design and source credibility to CSR messaging, brand advocacy, and stewardship messaging.
- **Online communities and consumer engagement.** How brand and consumption communities form, exchange information, and build identification, studied through mixed methods.
- **Experience design and visitor stewardship.** How the design of experiences and places shapes behavior, including hotel innovation and novelty, event technology and gamification, and shared stewardship on Tennessee Blueways.
- **Tourism and hospitality education.** Experiential learning, student engagement, and teaching evaluation in applied professional programs.

Methods: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, including case study and survey research

Scholarly impact (Web of Science, November 2026): 17 Core Collection publications; 304 citations; h-index 8; 151 verified peer reviews. ResearchGate: more than 36,000 reads.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Industry Educator of the Year, Stars of the Industry Purple Iris Awards 2025
Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association (nominated 2023, 2024)

Industry Educator of the Year, Stars of the Industry Awards 2025
Greater Nashville Hospitality Association

Scholarship to attend the Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism 2025
Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

Best Reviewer Award 2022–2024
Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism

Excellent Reviewer recognition (three reviews rated Excellent by journal editors)
Web of Science

Best Paper in Festivals and the Human Touch 2022
Tourism and Languages Subject Group, Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) Conference

Honorable Mention, Best Paper Award 2022
International Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference

Teaching Excellence Award, Graduate Teaching Assistant 2017–2018
University of Houston

Donald Greenaway Teaching Excellence Award 2014–2015
Conrad N. Hilton College, University of Houston

PUBLICATIONS

***Bold** indicates Dr. Whalen; * indicates student co-author.*

Refereed Journal Articles

Taylor, S., Jr., **Whalen, E. A.**, Zhuang, Y., & Sonmez, D. (2026). Shut-up and brew: Consumer perceptions of advocacy in the US craft beer industry. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, *38*(2), 333–356. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWBR-06-2025-0041

Whalen, E. A., & Lauber, D. E. (2025). Avatar profile design and source credibility in online leisure communities: Implications for engagement strategies. *Leisure Sciences*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2025.2485182

Liu, Y., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2025). Event planner destination choice: A case study of Nashville. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, *26*(1), 76–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2025.2456837

Whalen, E. A., & Dunlap, R. (2024). Hotel innovation and novelty: A case study of Disney's Star Wars Galactic Starcruiser. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *28*(9), 1390–1403. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2024.2337906

Belarmino, A., **Whalen, E. A.**, & Guzzo, R. F. (2024). The impact of message framing on perceptions of controversial CSR in hotels. *International Hospitality Review*, *39*(2), 304–322. https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-12-2022-0062

Whalen, E. A., & Bowen, J. T. (2023). Novel trends challenging tourism. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, *15*(6), 608–616. https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-09-2023-0109

Sisson, A. D., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2023). Engaging in student evaluations of teaching through intrinsic motivation: An exploratory study of competence, perceived choice, value/usefulness, and relatedness. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, *24*(2), 189–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2023.2268566

Whalen, E. A., Bowen, J. T., & Baloglu, S. (2023). Comparison of generational loyalty models and loyalty programs for Millennial, Generation X, and Baby Boomer hotel customers. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *7*(4), 2328–2346. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-01-2023-0053

Taylor, S., Jr., **Whalen, E. A.**, & Norris, C. L. (2023). Exploring consumer perceptions of no- and low-alcohol craft beers. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *40*(6), 625–638. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-06-2021-4709

Sisson, A. D., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2022). Getting back to human touch: Habit and change decisions during mobile device intermediations at events. *Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality*, *17*(4), 514–529. https://doi.org/10.1108/CBTH-03-2022-0051

Whalen, E. A., & Sisson, A. D. (2022). Co-branding hotel owners and operators to increase willingness to pay. *Research in Hospitality Management*, *12*(2), 151–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/22243534.2022.2133172

Whalen, E. A., & Belarmino, A. (2022). Risk mitigation through source credibility in online travel communities. *Anatolia*, *34*(3), 414–425. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2022.2048405

Sisson, A. D., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2021). Exploratory study on the perceptions of event gamification on positive behavioral outcomes. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *5*(5), 822–841. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-04-2021-0085

Belarmino, A., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2020). Examining the impact of political candidates on hotel revenue. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *3*(1), 36–53. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-04-2019-0071

Whalen, E. A., Belarmino, A., & Taylor, S., Jr. (2019). Share and share alike? Examining the maturation of the sharing economy through a craft beer exchange. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, *2*(4), 309–325. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-02-2019-0024

