

2026 Empower Summit

Program Schedule

Time	Event	Room
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7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Registration	Sugar Land Foyer V
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Six (6) SHRM continuing education credits (PDEs) are available for attending the conference.

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Corporate Exhibits	Sugar Land Foyer V
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Please visit the exhibition booth of conference sponsors.

8:45 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Coach's Corner	Sugar Land IV
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Professional coaches from the International Coaching Federation – Houston Charter Chapter will offer complimentary career coaching sessions. Sign up at the Registration Desk to take advantage of this exciting opportunity!

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	Ballroom V
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Honorary Co-Chairs:

***Donna Fujimoto Cole**, President and CEO of Cole Chemical*

***Donna Davis**, Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator,*

Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston

8:50 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Ice Breaking Exercise	Whova App.
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Through: ***Whova Application***

8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Plenary Session I	Sugar Land V
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“Workforce Development: Opportunities in Challenging Times”

Chair: ***Donna Fujimoto Cole**, President and CEO of Cole Chemical*

Panelists: ***Michelle Mower**, Director of Shadow Cave Pictures LLC*

***Matthew Cushing**, Executive Director, Office of STEM Engagement at Rice University*

***Jacquie Young-Hall**, Manager, Maritime Workforce Development of Port of Houston*

Insights into workforce development and economic mobility with new strategies, initiatives and educational activities as companies are downsizing their employee base and students are graduating from high school and college without jobs. Learn about existing and new fields of work that will drive economic mobility. Learn about opportunities in entrepreneurship to working in trending fields.

9:45 a.m. –10:45 a.m.	Speakers Session II	Sugar Land V
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“Civility in the Workplace”

Speakers: **Donna Davis**, Assistant Dean of Leadership and Empowerment & Title IX Coordinator, Agosto Justice Center, South Texas College of Law Houston
June Liu, MPH, Principal at JQL Consulting LLC
Renu Sachdeva, PCC, PHR, MBA, Global Head of Coaching at Talking

Civility in the workplace feels increasingly fragile as political polarization and public flashpoints heighten emotions and make everyday interactions feel charged—sometimes through nothing more than an offhand comment or an awkward silence.

This session examines how emotional influence shows up in routine workplace moments, how personal drivers shape reactions we may not fully recognize, and how greater self-awareness and self-regulation contribute to a more generative work environment. Participants will gain practical tools for responding thoughtfully in the moment, reducing unnecessary tension, and cultivating mutual support, respect, and professionalism across differences.

10:45 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.	Networking Break	Sugar Land Foyer
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Visit exhibits and sign up for a complimentary session at Coach’s Corner.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Concurrent Session I	Location
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Session A **Cane I - III**

“Harnessing Social Media with Purpose: Insights from Digital Strategist”

Speaker: **Vivienne Kwon**, President, ykcreative

Strategist brings a sharp, practical perspective on how social media can strengthen community connection, elevate organizational identity, and empower diverse voices. With deep experience in digital engagement and content strategy, she will share actionable approaches for using social platforms intentionally and responsibly. Attendees will gain concise, real-world guidance on building authentic online presence, navigating rapid-fire digital trends, and communicating in ways that support inclusion and trust across teams and communities.

Session B **Sugar Land V**

“Rest Is Not a Reward: Rethinking Work in Challenging Times”

Speaker: **Jasmine Shah**, M.A., MBSI Director, Psychospiritual Coach, The Jung Center's MBSI Board of Director of Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute
Core Coach of Columbia University Coaching Club

In today’s culture, rest is often treated as something we earn—but true thriving begins when rest is recognized as essential. Drawing from her work at The Jung Center’s Mind-Body-Spirit Institute, Jasmine Shah, M.A., guides participants through an exploration of rest rooted in psychospiritual practice. This session blends psychology, contemplative tools, and embodied awareness to help individuals reconnect with purpose, regulate stress, and lead from a grounded center. Through reflective exercises and practical strategies, attendees will explore ways to integrate restorative practices into daily life, cultivating clarity, presence, and a more sustainable, life-giving approach to work and well-being.

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Keynote and Luncheon	Sugar Land VI
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Emcee: *Vani Rao, Executive Coach, VTK Consulting LLC*

“Keynote Speech: Houston’s Asian Study”

Speaker: *Daniel Potter, Director, Houston Population Research Center at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.*

Team: *Katharine Yang Bao, Research scientist and co-author of the study Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University.*

The Houston region is one of, if not the most diverse in the entire country. Its diversity has been spurred by decades of growth, driven by both domestic and international migration. What are the factors that bring people to the Houston area? What contributes to people's quality of life in the region? And how does life in Houston look for one of the area's fastest growing groups -- Asian Americans? Using data collected from the Greater Houston Community Panel and the Asian American Community Study, these questions and others will be answered in order to help better understand the experiences, successes, and challenges confronting the region and its people.

1:35 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Concurrent Session II	Location
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Session A: **Cane I - III**
“AI as a Catalyst for Visibility, Voice, and Impact”

Speakers: *Nelson Vanegas, Chief Strategist, Goodspero*

Team: *Jessica Bolaños, Director, Digital and Impact | Education & Emerging Tech, Goodspero*

In a world where uncertainty is constant, AI offers powerful new ways for individuals and organizations to thrive. Jessica Bolaños and Nelson Vanegas of Goodspero will share how AI-driven tools can expand visibility, strengthen storytelling, and amplify impact, especially for communities navigating challenging times. Drawing from their work in strategic multimedia and impact-focused communications, they will demonstrate practical, accessible ways to use AI to elevate your message, streamline creative work, and empower diverse voices. Attendees will leave with clear, actionable insights on leveraging AI with intention, authenticity, and confidence.

Session B: **Magnolia I - II**

“Social Media and Cyber Security: employee/employer legal implications for unintended consequences. Keeping you out of court, the news and jail.”

Speaker: *Eartha Jean Johnson, Chief Developer | CRIME NO CRIME, LegalWATCH*

Employee/Employer Legal Implications for Unintended Consequences

What you don’t know can hurt your reputation and what people think of you when posting anything, but know that some posts can negatively affect your relationships with your suppliers, customers, employer, boss, co-workers, family and friends, while others may get you in trouble with the law!

2:35 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Networking, Survey, and Gifts Winners	Sugar Land Foyer
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Networking Survey, and Gifts Giveaway for Winners

- *Please return all name **badges** to the registration desk for recycling.*
- *Please complete conference surveys on Whova or return the **hard copy** to the registration desk.*
- *All attendees for afternoon sessions will be eligible for a door prize drawing that will start at 2:35 p.m. You must be **present to win**.*