PROTOCOL & DIPLOMACY INTERNATIONAL

PROTOCOL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

2026 Annual International Protocol Education Forum

Precision & Pace: Navigating Protocol & Diplomacy in a Fast-Moving World
20 July - 23 July 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
Conrad Indianapolis

Monday 20 July 2026

3:00 - 6:30 p.m. Registration | Elevator Landing - 2nd Floor

3:00 - 3:30 p.m. Volunteer Orientation | Singapore A&B

4:00 - 5:00 p.m. New Member & First Time Forum Attendee Welcome | Singapore A&B

The New Member and First-Time Attendee Welcome offers an introduction to PDI-POA and the community you are joining. Hear insights and greetings from Vice President of Membership, Mauri Earl, and President, Catherine Wilson, as they share perspectives on engagement, involvement, and making the most of your experience. This session is designed to help new attendees feel informed, welcomed, and connected from the start.

5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Opening Ceremony & Reception | Vienna North

Join us for the PDI-POA Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception, open to all attendees and grounded in this year's theme, Precision & Pace: Navigating Protocol and Diplomacy in a Fast-Moving World. The program will formally recognize the nations represented, offer a first opportunity to connect, and feature opening remarks from the President to set a welcoming and purposeful tone.

Dinner on Your Own

Tuesday 21 July 2026

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Registration | Elevator Landing - 2nd Floor

Morning Meet-Up in the Attendee Lounge | London

Join colleagues in the Attendee Lounge for a relaxed morning meet-up with coffee, networking, and optional professional headshots. Stop by the Author's Corner to connect with featured authors and discover new resources before the day officially kicks off.

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. Opening Announcements & Remarks | Vienna North & South

9:15 - 10:15 a.m. **Plenary: Trust, Judgement, and Power: Ethical Use of Generative AI in Diplomatic Practice | Vienna North & South**

Generative artificial intelligence is transforming professional practice, offering powerful efficiencies while raising complex ethical challenges - particularly in protocol and diplomatic contexts where trust, discretion, and cultural sensitivity are paramount. This plenary examines the responsible use of generative AI through a protocol and diplomatic ethics lens, focusing on where technology can appropriately support professional work and where human judgement must remain central. Participants will explore key ethical considerations - including bias, cultural representation, data privacy, transparency, and accountability - and gain a practical framework to guide policy, leadership decisions, and institutional practice. Attendees will leave with shared principals and critical questions to ensure AI adoption strengthens, rather than compromises, diplomatic credibility and trust.

Moderator: Catherine Wilson
Panelists: Ryan Gilha
Ankur Gupta, Professor-Computer Sciences, Butler University
James McGrath. Professor-Religion, Butler University

10:15 - 10:45 a.m. Networking Break

Networking Breaks provide dedicated time to continue conversations, strengthen connections, and engage informally with fellow attendees. Participants are invited to take professional headshots and visit the Author's Corner to meet featured authors and explore their work. These breaks are designed to encourage meaningful exchange in a relaxed, collegial setting.

11:00 - 11:45 a.m. **Forms of Address Fundamentals: Invitations, Place Cards, & Name Badges | Singapore A&B**

Every protocol professional needs to be knowledgeable about forms of address – on letters, invitations, place cards, name badges – and in conversation. This session will include information on use of the Honorable, former and retired office holders, ranks in the armed services, and titles in academia. This session will be of interest not only to members new to their job, but to advanced members who have questions no one has thus far been able to answer in a clear, concise way.

Robert Hickey, Author of *Honor & Respect: The Official Guide to Names, Titles and Forms of Address*

Sustaining Professional Effectiveness: A Framework for Balanced Wellbeing | Vienna West
Protocol professionals often operate under sustained pressure that will impact wellbeing and performance. Join me to explore practical strategies for managing stress, maintaining energy, and setting career-supporting boundaries to sustain professional effectiveness.
Hope Laman, Founder, Hope Filled Solutions, LLC

Staging Formal Photography | Vienna East
Learn how expertly planned photography elevates the impact of any ceremony or diplomatic event. This session covers the strategic role of photo staging—from timing and flow to placement, protocol, and visual storytelling. Discover how to coordinate principals, manage movement, and ensure every captured moment reinforces the event's purpose, prestige, and professionalism.