Belarmino, A., **Whalen, E. A.**, Koh, Y., & Bowen, J. T. (2019). Comparing guests' key attributes of peer-to-peer accommodations and hotels: Mixed-methods approach. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *22*(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2017.1293623

Whalen, E. A. (2018). Understanding a shifting methodology: A content analysis of the use of netnography in hospitality and tourism research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *30*(11), 3423–3441. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-08-2017-0536

Whalen, E. A., & Han, J. (2017). The innovative competitive advantage: A case study of two pioneering companies. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Cases*, *6*(1), 70–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/216499871700600108

Morosan, C., Dawson, M., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2017). Using active learning activities to increase student outcomes in an information technology course. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *29*(4), 147–157. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2017.1382369

Bowen, J. T., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2017). Trends that are changing travel and tourism. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, *9*(6), 592–602. https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-09-2017-0045

Book Chapters and Teaching Cases

Whalen, E. A. (2022). Online brand communities: A case study of Disney. In P. Hobbs (Ed.), *Interpreting and experiencing Disney: Mediating the mouse* (pp. 187–204). Intellect. https://doi.org/10.1386/9781789384741_11

Whalen, E. A. (2025). Beyond revenue: Serene Haven's quest for customer-centric revenue management. In *Revenue management and optimization: Beyond hotels* (Chapter 11).

Professional and Instructional Publications

Whalen, E. A. (2020, March). Creating your own personal brand. *Murfreesboro Magazine*, 2–3.

Whalen, E. A. (2019). Supplementary instructional materials (editing and development) for P. Kotler, J. T. Bowen, & S. Baloglu, *Marketing for hospitality and tourism* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Bowen, J. T., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2016). Millennials: Changing loyalty programs, design, and brand standards. *HITEC 2016 Special Report*.

Manuscripts Under Review

Whalen, E. A. *Experiential learning is not the problem: Rethinking student engagement in tourism, hospitality, and events education.* Revise and resubmit.

Whalen, E. A., Sisson, A. D., & Wallace, H.* *Shared waters: Encouraging cooperative use and conservation of Tennessee Blueways.* Manuscript under review.

Wallace, H.*, **Whalen, E. A.**, & Sisson, A. D. *Lines, lanes, and launches: Which low-cost launch layout makes blueway launches work smoother?* Manuscript under review.

Tan, K., & **Whalen, E. A.** *Negative emotions scale development.* Revise and resubmit.

Works in Progress

Whalen, E. A., & Sisson, A. D. Branding and Customer Trust. In *Handbook of customer service and loyalty in hospitality and tourism*. Invited chapter in progress (due fall 2027).

Whalen, E. A., & Lauber, D. E. *The impact of observed crime statistics on intentions to visit a destination.* Data collection in progress.

Belarmino, A., & **Whalen, E. A.** *Haute cuisine.* In development.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Wallace, H.*, **Whalen, E. A.**, & Sisson, A. (2026, October 21–23). *Lines, lanes, launches: Understanding how design shapes behavior on Tennessee Blueways.* International Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference, Breda, the Netherlands.

Whalen, E. A., & Sisson, A. (2026, October 21–23). *Beyond signs and rules: How message framing builds shared stewardship ethics on Tennessee Blueways.* International Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference, Breda, the Netherlands.

Taylor, S., Jr., **Whalen, E. A.**, & Zhuang, Y. (2025, June 16–19). *Politics in a pint glass: Consumer support for craft brewery advocacy.* International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE) Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

Taylor, S., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2024, March 8–9). *Shut-up and brew: Consumer perceptions of advocacy in the beer industry.* Southeast, Central & South American (SECSA) Federation Conference, Columbia, SC.

Whalen, E. A., & Lauber, D. (2024, March 8–9). *The impact of observed crime statistics on intentions to visit a destination.* Southeast, Central & South American (SECSA) Federation Conference, Columbia, SC.

Sisson, A., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2023, May 23–26). *It's time to connect the dots: Engaging in student evaluations of teaching through intrinsic motivation.* Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) Conference, Stenden, the Netherlands.

Sisson, A., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2022, October 5–7). *You can't win if you don't play! Perceptions of event gamification on behavioral outcomes.* International Society of Travel & Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Virtual Conference. **Honorable Mention, Best Paper Award.**

Sisson, A., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2022, May 25–27). *Power down for human touch: Mobile device intermediations at events.* Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland. **Best Paper in Festivals and the Human Touch.**

Liu, Y., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2022, March 4). *Event planner destination choice: A case study of Nashville.* Southeast, Central & South American (SECSA) Federation Conference, online.

