2017 GSB Session Recap: Many Small Moments Add Up to One Big Accomplishment

Moments matter. That was the message that close to 600 students from nearly all 50 states and seven other countries heard on the opening night of the 73rd GSB session, held July 31-August 11, and one that hit home in many ways throughout their two weeks on campus.

There were 200 first-year students for the fourth consecutive year, demonstrating that demand remains high for the GSB program.

The freshman, junior and senior classes retained a strong international presence as well, with 31 students representing diverse banking environments – Egypt, Grenada, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, St. Kitts and St. Lucia.

This year’s 193 graduates were the first to receive both the GSB diploma and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Certificate of Executive Leadership – the result of a tailored curriculum change two years ago to focus even more directly on important leadership skills.

To begin the certificate program, the graduates took the Life Styles Inventory™ online before coming to campus for their first year. Going forward, students will complete a 360-degree assessment with their bank peers during their second year. GSB faculty will help students interpret the results and define goals to build upon leadership strengths.

Student feedback on the Certificate of Executive Leadership training has been overwhelmingly positive, said GSB President & CEO Kirby Davidson. “The additional recognition means a lot to our graduates,” he said. Ongoing core curriculum changes, new electives and continued enhancements to the BankSim course are all part of GSB’s efforts to keep pace with changes in the industry and expectations of today’s banking leaders. (See article, p. 4.)

As the session got under way, several were honored for their contributions over the years, including program administrator Joan Papke. In her 30 years with GSB, she has become known as “the queen of the office,” especially for her ongoing work with the junior class and the faculty each year, Davidson said.

On the faculty side, GSB students, faculty and staff recognized the hard work and dedication of Chip Haley, who created the original BankSim platform that is still used today by GSB and other graduate banking schools, and Jack Shearer, a longtime BankSim instructor. Both retired after the August session.

Students came together in a moment of silence for Bruce Nordlee, 37, vice president-commercial lending at Pioneer Bank & Trust in Rapid City, S.D., who passed away July 31.

They also remembered fellow student Mat Timmer, vice president, Minnwest Bank, Sioux Falls, S.D., , who passed away in May.

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While many GSB alumni will attest to using everything they learned at GSB on a daily basis, few can say they have access to the most recent classes and professors annually. Ellen Moritz, president of FirstBank, Eagle County Market is the exception. Although she graduated from the program in 1997, her education is routinely refreshed by FirstBank’s several officers that attend GSB each year. Moritz, who became president for some of the branches in Eagle County in 2011, then added the remaining branches in 2013, proudly asserts that GSB is mandatory for officers with at least five years at the organization.

“FirstBank operates a little differently from most banks,” she says. “It rarely hires a VP or president from outside. Everyone starts in the management training program and works her way up the ranks. You don’t automatically become executive vice president or president. By the time you become a senior vice president, there will be a few positions available annually for executive vice president or president positions, and you can toss your hat in the ring. FirstBank requires employees to attend GSB after five years. We send all of the officers through the program at some point in their career,” she continues.

Moritz says she enjoys reading the papers and hearing the insights of employees who are in the program now because the projects they are working on are applicable to what’s currently being worked on in the bank—just as when she began the program in 1995.

“I remember learning more about our company financial statements,” she says. “I really hadn’t spent any time analyzing our statements because we’re a really large organization and all of us are not involved in every aspect of the bank. It was interesting to dig into some of those things you would do, such as financial statements, if you worked at a smaller community bank.”

Moritz also fondly recalls getting to know bankers from institutions all over, networking and communicating with others in the industry about similarities, differences and challenges. “I enjoyed having continuing education after being out of college for years,” she says. “It was a good thing to go and learn more about the industry you work in.”

“Born in Minnesota, Moritz says she enjoyed the camaraderie from fellow Midwesterners and was very happy she picked the Madison campus. “It was amazing how, after being in the work world, the classes become so much more meaningful to you because the education is specifically about your career and what you’re doing,” she says. “It came at a good point in my career to get some specific banking knowledge to fill in some of the gaps of what you’re learning on the job along with some other information just about banking in general and specifics about how banks are run: the aspects of banking such as lending, marketing, etc., that are more important to you now that you’re in that line of work.”

Although many GSB graduates credit social media with enabling them to stay in contact with classmates from afar, Moritz laments that at the time she attended, email was just on the horizon and she was one of only a handful of students in her class who had it—thanks to her IT husband who was an early adopter—which made it difficult to stay in touch. However, she was able to connect a little closer to home.

Since FirstBank has more than 2500 employees, Moritz says there were several other employees at GSB when she attended that she didn’t previously know so they became her resources within the company.

“Three in my class and even in the other classes became good resources, friends, and confidantes to me, in just our own bank that I could go to when I had a question or wanted to talk things out,” she says.

Outside of the office, Moritz enjoys skiing, running—she’s currently training for a marathon—traveling, reading, improving her fluent German and particularly family time, which involves attending the various sporting endeavors of her three sons, Sebastian 17, Alec 15 and Theo 12, who all happen to play on their school basketball teams.
Kicking off the Distinguished Speaker Series on the first night of the session, Steve Gilliland illustrated the point that each of us as individuals can change someone else’s trajectory in a moment.

As an exercise, he advised students to think of the five people who have made the biggest difference in their lives and assign a word to each name describing the contribution that person made. “Now ask yourself,” he said, “what have you done with it?”

