

AIPC Academy 2026 Draft Program: April 12-17



Sunday 12 April 2026	
13.00 - 13.30	Registration
13.30 – 14.00	Icebreaker exercise. circle of connections Introduce yourself in 1 minute! Share your role, venue, and unique perspective in a dynamic, outdoor circle to foster connections and set the stage for collaboration. Presenters: Participants Terrasse e-coffee / Cherry Meeting Room
14.00 – 14.30	Unleash the Warrior Within. The Haka Experience
14.30 - 15.00	Welcome to the AIPC 2026 Academy! Presenter. Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
15.00 - 16.00	Global Market Outlook A "scene setter" for Academy discussions, this opening session will provide a global market outlook, based on recent research by AIPC partners. Presenter: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
16.00 – 17.00	Introduction of team challenges A key element of the AIPC Academy are the team challenges. joint exercises round industry challenges. In this session, the participants will be briefed on their mission. Presenters: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC Julianne Jammers Managing Director STCC
17.30 - 19.00	Welcome reception Badian Lounge Bar, and Buffet Dinner. Argan Restaurant
Monday 13 April 2026	
09.00 - 09.30	Start of day Exercise Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
09.30 - 10.30	Voice of the Customer

	The overall event industry – similar to other industries – is facing an increased level of uncertainty. In this session, you will hear from 2 very different event organizers the challenges they are facing and how this is impacting their expectations with regards to contracting convention centers. Presenters: Natasha Richards Director of Impact & Industry Relations IMEX Chiara Gasparotto Deputy CEO European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO)
10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 - 12.30	Everything you want to ask a CEO Julianne Jammers Executive Director SwissTech Center Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center Lenka Zlebkova CEO Prague Convention Center
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch break. Argan Restaurant
13.30 – 15.00	Leadership through uncertainty Presenter: Sandy Kennedy CEO Entrepreneurial Scotland Uncertainty is the norm, but it also drives growth. This interactive workshop, led by executive Sandy Kennedy, equips leaders with tools to navigate ambiguity, mitigate risks, and turn uncertainty into opportunity. Through discussions and exercises, gain insights to lead confidently, make informed decisions, and inspire your team.
15.00 - 15.30	Networking Break
15.30 - 16.30	Leadership through uncertainty Presenter: Sandy Kennedy CEO Entrepreneurial Scotland
16.30 – 17.30	Team Challenge Preparation
18.30 - 20.00	Cocktail and Tapas Academy. Learn, Taste, Enjoy

Tuesday 14 April 2026

09.00 - 09.30	Start of day Exercise Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
09.30 - 10.30	TBD

10.30 - 11.00	Networking break
11.00 – 12.00	Global Trends in the Event Industry Professor Gayle McPherson Chair in Events and Cultural Policy, and Director of the Research Centre for Culture, Sport and Events School of Business and Creative Industries, University of West of Scotland Professor Gayle McPherson explores key trends in the evolving event industry, highlighting global growth, sustainability, and stakeholder expectations. She'll discuss emerging markets, women's football, multi-city bids, and AI's impact on venues and branding, emphasizing the industry's role in achieving net zero and adapting to technological advancements.
12.00 – 13.00	Finance. bringing it all together Finance is the place where it all comes together. In this session, you will hear from the Head of Finance of the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) how exiting financial data actually are and how they allow to have the bigger picture on the health of a convention center. Gemma Roxburgh Chief Financial Officer Hacking and Paterson Management Services
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break. Argan Restaurant
14.00 – 16.00	Team Building – The Sphere A spaceship, hidden in Europe's Area 51 in La Hulpe, Belgium, enables time-space travel. Engineers warn of timeline flaws threatening the world. Powered by AI within a mysterious sphere, it offers journeys to ancient Egypt, medieval quests, Mayan mysteries, Victorian London, and a futuristic Los Alamos to avert global catastrophe..
16.00 – 16.30	Networking Break
16.30 – 17.00	Session TBD Presenter.
17.00 - 18.00	Team Challenge Preparation
18.30 – 20.00	Buffet dinner - Argan Restaurant
20.00 – 21.00	Night walk in the woods (Optional)
Wednesday 15 April 2026	