Reid, R.*, & **Whalen, E. A.** (2022, January 6–8). *Universal service design in the restaurant industry: Bridging the gap between ADA guidelines and customer needs.* 27th Annual Graduate Education & Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality & Tourism, Houston, TX.

Bowen, J., Baloglu, S., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2019, July 24–26). *The antecedents of hotel loyalty across generational segments.* ICHRIE Conference, Special Interest Group—Sales and Marketing Faculty, New Orleans, LA.

Taylor, S., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2019, July 24–26). *Craft beer traders' behavioral intentions and engagement in online communities: An exploratory study of perceived similarity.* ICHRIE Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Whalen, E. A., & Bowen, J. (2019, January 3–5). *To believe or not to believe: The impact of avatar information labeling on source credibility.* Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, Houston, TX.

Whalen, E. A., & Bowen, J. (2019, January 3–5). *Risk mitigation through source credibility: An investigation of online community engagement.* Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, Houston, TX.

Bowen, J., Baloglu, S., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2018, November 7–9). *Do models of customer loyalty vary across generational segments?* EuroCHRIE Conference, Dublin, Ireland.

Whalen, E. A., & Bowen, J. (2018, January 3–5). *The loyalty of a generation: Comparing models of customer loyalty across generational segments.* Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, Fort Worth, TX.

Whalen, E. A., Taylor, S., Jr., & Bowen, J. (2018, January 3–5). *Craft beer aficionados welcome: How source attractiveness and risk perceptions influence intentions for beer exchange.* Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, Fort Worth, TX.

Whalen, E. A., Bowen, J., Baloglu, S., & Lee, H.-K. (2017, July 26–28). *Existing loyalty programs a thing of the past? Understanding millennial loyalty.* ICHRIE Conference, Baltimore, MD.

Whalen, E. A. (2017, June 20–22). *Is there room for online ethnography in the changing netnography landscape?* Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) International Conference, Qualitative Research Symposium, Quebec City, Canada.

Whalen, E. A., & Bowen, J. (2017, June 20–22). *Engaging the customer: The impacts of online travel community engagement on brand identification and behavioral intentions.* TTRA International Conference, Graduate Student Colloquium, Quebec City, Canada.

Whalen, E. A., & Bowen, J. (2017, January 5–7). *Exploring the antecedents of tourism and hospitality based online communities on consumer decision making processes.* Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, Houston, TX.

Belarmino, A., **Whalen, E. A.**, Koh, Y., & Bowen, J. (2016, July 20–22). *Sharing means caring: How the need for relationships drives guests to Airbnb.* ICHRIE Conference, Dallas, TX.

Morosan, C., Dawson, M., & **Whalen, E. A.** (2016, July 20–22). *Using active learning activities to increase student outcomes in an information technology course.* ICHRIE Conference, Dallas, TX.

GRANTS

Funded

Silvan S. Tomkins Grant for Research in the Affective Sciences ($3,000) 2023
Negative Emotions Scale Development. Co-investigator with K. Tan.

Faculty Professional Development Travel Grant, MTSU ($820) 2023
Congressional Summit on Travel & Tourism, Washington, DC.

Distinguished Lecture Fund, MTSU ($1,500) 2022
THM 4600 Leadership and Professionalism Seminar. Speaker: Tennessee Tourism Commissioner Mark Ezell.

MT Online Intercultural Exchange (MTOIE) Grant, MTSU ($5,000) 2021
THM 4140 Food and Spirits Tourism, with J. Qurashi. Awarded; project not implemented.

Teaching Innovation Program Grant, University of Houston ($27,850) 2016
Interactive and Student-Centered Learning Through the Active Learning Classroom, with R. Lee.

Submitted, Not Funded

Faculty Travel Grant, MTSU 2020
ICHRIE Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ.

Information Literacy Curriculum Integration Grant, MTSU 2020
THM 4400 Capstone in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Online Degree Grant, University of Houston 2018
Internal Consulting and Research Planning; Hospitality Business Analytics.

Marketing Science Institute Clayton Dissertation Proposal Competition 2017
To Believe or Not to Believe: The Impact of Avatar Information Labeling on Source Credibility.

