



Ph.D. in Business Administration

Graduation Reception
Academic Year 2025-2026

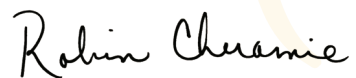
May 12, 2026
The Conservatory
Acworth, GA

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on earning your Ph.D. in Business Administration from Kennesaw State University. The value of this accomplishment cannot be overstated. As a member of the graduating class of 2025-2026, not only have you taken a significant step toward achieving your professional goals, but you have also proven your ability to overcome challenges and strive to better yourself.

Completing your Ph.D. is one of the most difficult things you will ever do. While celebrating your success, be sure to thank the friends and family in your life who supported you on this journey and helped give you the strength to earn the highest academic degree awarded by our University.

To our 2026 Ph.D. graduates, what you have already accomplished is amazing. What comes next from you will be no less than inspiring. Congratulations!



Robin Cheramie, Ph.D.
Dean, Coles College of Business
and Professor of Management
Kennesaw State University

Spring Commencement Reception Event Program

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Saurabh Gupta
Executive Director, Ph.D. Business Administration

Dr. Alison Keefe
Associate Dean for Graduate Programs

Program Faculty Recognition for AY 2025-2026

Presentation of Program Outstanding Student Award

Recognition of Graduates

Closing Remarks

Dr. Robin Cheramie
Dean, Coles College of Business

Dinner

Faculty Recognition

Dr. Raj Veliyath



Rajaram (Raj) Veliyath is a Professor of Management in the Michael A. Leven School of Management, Entrepreneurship and Hospitality at Kennesaw State University. His academic expertise spans strategic management, business policy, and international business, with a focus on how firms compete and govern themselves in complex and global environments.

Dr. Veliyath holds a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, and a Bachelor of Technology (Honors) from the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. His research interests include strategic management and international business, and his scholarly work has been published in well-regarded academic journals within these fields

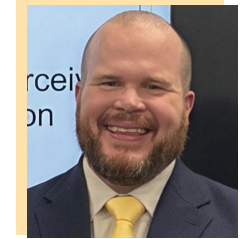
At Kennesaw State University, Dr. Veliyath teaches in the management discipline and contributes to the academic mission of the university through teaching, research, and service. His work supports the development of analytical and strategic thinking among students preparing for leadership roles in domestic and global organizations.

Dr. Veliyath's record of peer-reviewed scholarship reflects sustained productivity and influence in strategic management and international business. His body of work continues to advance research conversations in these areas and strengthens the academic reputation of our PhD program through visible, citable contributions.

In addition to his scholarship, Dr. Veliyath consistently demonstrates strong engagement with the PhD program through meaningful participation in doctoral activities and support of student development. He has served on nine committees, and his continued involvement helps build a rigorous and supportive research environment for our doctoral students. Collectively, his scholarly output and active program engagement exemplify the level of faculty commitment that makes our PhD program thrive.

Outstanding Student of the Year

Brad Eskridge



Brad Eskridge is an Instructor of Marketing at the Foster College of Business at Bradley University. He holds a B.S. and an MBA from Bradley University. At Bradley, he teaches undergraduate classes in marketing, sales, business, and the honors program. With over fifteen years of athletic and academic coaching experience, Brad currently serves as the Head Coach for the university's competitive Sales Tea. Since taking over in 2016, he has helped the team earn Top-15 placements annually, eight Top-10 placements, and the 2021 and 2022 championships at the National Collegiate Sales Competition. During his tenure at Bradley University, he has been recognized with the Faculty Teaching Award in 2024, the Chair's Citation for Excellence in 2022, the Award of Excellence in 2020, and the Professional Achievement Award in 2019. His research interests include sales leadership, the use of artificial intelligence in marketing and sales, and salesperson performance. Brad and his wife Jessica were married in 2012 and are blessed for four amazing daughters: Hadley, Havenly, Hartley, and Halsey.