He encouraged students to live with purpose, passion and pride as leaders. “You set the tone for the culture in your workplace,” he reminded the audience.

His stories came with another gentle reminder: One of the greatest gifts is understanding. Don’t prejudge. “What you go through in life will either make you bitter or better, weaker or stronger,” he said.

Going into the second week of the session, speaker Phillip Van Hoosier described professionalism as a choice, based on the idea that “good enough is not good enough.”

To that end, he shared his 12 professionalism enhancement techniques – principles and practices that anyone in any role can use to perform at an advanced level:

1. Always offer your assistance.
2. Take a minute longer than is necessary.
3. Do more than is expected.
4. Don’t whine; don’t whisper; don’t wonder.
5. Guard your reputation.
6. Never compromise your integrity.
7. Commit to constant improvement.
8. Work to solve problems – not place blame.
10. Strive for excellence not perfection.
11. Don’t give up; give out.
12. Be thankful.

New Courses Added, BankSim Update Planned

Throughout the decades, GSB has continually evaluated and updated its course offerings to keep bank leaders on track or ahead of industry changes.

Each year, GSB faculty – working professionals with their hands directly in the banking business – make changes to their courses to remain up-to-date and propose new classes based on the issues they or their clients face.

Another key part of the process is a three-day meeting of GSB’s Curriculum Advisory Committee each winter. Lead instructors for each core section, bankers from the school’s Banker Advisory Board, and trustees – leaders from each of GSB’s 17 sponsoring state bankers associations – participate on the committee.

In 2017, GSB added the following new electives:

• **Banking in an Era of Digital Interruption**
  Creative and well-funded fintech competitors from Silicon Valley and beyond are challenging every part of the traditional business model. This class integrates the innovation models and processes that are needed to prepare leaders to survive and thrive in this new world of banking.

• **Government Loan Programs: SBA to USDA – Improve Your-Bank’s ROE Safely**
  This course covers the basic elements of SBA, USDA and EB5 loan programs. Students discuss each program’s advantages and disadvantages, the economics of each program, secondary market implications, successful marketing strategies, and common mistakes in implementation.

• **Payment Systems and Fraud Allocation**
  Fraud losses on deposit accounts are costing the banking industry close to $2 billion each year. This course focuses on the laws, regulations and rules that allocate loss on the most common frauds and financial institutions’ legal rights and responsibilities.

Changes to BankSim

A detailed case study was integrated throughout BankSim this year, the capstone senior course. The comprehensive case study incorporated all facets of banking that they had learned throughout the first two years of the School. “Students worked through the issues facing the bank in the case study in a way that emphasizes teamwork and leadership skills,” said President & CEO Kirby Davidson.

“It’s part of the intersession project this year, to discuss individual plans and then come up with a comprehensive strategic plan for the bank their team will be managing throughout BankSim,” he said. “It goes far beyond a numbers game – just as running a bank today involves far more than just attention to financials.”

Still Time to Enroll for the Bank Technology Security School – Apply by September 15

Whether you’re a veteran Information Security Officer or new to the IT security field, you won’t want to miss the Bank Technology Security School, coming up October 15-20, at the Dex Media Center in Dallas. This exceptional program provides the skills and knowledge to effectively secure your bank’s and your customers’ most sensitive information – using hands-on learning labs for retained knowledge. Visit the GSB website to view a list of distinguished faculty and learn more about an in-depth curriculum that offers an ideal mix of cybersecurity education with critical information about the business of banking.
Save Up to 25% on GSB Online Seminars with Multi-Program Discounts

Choose three or more GSB online seminars and save 15% using GSBPICK3 – or, for even more savings, choose five or more titles and save 25% on registrations by using GSBPICK5 coupon code. You’re welcome to choose from any of GSB’s 2017 programs, but here’s a list of programs coming up soon, in date order.

How to Craft an Effective Commercial Loan Write-Up

Business Cash Flow Basics and Global Cash Flow Integration Issues for Lenders and Analysts

Equipment Finance: Loans and Leases, Plus Capitalization

Understanding C&I Loan Structuring, Loan Agreements and Covenants

Financial Statement Projections: Tools for Making a Simplified and Effective Forecast

Basic Estate Planning and Estate Settlement

Predicting Future Job Performance through Behavioral Based Interviews

Building an Effective Marketing Plan

Creating the Right Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Program for YOUR Community Bank

How to Build an Employee Referral Program That Works

Getting in the Door with Prospects - Tips on Leveraging Your Network

Small Business Lending in Today’s Economy

Secrets of Buying and Selling a Community Bank

Dealing with Powers of Attorney

Increased Pressure on Vendor Management

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Budget Now for 2018!

Enrollment opens for 2018 programs in mid-September — watch for details in your inbox and budget for these exceptional offerings:

Graduate School of Banking
July 29-August 10, 2018

Bank Technology Management School
April 8-13, 2018

Bank Technology Security School
October 21-26, 2018

Human Resource Management School
April 15-20, 2018

Financial Managers School
September 9-14, 2018

Bank Management Forums
Ongoing Throughout the Year

Online Seminar Series
Ongoing Throughout the Year

Don’t Delay!
Programs fill quickly, so early application is encouraged!

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Purchase 3 programs at one time and receive a 15% discount with coupon code GSBPick3

Purchase 5 programs at one time and receive a 25% discount with coupon code GSBPick5