

[Date]  
[Administrator Name]  
[Administrator Title]  
[Department]

Dear [Administrator Name],

I am writing to request approval to attend the Academic Meeting Professionals Conference, scheduled for August 27–28, 2026, at Dollywood’s HeartSong Lodge & Resort in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. This conference is specifically designed for meeting and event planners across the University of Tennessee System. It provides focused professional development that is highly relevant to my role, including opportunities to strengthen skills in event planning, logistics, budgeting, communication, vendor management, and guest experience. Because this event is tailored to UT employees, the sessions and resources directly address the unique challenges and expectations of planning events within our System.

#### Key Benefits to My Role and Our Department

- **Role-Aligned Professional Development:** The conference offers peer-led sessions and professional presentations that will provide practical insights and System-specific best practices I can immediately apply to my work.
- **Access to Award-Winning Industry Experts Without High Travel Costs:** HeartSong Lodge & Resort offers an in-state, comprehensive conference environment with lodging, meeting space, catering, transportation, and access to Dollywood’s nationally recognized event professionals. Dollywood was recently named to Forbes’ Best Customer Service 2026 list and has earned multiple international Golden Ticket Awards, including Best Guest Experience for 16 consecutive years.
- **Strategic Use of Dollywood as a Learning Environment:** Rather than serving as a distraction, Dollywood functions as a unique case-study setting. Behind-the-scenes processes at the park mirror the operational challenges we face in University event planning, including cross-department coordination, simultaneous project execution, and guest engagement.
- **Networking and Vendor Engagement:** The conference includes access to 40 vendors representing UT offices, UT-contracted businesses, and local professionals in the meetings and events industry, creating valuable opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

For an additional \$75, attendees may participate in an optional Friday afternoon session that will feature a luncheon and guided walking tour of signature event spaces led by Dollywood’s event professionals. Participants will hear how they approach budgeting, cross-departmental collaboration, simultaneous project planning, change management, guest-experience enhancements, brand integrity, and real-time operational decision-making at “America’s #1 Theme Park” (as named by Tripadvisor Traveler’s Choice Awards three of the last four years!).

#### Estimated Costs

Lodging: \$160 per night

- **Conference Registration:** \$150–\$300 (depending on registration date)
- **Optional In-Park Educational Experience:** \$75 (park admission not included)
- **Mileage and per diems**

Attending this conference will enhance my effectiveness in planning and executing high-quality University events, and represents a strong return on investment due to its in-state location and system-focused content.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Department]