Graduates

Ph.D. in Business Administration



Olushola Abayomi

Information Systems

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Khawaja Saeed, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Pallab Sanyal, Ph.D., George Mason University
Reader: Reza Vaezi, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University



Tony Ballard

Management

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Joshua Palmer, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Graham Lowman, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Charn McAllister, Ph.D., Northern Arizona University

AI You Can Trust: Understanding the Role of Structural Assurance and Situational Normality in the Use of Generative AI

Key Points:

- **Trust is critical for GenAI adoption**
Widespread use of Generative AI depends on user trust, especially because GenAI performs tasks traditionally associated with human intelligence and cognition.
- **Structural assurance and situational normality drive trust**
Building on the Trust in Technology Model, the study shows that safeguards, reliability, and familiarity with GenAI systems positively influence users' trusting intentions.
- **The model extends theory and offers practical guidance**
By expanding cognitive factors and testing them across different contexts, the research advances theory on trust in emerging technologies and provides actionable insights for organizations to increase users' willingness to rely on GenAI.

Veteran Identity Strain Beyond the Honeymoon-Hangover Stage

Key Points:

- **Civilian transition creates identity strain**
Veterans often struggle with role ambiguity and identity adjustment in civilian jobs.
- **Military rank shapes coping ability**
Higher former rank is expected to support more effective coping during transition.
- **Guidance for HR practices**
Results can inform training and policies to reduce turnover and improve skill transfer.



Davis Brown

Marketing

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Patrick Fennell, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Pramod Iyer, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Laura Bowman, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

From Evaluation to Expression: Exploring Value-Driven Review Activism in Response to Minority Ownership Signals

Key Points:

- **Reviews as activism**
Consumers use reviews to express values, not just quality.
- **Identity signals influence reviews**
Ownership identity shapes positive or negative viewing.
- **Opportunity for minority-owned businesses**
Highlighting identity can boost reputation and engagement.



Trey Constantine

Management

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Birton Cowden, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Steven Phelan, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Shelby Meek, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Identifying the Threshold: Using Regulatory Focus as a Predictor of CEO Adaptability During Environmental Changes

Key Points:

- **Personality shapes strategic adaptation**
Executives' regulatory focus affects how well they adapt to change and avoid declining performance.
- **Novel theoretical integration**
The study combines regulatory focus and effectuation theories using simulations to analyze decisions under uncertainty.
- **Dynamic view of executive strategy**
Strategic behavior is shown to be flexible and personality-driven, not fixed, with implications for outcomes like CEO turnover.



Mac Cunningham-Sereque

Information Systems

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Aaron French, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Co-Chair: Amy Woszczyński, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Andrew Green, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Saurabh Gupta, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Digital Divide and Participation in Financial Services: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

Key Points:

- **Digital access matters**
Digital resources affect financial participation.
- **Motivation explains the link**
Autonomy, competence, and relatedness drive the effect.
- **Theory-driven, data-tested**
COR and SDT are tested with U.S. survey data.



Vannesia Darby

Marketing

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Hyunju Shin, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Patrick Fennell, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Jacqueline Eastman, Ph.D., Florida Gulf Coast University

The Role of Race in Consumer Responses to Social Media Influencer Transgressions

Key Points:

- **Influencer race matters**
Consumer reactions differ by influencer race.
- **Blame drives disengagement**
Responsibility judgments explain responses.
- **Context shapes effects**
Controlability and influencer type moderate outcomes.



Brad Eskridge

Marketing

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Hyunju Shin, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Brian Rutherford, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Lucy Matthews, Ph.D., Middle Tennessee State University

AI-Customer Symbiosis: Driving Future Relationship Intentions Through Perceived Benefits and Relationship Satisfaction

Key Points:

- **AI-customer symbiosis matters in B2B sales**
Customers' perceptions of working symbiotically with AI shape their future relationship intentions.
- **Benefits and satisfaction explain the effect**
Perceived benefits and relationship satisfaction mediate the impact of AI-customer symbiosis.
- **Ethics and relationships condition outcomes**
A firm's ethical reputation and salesperson relationship quality strengthen these effects.