Melissa Goitia, Executive Director-University Ceremonies, Office of the Sr Vice President & Secretary of the University, Arizona State University

12:00 - 1:15 p.m. Networking Lunch | Artsgarden

The Networking Lunch offers a welcoming space to connect over a shared meal and meaningful conversation. Attendees may gather at tables centered on curated discussion topics or simply enjoy relaxed, open dialogue while building new relationships and strengthening professional connections.

1:30 - 2:15 p.m. Breakout Session 2

Diplomacy at the Board Table: Meeting Management & Etiquette | Singapore A&B
Successful meeting management begins with a plan and a strategy. Deploying your protocol and diplomacy skills along with understanding meeting management best practices, such as Roberts Rules of Orders, can pave the way for the important work to be done. Learn how to set an approachable agenda and steward a meeting to success for you and your principal.

Darin Pfeifer, PhD, Assistant Vice President for Administration and Protocol, Drexel University

Invitations, RSVPs, & Ticketing - building a seamless guest management process | Vienna West
For protocol professionals, invitation and RSVP management is a critical function that directly impacts security, access, and the success of events involving senior leaders, dignitaries, and the public. This session offers a practical overview of guest management best practices across events of varying size, scope, and budget. Topics include invitation structures, target counts, guest list development, RSVP collection, confirmations and ticketing, and managing guest correspondence in high-pressure environments—helping protocol officers support principals, reduce risk, and ensure events run smoothly and professionally.

Mackenzie Wasilick, Social Secretary, Office of Governor Kathy Hochul

Confidence & Presence in Every Moment | Vienna East
This lecture examines how etiquette and protocol cultivate true confidence and a commanding presence in every interaction. It reveals how posture, tone, timing, and awareness communicate authority and poise long before words are spoken. Attendees will gain practical tools to move through each moment with intention, elegance, and self-assured grace.

Christine Glick, Etiquette & Protocol Coach, The Bold Protocol

2:15 - 3:00 p.m. Networking Break

3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Breakout Session 3

Leading High Powered Teams | Singapore A&B
Leading high-powered protocol teams begins by putting the right pieces in place according to the dynamic you are trying to create. Hiring with purpose, a program with goal alignment, driving accountability, and dynamic leadership. High-powered teams are built intentionally, on a foundation made up of carefully designed leadership pillars. We will address how to build this foundation as well as how to manage a change toward a high-powered work environment.

Kyle Helvey, Co-Founder & CEO, Global Center for Protocol Development

Topic of Precedence | Vienna West
Description coming soon!

Bengt-Arne Hulleman, Executive Director, Protocolbureau

Topic of Sports Protocol | Vienna East
Description coming soon!

Danny Haynor, Director, Men's Basketball Championships, NCAA

*Optional : Dine Around Socials *Sign-up available in July*

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PROTOCOL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Wednesday 22 July

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Morning Meet-up in the Attendee Lounge | London

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. Welcome & Morning Announcements | Vienna North & South

9:15 - 10:30 a.m. **Plenary : The Room Speaks First : Diplomatic Seating, Precedence and Protocol in Practice | Vienna North & South**

This plenary equips participants to design seating and room layouts that communicate respect, neutrality, and hierarchy appropriately, while avoiding common protocol pitfalls. Participants will build, test, and defend seating charts using real diplomatic rules and practical hosting constraints.

Leslie Lautenslager, Founder, LL Protocol Solutions, LLC

10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Networking Break

11:15 - 12:00 p.m. Breakout Session 4

Forms of Address Fundamentals: Invitations, Place Cards & Name Badges | Singapore A&B
Every protocol professional needs to be knowledgeable about forms of address – on letters, invitations, place cards, name badges – and in conversation. This session will include information on use of the Honorable, former and retired office holders, ranks in the armed services, and titles in academia. This session will be of interest not only to members new to their job, but to advanced members who have questions no one has thus far been able to answer in a clear, concise way.