TEACHING

Middle Tennessee State University (2019–present)

THM 3100 Introduction to the Tourism and Hospitality Industry *(face-to-face, online)*
THM 3200 Principles of Lodging / Hotel Operations *(face-to-face, online)*
THM 3210 Service Design and Delivery *(face-to-face, online)*
THM 3350 Event Planning / Special Events
THM 3600 Professional Development *(online)*
THM 4140 Food and Beverage Tourism *(face-to-face, online)*
THM 4400 Capstone in Tourism and Hospitality Management
THM 4600 Leadership and Professionalism Seminar *(face-to-face, remote)*
THM 4907/4908/4909 Work Experience I and II; Internship in Hospitality, Events, and Tourism

University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College (2012–2019)

- Advanced Lodging Management Capstone (with Red Global HotelSim simulation)
- Advanced Hospitality Operations Capstone
- Hospitality Marketing (face-to-face, online)
- Hotel Operations (hybrid)
- Managing in the Service Environment (face-to-face, online)
- Housekeeping and Rooms Management
- Orlando Resort Experience (sole developer and instructor of experiential learning course)
- Graduate Directed Practicum (leadership, CHIA, personal branding)
- Instructor, Hilton College sister program, Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola, Lima, Peru (2013)

Belhaven University, School of Business (2018–2019)

- Hospitality Marketing (designed online course for adult studies)
- Facilities Management

Executive Education

- CMAA Business Management Institute
- CMAA AKSARBEN Chapter Education

STUDENT RESEARCH MENTORING

Faculty Mentor, Undergraduate Research 2026
Hannah Wallace, *Lines, lanes, and launches: Designing blueway entrance sites on the Duck River*

Thesis Mentor, High School Thesis, Central Magnet School 2026
Cadence Upham, *The role of parasocial interaction in shaping trust in YouTube influencer endorsements: A study of The Tim Tracker and Disney Parks*

Chair, Master's Thesis 2021
Will Mitchell, *The impact of crime statistics on traveler risk perceptions and willingness to travel*

Chair, Undergraduate Honors Thesis 2021
Rosemary Reid, *Universal design in the restaurant industry: Bridging the gap between ADA guidelines and customer needs*

Committee Member, Doctoral Dissertation 2020
Mohammed Alqahtani, *From the traditional marketing mix (4Ps) in sport to new marketing mix (3Ps): Toward a paradigm shift from practitioner's perspective*

SERVICE

Program Leadership, Tourism and Hospitality Management, MTSU

- Led the newly approved B.S. in Tourism and Hospitality Management from launch: created and implemented its first strategic plan, overhauled the curriculum and concentrations, and developed its mission, vision, and core values
- Achieved and maintain ACPHA accreditation; first ACPHA-accredited hospitality program in Tennessee
- Developed the Major Field Assessment and graduating-student exit survey
- Organize and lead the THM Industry Advisory Board
- Created the THM Mentorship Program with the THM Advisory Board (2024–2025)
- Mentor, Student Ambassadors, Tennessee Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism (2024, 2025)
- Wrote proposal for an on-campus hotel learning lab
- Organized Spring 2020 THM/LSTS Career Fair; Faculty Advisor, HC3 Hackathon MTSU team (2020)
- Search committees: Chair (Summer 2021, Fall 2021); Member (Spring, Summer, and Fall 2021; Spring 2024; Fall 2025)

University Service, MTSU

2025–2029	Faculty Senate
2022–2028	Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (Chair 2024–2025, 2026–2027; Vice Chair 2023–2024, 2025–2026)
2026–2027	Faculty Leadership Development Institute, Participant
2026–2027	Campus Hotel Advisory Committee
2024–2025	Campus Hotel Project, RFP Consultant and Selection Committee
2024–2026	Academic Misconduct Committee
2023, 2024	CUSTOMS New Student Orientation, Panelist and Moderator, Academic Affairs
2021–2023	Academic Appeals Subcommittee, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences
2022	Strategic Planning Consultant: Public Health; Recording Industry; College of Media and Entertainment

2021	Search Committee, Director of Corporate and Strategic Partnerships
2021, 2022	Scholars Week Poster Symposium, Judge
2020–2025	Consultant, Hotel Design Course Project, Interior Design Program

Professional and Disciplinary Service

2024–present	Editorial Board, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights
2023–present	Editorial Board, Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education
2021–present	Editorial Board, Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism
2026	ACPHA Accreditation Site Reviewer, University of Mississippi
2023–present	Academic Advisory Committee, Hospitality Internships
2022–2025	Advisory Board, Hospitality and Tourism Program, Nashville State
2014	Research Project Funding Committee, AH&LEF

Ad hoc reviewer (151 verified reviews across 17 journals; Web of Science): *Advances in Hospitality & Tourism Research; Anatolia; Applied Sciences; Behavioral Sciences; Cornell Hospitality Quarterly; Current Issues in Tourism; Foods; International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research; International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health; International Journal of Hospitality Management; Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education; Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights; Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research; Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing; Journal of Services Marketing; Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism; Research in Hospitality Management; Sustainability; Tourism Management; World Leisure Journal.* Conferences: ICHRIE, EuroCHRIE, ICHRIE SECSA, Global Conference on Business Economics (GLOBE).