Matthew Maylath

Accounting

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Hyungshin Park, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Marcus Caylor, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Qi (Flora) Dong, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Comparative Impact of the Dot-Com Bubble, Great Financial Crisis, and Covid-19 on the Relative Properties of Management Earnings Guidance and Analyst Earnings Forecasts

Key Points:

- **Purpose and scope of the study**
Compares manager guidance vs. analyst forecasts across three major crises.
- **Information advantages under uncertainty**
Examines how macro and firm-level uncertainty shift information advantages.
- **Contribution and practical relevance**
Helps investors interpret forecasts during economic crises.



Shelly Robinson

Information Systems

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Reza Vaezi, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Hamed Qahri-Saremi, Ph.D., Colorado State University
Reader: Saurabh Gupta, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Affective Ambivalence and Behavioral Outcomes in System-Directed Work Environments

Key Points:

- **Emotions drive behavior before cognition**
Affective reactions shape how people act in system-directed work.
- **Ambivalence leads to different responses**
Mixed positive and negative emotions influence whether clinicians comply, revert, or innovate.
- **System affordances shape outcomes**
Perceived action possibilities explain why similar emotions produce different behaviors.



Jenna-Lyn Roman

Management

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Graham Lowman, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Joshua Palmer, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Katina Sawyer, Ph.D., University of Arizona

Can Caregivers Really Have It All? Identity Salience and Career Success

Key Points:

- **Focus on working caregivers and identity management**
Examines how working caregivers manage work-family boundaries and identity.
- **Attention to non-traditional caregiving arrangements**
It highlights gaps in existing work-family research by including non-traditional caregivers, such as extended family caregivers, those in multigenerational households, and step, adoptive, or foster parents.
- **Integrated theoretical model and empirical approach**
Tests an integrated theory model using survey data to link caregiving to work and life outcomes.



Lee Shinaberger

Accounting

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Andrew Trotman, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Divesh Sharma, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Velina Popova, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

The Effect of Client Power and Auditor Power on Auditor Negotiation Judgments

Key Points:

- **Power Dynamics**
Studies how auditor and client power shape audit negotiations.
- **Regulatory Context**
Motivated by independence concerns under SOX and EU rules.
- **Study Design**
Uses an experiment varying client power and auditor role.



Lesya Stallings

Accounting

Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Sunay Mutlu, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Divesh Sharma, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: Kelly Ha, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University

Firm-Level Climate Change Exposure and Analysts' Information Environment

Key Points:

- The study examines the link between firm-level climate change exposure and financial analysts' information environment.
- It investigates how a firm's climate change exposure score from earnings calls affects analysts' forecast properties.
- The study uses a specific component of CSR disclosure in climate change exposure and its impact on analysts' forecasts and recommendations.



Chunxia (Trisha) Zhang

Management

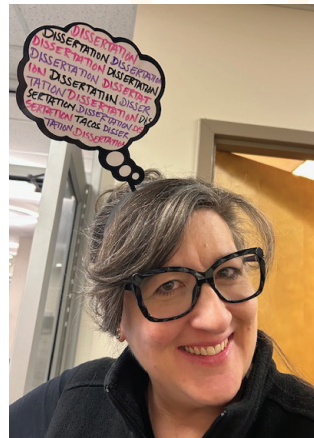
Dissertation Committee:

Chair: Birton Cowden, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Second: Michael Maloni, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
Reader: David Gligor, Ph.D., Florida Gulf Coast University

Will Chinese Suppliers “Eat” U.S. Tariffs or Walk Away?

Key Points:

- **Tariffs Pass-Through Interpretation**
Explores how Chinese suppliers interpret U.S. buyers’ decisions to pass through tariff costs.
- **Emotional and Behavioral Responses**
Shows how perceived severity and unfairness drive supplier emotions (e.g., anger) and relationship continuation intentions.
- **Experimental Approach and Contribution**
Uses a 2x2 vignette experiment to link geopolitical trade shocks to micro-level supplier-buyer dynamics.



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