Robert Hickey, Deputy Director, The Protocol School of Washington

Ethical Leadership & Intercultural Protocol in the Converging Era | Vienna West
Ethical Leadership and Intercultural Protocol in the Converging Era" refers to the practice of leading with integrity, cultural intelligence, and global awareness in a world where political, technological, and social systems are increasingly intertwined. It emphasizes that ethical principles—such as dignity, fairness, accountability, and transparency—must guide decision-making even as leaders navigate diverse, and sometimes conflicting cultural norms. Intercultural protocol provides the behavioral framework that enables leaders to demonstrate respect, build trust, and communicate effectively across borders. Together, these disciplines equip leaders to act with clarity and credibility while fostering cooperation in a complex, interconnected global environment.

Dr. April Ripley, CEO, The Premiere Image, Inc.

Protocol & International Misconceptions | Vienna East

Knowing protocol rules is not enough for Protocol officers. International knowledge of geography, history, culture, languages, traditions, politics, and religions is very important for the Protocol Officer role and the success of all events. There is a lot of misinformation, and to avoid any mishap, a Protocol Officer should seek knowledge about all fields in the international arena.

Ragda Kurdy, Executive Director & CEO, Protocol, Translation & International Services, Inc

12:00 - 1:15 p.m. Networking Lunch | Artsgarden

1:30 - 2:45 p.m. **Plenary: Bridging Cities, Elevating Communities | Vienna North & South**

Discover how Sister City partnerships strengthen global ties through international collaboration, cultural exchange, and community engagement. This session highlights proven approaches and inspiring examples that help cities build meaningful relationships and create local impact through global connection.

Moderator: Melissa Goitia
Panelists : Raju Chinthala, Indianapolis & Carmel Sister Cities
Peter Kirkwood, Indiana State Representative, Sister Cities International
Lana Ramer, President, Ukrainian Society of Indiana

2:45 - 3:30 p.m. Networking Break

3:30 - 4:15 p.m. Breakout Session 5

Engaging on the Caribbean Stage | Singapore A&B
Description coming soon!

How to Create Service-Hearted Experiences | Vienna East
Protocol is the way we do business and engage with people. It's also the art of making people feel welcome, secure, and valued. It can be a thankless and challenging practice, becoming a checklist at best and a hindrance at worst. This session challenges protocol officers to move beyond the checklist and adopt a service-oriented mindset that elevates a standard visit into a world-class experience, even with limited resources.

Pamela Eyring, President, The Protocol School of Washington

Onsite Operations - executing events with precision & control | Vienna West
As a continuation of Part 1's focus on invitations, RSVPs, and ticketing, this session shifts from planning to execution—examining how pre-event decisions directly shape onsite success of guest operations. Designed for protocol professionals operating in high-visibility, high-pressure environments, the program explores best practices for onsite registration management, credentialing systems, printed name support (including name tags, table tents, and seat signs), staffing plans, seating logistics, and event activations. Participants will gain practical insights to support security, manage

access, guide dignitaries and principals seamlessly, and ensure onsite operations reflect professionalism, accuracy, and respect for protocol at every touchpoint.

Mackenzie Wasilick, Deputy Secretary, Office of Governor Kathy Hochul

Dinner on your own.

Social options coming soon!

Thursday 23 July

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Morning Meet-up in the Attendee Lounge | London

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. Welcome & Morning Announcements | Vienna North & South

9:15 - 10:30 a.m. **Plenary : Fundamentals of Flag Protocol | Vienna North & South**
This interactive session immerses participants in the essential principles of flag protocol through practical, hands-on application. Participants will practice proper flag positioning, order of precedence, and display in a variety of real-world scenarios, including ceremonies, stage setups, and international engagements. Through guided exercises and live demonstrations, the session reinforces standards of respect, accuracy, and cultural awareness, ensuring participants leave with the confidence to correctly present flags in professional and diplomatic environments.

10:30 - 11:15 a.m. Networking Break

11:15 - 12:00 p.m. Breakout Session 6

African Traditional Protocol Precedence: Nigeria as a Case Study | Vienna East
The focus is on historical African systems of traditional protocols and precedence that governed social interactions in African societies. - The presentation specifically pertains to African societies with a focus on Nigeria and its unique customs. - It explores how these traditional practices shaped hierarchy, authority, and social order. - It underscores that these dynamics predates colonial influences.