Industry and Community Service

2025–present	Board of Directors, Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association (TNHTA)
2025–present	Marketing Committee, Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association
2025–present	Tourism Committee, Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association
2023	Tennessee State Representative, Congressional Summit on Travel & Tourism, Southeast Tourism Society, Washington, DC
2024	THM Representative, Williamson County Schools Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center
2024	THM Representative, Tennessee Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development visit to MTSU

University of Houston Service (2012–2018)

- Lodging Committee Member (2012–2018)
- Club Advisor, Hotel and Lodging Association of the Greater Houston Area Student Chapter (2013–2015)
- Club Advisor, Disney Internship Program Alumni Association, Houston Chapter (2013–2015)
- Enrollment Services Liaison, Communications Internship (2012–2014)
- Faculty Panel on Student Engagement in the Classroom (2017); Team Facilitator, EuroCHRIE Hotel Challenge via Red Global (2017)
- Moderator, UH Hall of Honor Think Tanks (2016)

INVITED TALKS AND PANELS

January 17, 2026	Speaker, “Careers in Tourism & Hospitality Management,” Upward Bound

July 16, 2025	Panelist, "The Future of Hospitality Workforce & Compliance," TNHTA Legal + Workforce Symposium
May 29, 2025	Speaker, Bahamas Tourism Commission and University of the Bahamas (MTSU collaboration)
January 15, 2025	Speaker, "Learning about THM and the New Hotel Project," Dames Club
October 25, 2024	Panelist, "Effective Strategies for Time Management & Prioritization," Hospitality Internships Learners2Leaders Webinar
May 24, 2024	Panelist, "Effective Communication," Hospitality Internships Learners2Leaders Webinar
April 24, 2024	Speaker, Rutherford County Hospitality Association
April 9, 2024	Speaker, "Tourism: More Than a Vacation," HHP Spring Showcase, MTSU
October 20, 2023	Speaker, "Leadership Essentials," MTSU Quantum
June 23, 2023	Speaker, "Beyond the Mainstream: Special Interest, Niche, and Heritage Tourism," MTSU Alumni Summer College
June 22, 2023	Moderator, "The Economic Impacts of Rural Tourism," MTSU Alumni Summer College
June 21, 2023	Speaker, "Tourism: More Than a Vacation," MTSU Alumni Summer College
May 17, 2023	Speaker, "Tourism in Your Own Backyard," Dames Club
March 2, 2019	Breakout Speaker, Hospitality Management, Texas Community College Teachers Association Annual Conference
October 22, 2015	Keynote Speaker, HEB Women in Leadership Luncheon Series
May 1, 2015	Breakout Speaker, Houston Public Library Annual Meeting

MEDIA

Podcast guest, *Gather and Go with Brian Jewell* (The Group Travel Leader): "Tourism's Future — Are You Doing Your Part?" (June 24, 2026). https://grouptravelleader.com/tourisms-future-are-you-doing-your-part/

Featured in *MTSU News*: "MTSU Tourism, Hospitality Management professor Whalen wins triple honors in 2025" (October 16, 2025).

Featured on *Out of the Blue*: "Why MTSU's Hospitality & Tourism Program Is a Game-Changer for Your Career" (July 2, 2025).

Featured in *MTSU News*: "Professor says communication is key to helping students succeed during pandemic" (October 15, 2020).

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Assistant General Manager April 2011–June 2012

Drury Inn & Suites Houston West/Energy Corridor, Houston, TX

- Oversaw all team members and supervisors; hired and managed front desk, housekeeping, and maintenance staff
- Managed financial performance, corporate accounts and sales calls, and guest relations

Restaurant Manager April 2010–April 2011

Pappas Seafood House, Humble, TX

- Managed staff training, evaluation, scheduling, and coaching across host, bar, and service teams
- Oversaw cash and credit receipts, labor charts, and directed selling to grow profit

Server, Head Waiter, and Trainer December 2009–April 2010
Pappas Seafood House, Humble, TX

Ranch Hand June–October 2009
K-Bar-Z Guest Ranch and Outfitters, Cody, WY
- Managed guest kitchen and meals, cabin housekeeping, and guest services; led trail rides and outfitted hunting trips

Intramural Soccer Supervisor August 2008–May 2009
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA