



**GSB—WHERE
BANKING AND
LEADERSHIP
COME TOGETHER**

BUDGET NOW

Deadlines Fast Approaching for Spring Specialty Schools

Bank Technology Management and Human Resource Management Schools Each Earlier in 2017 – Immediate Enrollment Strongly Encouraged

GSB’s popular spring specialty schools are each being held a few weeks earlier in 2017 than they were last year – thus, interested bankers are encouraged to enroll now to ensure a space in class. Registrations have been strong to date and space is limited in these programs; in fact, some have sold out and had waiting lists in recent years, so early enrollment is strongly encouraged.

The Bank Technology Management School (March 19-24) has a February 17 application deadline and the Human Resource Management School (March 26-31) has a deadline of February 26. Both programs have been immensely popular as they offer in-depth courses on the business of banking, as well as role-specific curriculum on the hottest issues facing human resources and technology managers, respectively.

For details on the Bank Technology Management School, visit: <https://www.gsb.org/it/Technology-Management-Overview.php>

For detail on the Human Resource Management School, visit: <https://www.gsb.org/hr/Human-Resource-Overview.php> ■



Budget Now for 2017 Programs

Graduate School of Banking

July 30 - August 11, 2017

Bank Technology Management School

March 19 - 24, 2017

Human Resource Management School

March 26 - 31, 2017

Financial Managers School

September 10 - 15, 2017

Bank Technology Security School in Dallas, TX

October 15 - 20, 2017



Don't Delay!

Programs fill quickly, so early application is encouraged!

Alumni Spotlight: Chris Meyer: Taking the Reins



Chris Meyers,
CEO and EVP, The Friendship
State Bank & Friendship Insurance,
Friendship, Indiana

If you asked Chris Meyer, who was an independent writer and marketer 15 years ago, where he thought he'd be today, bank executive would not have been on his radar. Meyer, hired by the family owned Friendship State Bank, Friendship, Indiana, 15 years ago as a marketer, was recently appointed president and CEO.

The 2008 GSB graduate, who is as affable as he is sharp, admits he initially didn't know much about the industry. His role in marketing required him to interact with all the different departments in the bank

while learning the role community banks play in the area. He soon caught the bug.

"As I got to know the people in this organization and the value that this type of business has as far as the people who work here, the customers and the community, it became very appealing to me," he says.

Meyer soon began taking on projects that were integral to the growth of the bank, such as transforming its call center to enable them to provide better customer service.

"I started training because I had a sales background so then I became the marketing and training guy, he says. "And then I'd work on another project and I'd pick up another skill and become 'this' guy." Meyer says that over time he worked with other people including the president and CEO who gave him a lot of opportunity. "He was a great mentor," he says. "He gave me the chance to fail—which I didn't," he says laughing. "When you're given a lot of opportunity to try new things, you can fail but I learned a lot, and then I ended up going to GSB to get the credentials and banking chops." Of the time commitment involved, he says, "Anybody who goes through that is giving up an awful lot, but learning a lot in return."

As Friendship continued to grow and add new branches, Meyer continued earning new responsibilities and taking on new projects through the mentorship of the former president/CEO, who just happens to be his father-in-law and is now president and chairman.

"It felt very natural to step into a leadership role in a multi-generational family bank," Meyer says. "I did a lot of work with my fellow department managers over the years. I got a little of a leadership role thrust on me because of some of the innovations we did that I headed up." Meyer stresses that his successes are not just his, but can be attributed to the teamwork of colleagues and staff. He acknowledges that being the son-in-law of the president/CEO had both advantages and disadvantages.

"In the beginning people think you have privilege and opportunity that other people don't get," he says. "Yes, that can be true, but I like to think—and I've been told—that across the board, I've gotten the

support of everybody this year not just because of that relationship, but also because in the last 15 years I've earned some level of respect for the knowledge and efforts we put in. It goes a long way in a leadership position if you relentlessly acknowledge the support and contributions of everyone in the organization. And that's the way I look at it, my only job is to make sure that the 133 people that are here have meaningful, prosperous, occupations. That's my biggest responsibility."

It was Meyer's commitment to these responsibilities that lead to him attending GSB. Although he was under the tutelage of his mentor, and armed with undergraduate degrees in finance, Russian studies and history, he knew that he still had some weaknesses.

"I chose GSB first of all because it has an awesome reputation as far as rounding out people who are leading an organization and broadening the scope of knowledge," he says. "We have four alum here from GSB and everybody who has come back has been the wiser for it. GSB gave me the credibility and credentials; it was necessary to do it."

Although Meyer learned much at GSB, his top takeaway was the realization that as much as a commodity as the industry of banking is, checking accounts, savings accounts, loans, etc., GSB teaches a



Chris with his family

wide variety of ways in which it can be approached.

"It's a dynamic industry," he says. "It's not static. It's not boring. There's a lot to it. Because you're not just juggling numbers around—now that may be the way some people approach it-- I learned that you can make it a very dynamic and interesting field and career."

Meyer, who attended GSB between 2005 and 2008, says that though he enjoyed biking around the lakes in Madison, Wisconsin, which is one of his favorite cities, his most memorable experiences were forging bonds with staff and with students that still exist in addition to not having his bank simulation fail in his third year. "Getting through the Bank simulation prosperous made me pretty happy!" he says laughing. He admonishes those considering a GSB education to not treat it lightly.

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GSB Curriculum Advisory Committee and Banker Advisory Board to Hold Joint Meeting

The GSB Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC), made up of faculty section leaders from across various curriculum areas of the Graduate School of Banking, will meet later this month for an intensive two days of detailed curriculum review. The goal of the meeting, as it has been each year for decades, is to take a detailed look at curriculum, student feedback, industry trends, banker learning needs and demographic details to ensure the school remains on the leading edge. "We are committed to providing the industry's most comprehensive and robust learning and networking experience; that's why we take this meeting very seriously," said GSB president and CEO, Kirby Davidson. "We say it often – our staff administers the school, but our faculty and our curriculum really are the school. It's imperative that we take a comprehensive look each and every year to make sure we're doing the right things for our students and for the industry," added Davidson.

Joining the CAC is the GSB Banker Advisory Board (BAB), made up of alumni representatives from each of GSB's sponsoring states. Since its inception, GSB has actively involved banking professionals in program design and promotion and the BAB continues that tradition. The primary responsibilities of board members are to provide GSB with useful banker insights and suggestions for program enhancements and to help foster and coordinate GSB alumni activities. In addition to meeting independently as an alumni group, the BAB will also participate in joint discussions with the CAC, a format that began several years ago with great success. "Getting these two key constituent groups together for meaningful discussions has proven an invaluable formula for helping the school succeed," added Davidson. ■



2016-17 GSB Banker Advisory Board Representatives

We thank these dedicated bankers for their service to the school and the industry.

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GSB Supports Industry Events Nationwide

GSB is pleased to support these and other upcoming industry events; we encourage you to attend these exceptional programs – and when you do, please take a moment to learn more about GSB programming. A GSB representative will be onsite at many of these events and each state association also has details they can share about educational offerings from GSB. ■



Wisconsin Bankers Association Executives Conference, Milwaukee

Missouri School of Bank Management, Columbia

Illinois Bankers Association ONE Conference, East Peoria

Michigan Bankers Association BEST Conference, Traverse City

Indiana Bankers Association MEGA Conference, Indianapolis

Tri-State HR and Leadership Conference from NE, KS and MO Bankers Associations, Overland Park, KS

Kansas Bankers Association Technology Conference, Topeka

Texas Bankers Association Technology Conference, San Antonio

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Meyer stresses the networking as a key benefit of GSB, but also stresses the importance of the academic rigor to the overall experience. “If you just go there for the social side of it, you’re going to miss a lot because there is much knowledge you can gain if you apply yourself,” he says. “Your bank is investing to get you there and there is a lot of knowledge to be gained. I still have all my course books that I refer to periodically. If you approach it with balance, you can take away good memories of people and good knowledge.”

Meyer also walked away with new insights about himself. “At GSB you’re presented with so many different disciplines—there’s lending, deposits, retail banking, etc.” he says. “I’ve always been a bit of a renaissance man, so I like to know a little about a lot of things; but I think I discovered what things I really enjoy most in banking. I didn’t know I’d enjoy learning how a loan is structured or being on an asset liability committee and understanding how that functions. I think I learned that I can know a lot about many aspects of banking rather than just a little bit. You can become, not an expert, but proficient in every area of banking if you apply yourself,” he says. “There are a lot of narrow focuses in business. I’m a commercial lender. That’s what I do. I am a retail specialist. What this education opened up to me is that you can learn about all aspects of banking and become the wiser for it because you can learn how they all interact and how things apply to each other. One of the most valuable aspects of my whole educational experience at GSB was that I can now interact and communicate with each and every department fairly fluidly. It’s necessary.”

In addition to GSB, Meyer also credits his education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Isenberg School of Management (UMass), which GSB has partnered with to offer a combined accredited MBA program, for giving him the foundation to speak the language of his colleagues from different areas of the bank such as IT and accounting.

“UMass doesn’t mess around!” he says. “The professors that you deal with in the online environment are the same ones you have

would get if were attending the [brick and mortar] school and taking courses. You get the real deal as if you were actually there and I found it compelling.”

Meyer admits that though he probably would be functioning just fine without the MBA, he desired to function on a much higher level and UMass gave him the tools to do that.

“If there are any doubters out there who are considering GSB and saying ‘I don’t want to put in the effort,’ take one course per semester and you’re done in three years,” he says. “It’s enlightening, it’s invigorating, it’s hard-ass work, but if you can manage to be employed you can manage to take one class a semester.”

As committed as Meyer is to the family run business, he is equally committed to family recreation. Meyer and his wife Cassandra, a nurse practitioner, are parents to 14-year-old Henry, who Meyer describes as a “brainiac,” 12-year-old Nora, a “dance maniac” and member of her school’s dance team and a 10-month-old golden doodle puppy.

The family enjoys life on 13 ½ acres in Versailles, Indiana, complete with an orchard and gardens where Meyer can work outside and indulge in one of his favorite hobbies, home beer brewing.

Meyer is an avid player of Magic the Gathering, a 22-year-old card game he describes as similar to Dungeons and Dragons. He says he and son Henry have bonded playing the game that has inspired global tournaments. “My wife says I’m a bigger nerd than my son!” he chuckles.

And when not playing Magic the Gathering, Meyer is an ardent collector of comic books and vintage posters. “If you surround yourself with beauty, your life is more pleasurable, I think.” ■

2017 Online Seminars – Timely, Convenient, Affordable

The GSB Online Seminar Series offers a convenient, cost-effective way to access quality educational opportunities. Programs are designed to meet the dynamic learning needs of today's busy financial professional and are delivered by some of today's top industry experts. A few of our upcoming programs include:

FFIEC CAT - Next Steps

January 26 at 2:00 p.m. Central Time

Accounting Basics/Refresher for Bankers

February 1 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

Leading the Prospecting Effort

February 7 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

Basic Estate Planning and Estate Settlement

February 7 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

The Future of Small Town Banking - 3 Steps to Renewed Success in 2017

February 8 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

Strategies for Family Banks

February 9 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

Loan Underwriting Mistakes

February 9 at 9:30 a.m. Central Time

Secrets of Buying and Selling a Community Bank

February 14 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

Formation and Use of the Bank Holding Company

February 15 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time

Visit gsb.org and view the calendar page for a complete list of all scheduled programs. ■



Stay Connected!

Keep your alumni contact information current in the GSB database. An online Alumni Update form is available at <https://www.gsb.org/student-alumni-center/alumni-update-form.php>.