Madison, Wis. — The Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison will add an additional specialty school to its line-up of educational offerings in 2018. The Sales and Marketing School will be held October 14-19, 2018, at the Fluno Center for Executive Education in Madison, Wis.

“We often heard from our graduate school alumni and others about the need for a comprehensive school that focuses on sales, marketing and the business of banking, and the critical ways these functions work together to drive success. So, we worked with our exceptional faculty and a team of bankers who advised on curriculum. The result is an all-new program that we’re really proud of, and that is in keeping with GSB’s reputation for excellence,” said Kirby Davidson, GSB president and CEO.

The curriculum will offer a solid foundation on the business of banking – including bank performance analysis, the current regulatory environment and the future of community banking. Additionally, components on sales and marketing – including planning, prospecting, goal setting, budgeting, coaching, acquisition strategies and more – will round out this interactive format.

Of key benefit will be individual coaching/mentoring sessions with faculty available each evening to aid student’s in the sales and marketing planning process and incorporating content learned into their bank’s primary sales/marketing situations and goals. To learn more about this new offering, or to register, visit www.gsb.org.
Donna Hoppenjan fondly remembers her father frequently taking her to Mound City Bank, Platteville, Wisconsin, where as a young girl, she had her first savings and checking account. She loved numbers and helping people so she says she naturally gravitated to banking, beginning her career as a teller at Mound City Bank after graduating from high school. Little did she know at the time that she would later become president and CEO of that same bank.

In 1988, Hoppenjan was charged with instituting the internal auditor function at the bank. Her promotion to internal auditor led to simultaneously establishing the bank’s compliance department, managing operations and, ultimately, attending GSB.

“I was looking to enhance my banking knowledge overall and the Graduate School of Banking had a very distinguished reputation,” she says. “My past president had attended GSB-Madison and it came highly recommended. GSB is close to home and it hosts many bankers from the Midwest so I saw it as a great opportunity for me to network and get to meet other bankers. I believe that GSB provides a well-rounded banker education platform for those bankers aspiring to advance and grow in their own banking careers. It enhanced my knowledge in a variety of banking areas that I had not been exposed to; and in areas that I was familiar with, it brought me to a higher level of expertise.”

When Mound City decided to buy a branch in her home town of Cuba City, Hoppenjan was selected to be project manager and had the opportunity to train the staff and manage the transition, but she instead opted to return to the home office in Platteville to continue in operations, compliance and audit, which proved to be a good decision as it resulted in her being named senior vice president of retail services in 2001.

Hoppenjan also completed the GSB Senior Management School in 2006 and the Financial Managers School in 2007. An avid learner, she says one of the most memorable aspects of the program was the dedication of the GSB instructors.

“I just really admire their passion for banking,” she says. “They ensure that GSB is providing quality executive banking education and that it’s top notch for aspiring bankers.”

Hoppenjan particularly remembers instructors James Johannes, Terry Saber and Tom Farin. “It’s so memorable to have such distinguished people teaching us,” she says. “They are passionate about teaching the next generation of bankers and inspiring them to become executive management. It was just so enlightening.”

The instructors and classes are only one facet of the value Hoppenjan found at GSB. She appreciatively reminisces about living on campus and interacting with her fellow banker classmates for two weeks each of the three years. “Even today, 19 years later, I’m still emailing and bouncing ideas off my fellow GSB classmates,” she says. She muses about the successful bankers she says she would have never met had they not shared the experience of exploring the beauty of the UW-Madison campus and what it has to offer.

“The life-long friendships that I’ve gained because of GSB inspired me to stay connected with GSB by serving on the GSB Alumni Council and a six-year term as the Wisconsin representative of the GSB Banker Advisory Board, which I also had the opportunity to chair.”

Hoppenjan takes pride in following the journeys of her fellow classmates that have gone on to become bank presidents and leaders in the banking industry.

“I feel GSB plays a vital role in our success stories and I’m very proud to be a GSB-Madison graduate,” she says. “I was promoted to senior vice president, retail services, after graduation from GSB. Without GSB I would have never had the opportunity to be selected in our presidential search to succeed my predecessor as president and CEO in 2013.”

Hoppenjan’s accomplishments don’t end there. Celebrating 40 years in the industry this year, she was the first woman president and board of directors for Mound City Bank and instrumental in founding the internal audit, compliance and HR departments which now all have full time personnel.

When not acting as trailblazer at Mound City Bank, Hoppenjan enjoys walking with friends and family time at her cabin along the Mississippi River boating with her husband Rick, adult children Chad and Sara and grandchildren Colin and Keira.
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