Chuks Josiah, PhD, DEO, De-Ivy League School of Protocol & Diplomacy

Protocol and Professional Growth: Applying Protocol Skills for Career Development | Vienna West
Join us to identify strategies for parlaying your protocol skills and experience into related fields. Consider how you assess building your professional portfolio and join a discussion of deciding when it is time to take the next step.

Hope Laman, Founder, Hope Filled Solutions, LLC

Darin Pfeifer, PhD, Assistant Vice President for Administration and Protocol, Drexel University

Fashion and Diplomacy | Singapore A&B
Fashion and diplomacy are a powerful pair. Learn how fashion has been used as a diplomatic tool throughout history, how you can better brief the principals you work with about dressing for the occasion, and how to harness the power of colors, fabrics, and designers to advance your own protocol career.

Mary Guido, Owner & Lead Planner, Mary Guido Atelier

12:00 - 1:15 p.m. Networking Lunch | Artsgarden

1:30 - 2:00 p.m. Group Photo - Location TBD

2:15 - 3:00 p.m. Breakout Session 7

The New Soft Power: Strategic Presence and Protocol in an Age of Acceleration | Vienna West
In today's fast-moving diplomatic and organizational environments, protocol professionals must operate with precision, agility, and strategic awareness. This session reframes etiquette and protocol as instruments of modern soft power, which are tools that shape perception, stabilize high-pressure interactions, and influence outcomes under accelerated timelines. Participants will explore how strategic presence functions as an invisible architecture of authority in complex, cross-cultural settings. Practical frameworks will equip attendees to apply protocol dynamically without sacrificing dignity or precision.

Courtney Savoy, President, The American School of Etiquette, Inc

Ceremony Culture and Cohesion: Understanding Military Traditions Today | Singapore A&B
Military traditions (ranging from formal ceremonies and symbolic rituals to shared cultural customs) serve as powerful tools for reinforcing discipline, unity, and pride across generations. In today's rapidly changing world, these traditions not only preserve heritage but also adapt to reflect evolving values of diversity, inclusion, and global engagement. By examining their enduring significance, this presentation highlights how ceremony and culture foster cohesion, strengthen leadership, and sustain the moral fabric of military life.

Jennifer Beckett, Director of Protocol, Office of the Secretariat, SAF/DSP
Greg Pendleton, Deputy Chief, ACC Protocol, ACC

State Banquets | Vienna East
Description coming soon!

Bengt-Arne Hulleman, Executive Director, Protocolbureau

3:00 - 3:15 p.m	Break
3:15 - 4:00 p.m.	**Plenary: Share Your Scar Tissue | Vienna North & South** Back by popular demand for a second year, this session invites protocol professionals to once again compare battle scars, swap hard-earned lessons, and share a few well-deserved laughs with colleagues who truly understand the job. We'll revisit the behind-the-scenes moments that didn't go quite as planned—and the wisdom gained along the way. Think of it as group therapy... but with better name tags. *Moderator: Chris Young, Governance Chair, PDI-POA*
4:00 - 4:15 p.m.	Final Announcements
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	**Closing Ceremony & Reception | The Rathskeller** The Closing Reception at the historic Rathskeller offers a final opportunity to connect with colleagues and reflect on the shared experiences of PDI-POA. Join us for an evening of conversation and collegial exchange, culminating in closing remarks from the President as we formally conclude the program and look ahead to continued collaboration.

Note on:

Networking Breaks provide dedicated time to continue conversations, strengthen connections, and engage informally with fellow attendees. Participants are invited to take professional headshots and visit the Author's Corner to meet featured authors and explore their work. These breaks are designed to encourage meaningful exchange in a relaxed, collegial setting.

The Networking Lunch offers a welcoming space to connect over a shared meal and meaningful conversation. Attendees may gather at tables centered on curated discussion topics or simply enjoy relaxed, open dialogue while building new relationships and strengthening professional connections.

Please note, all programming, descriptions, and times are subject to change.