10.00	Departure to Brussels
11.00 - 12.00	Business Development – What we think, we become Business development entails tasks and processes to develop and implement growth opportunities within and between organizations. But it all starts with an ambition and articulated objectives, which is turned into reality. In this session, you will hear from a senior industry leader how this can be achieved. Presenter: Genevieve Lim Vice President of Sales & MICE Marina Bay Sands
12:00 – 12:30	Presentation about Tour et Taxis Jean Vandamme Sales & Hospitality Manager – Events Tours et Taxis
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break. The Belgian Bar @ Gare Maritime
13.30 – 16.30	Management by Walking Around 2.0 In this session, the participants will be broken up into small teams. Each team will receive a case study on a convention center which needs to be “fixed”. Applying the lessons learned so far, each team will come up with a proposal, addressing the challenges faced. Next to the case study, the teams will have access to a chief operating officer, a chief technology officer, a sales manager and a HR- manager to obtain additional information and guidance. However, the teams will only have 2,5 hours to come up with the solution. Facilitated by. Julianne Jammers Managing Director SwissTech Convention Center – EPF Steve McKenzie Chief Innovation Officer Momentus Technologies Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center Gemma Roxburgh Chief Financial Officer Hacking and Paterson Management Services
16.30 – 18.00	Team Challenge Preparation
18.30 – 20.00	Dinner
20.00	Free time to explore the city

Thursday 16 April 2026	
09.00 - 09.30	Start of day Exercise Kurby Court President & CEO Calgary Convention Center
09.30 - 11.00	Bridging the Gap. Mediation and Business Events In our dynamic and fast paced business events industry, effective conflict management is key to seamless operations and successful outcomes. This workshop introduces mediation as a practical tool for resolving workplace tensions, facilitating collaboration, and improving team performance under pressure. Through interactive exercises and industry-specific scenarios, participants will discover how mediation bridges communication gaps and enhances workplace safety. Presenter. Angela Herberholz Founder HERBERHOLZ MEDIATION SERVICES
11.00 – 11.30	Networking break
11.30 – 12.30	Technology. to boldly go ... Technology has never been as important for convention centres as it is today, whether it concerns the implementation of health & safety protocols, enabling digital events or delivering actionable insights via data mining. This session will give an overview of the market landscape and the latest trends when it comes to technology for convention centers. Presenter. Steve MacKenzie Chief Innovation Officer Momentus Technologies
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch break. Argan Restaurant
13.30 – 16.30	Leadership in practice. a toolkit to apply next week Presenter. Kurby Court CEO Calgary CC
13.30 – 16.30	Challenge Presentation
16.30 – 17.30	Debrief With the team challenges delivered, it is time to debrief on the Academy week so far. What are the key lessons learned, the take-aways, new challenges discovered, ...
18.30 – 20.00	Special Academy Dinner - Brasserie 135

Friday 17 April 2026	
09.00 – 09.30	One step at a time. Kaizen Putting in place a continuous improvement process is of key importance for any organization wanting to achieve excellence. In this workshop, different methods and approaches will be explained, followed by an exercise and the definition of an action plan when participants will be back at their convention centre. Presenter: Sven Bossu CEO AIPC
09.30 – 10.30	Hosting a NATO Summit. Insights from The Hague's 2025 Experience Presenter. Michiel Middendorf General Manager World Forum The Hague In 2025, the World Forum The Hague hosted a historic NATO Summit. We have the privilege of welcoming Michiel Middendorf, CEO of the convention center, as a keynote speaker to share what it takes to make such a high-profile summit happen
10.30 – 11.30	Design is how it works, not how it looks like Good event design is key for delivering successful events and goes beyond the creative elements. it should include a clear strategy, excellent production and analytics allowing for actionable insights. This session will focus on the role convention centers can play when it comes to event design, covering all these elements. Presenter. Adam Paulitsch Design Director and Principal Populous Kansas City
11.30	Certificates and good-bye drink