



**Commercial Banking Program**  
*“defining a new generation of bankers”*

Newsletter, Issue #9: December 2021

Dr. Kent Belasco, Director Commercial Banking and Assistant Professor of Finance

Hello supporters of the Commercial Banking Program at Marquette University, I hope your new year is off to a good start and that we will make much progress on the pandemic in 2022. Once again, we were able to complete the semester without significant incident. This past semester we were completely back to normal, albeit with masks in class. This is definitely the preferred mode of education from the students, and makes a considerable difference. Overall, due to the pandemic we have been unable to do many of the activities we normally do, however, we were able to

## Student Enrollment

We continue to grow the program. During this academic year, a total of 25 students have been admitted to the program. To-date, a total of 73 have been admitted to the programs. Of that number, 45 students have graduated (including the graduates this month) with the Finance/Commercial Banking degree, thus far, with more in the pipeline. Of all graduates 100% of these students have been placed, upon graduation, with financial institutions. This supports my dual goal of providing excellent careers for students, and exceptional talent to the banking industry. We continue to market the program to existing and prospective students vigorously. As one of the few undergraduate programs in the United States dedicated to the education and preparation of students for careers in commercial banking, we must continue to create awareness. Although we are building our reputation through quality internships and hires, among other activities, we would greatly appreciate your support in sharing this newsletter with anyone interested in this program and career path.

## Advisory Board

Our advisory board remains “top-notch” and is an exceptional resource that has helped me to continue to market and improve this important program. The advisory board is comprised of 26 senior professionals representing money center, regional, and community banks, several accounting and consulting firms, a law firm, and the major banking associations (American Bankers, Wisconsin Bankers, Illinois Bankers, and Risk Management associations). This past year 3 new members were added to the advisory board: Mr. Daryll Lund, EVP and Chief of Staff for the Wisconsin Bankers Association, Mr. John Sullivan, Academic Market and Assessment Director for the Risk Management Association, and Mr. Kevin Kane, President Southeast Wisconsin Market for First Business Bank. Many thanks to Patty Rogers of the Wisconsin Bankers Association, who recently retired, for the years of support she has provided to the program, as well as to Mike Flynn, formerly of First Business Bank, for his continued support as well.

Finally, I want to thank Mr. Andrew Oates, who has served as the student representative to the advisory board as well as being the President of the Commercial Banking Club. Andrew provided untiring support for the program and has been a continual “go-to” person for me, as I have marketed the program. Andrew is graduating in May and is starting his career at BMO Harris. Additionally, he was the recipient of this year’s Service and Leadership award. With his departure, Lily Pollack will be joining the advisory board as the student representative. Additionally, she was elected as the new President of the Commercial Banking Club.

Again, I cannot say enough how supportive and effective this advisory board is to me and to the program. They continue to engage in network recruiting events, panelists for conferences, sponsor conferences, provide financial

support, provide internships, hire students, provide exceptional guidance to the curriculum, and participation on working committees as well as guest presentation and co-teaching of key courses.

## Activities

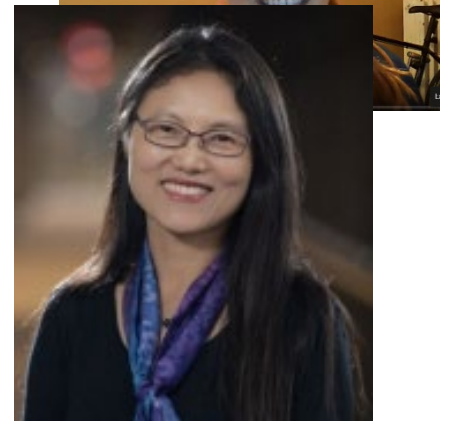
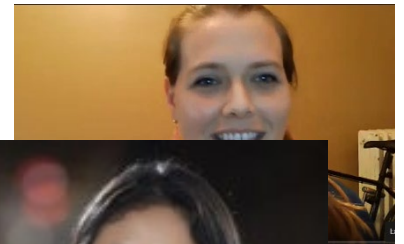
As I indicated previously, this year was somewhat light on activities, due to COVID. Therefore, you will not see screen shots from our visits to Chicago in this newsletter. However, I am optimistic about the fall and certainly by spring next year for these events. We were able to conduct a virtual “Careers in Finance” event in September, and a Commercial Banking Program open house in October, albeit virtual. I was most impressed with the turnout of both events. The results from the event were exceptional and I credit my past graduates who provided testimonials and updates about their careers at the open house. Many thanks to Andrea Matsudaira, Michelle Fredericks, Andrew Oates, Salem Yakuba, and Matthew Carroll for their excellent presentations.



During the spring we conducted a networking event, similar to the open house, but designed to communicate with freshmen and sophomores who may be interested in applying for the program. This network event was structured a bit differently. I became aware, during the semester, of a book that was written by a Princeton professor, JC deSwaan (pictured right).



The book, entitled, “Seeking Virtue in Finance: Contributing to Society in a conflicted industry,” provided one of the best testaments to the value that commercial banking provides to the community, the economy, and the society at large. An excellent read for students considering a commercial banking career. I learned of this book through an article in the American Banker, authored by Laura Alix (pictured above), a reporter for the American Banker. Through this article I was able to reach out to both JC and Laura who both graciously agreed to join my network event in April and provide their insights of the profession, along with excellent feedback from bankers such as David Anderson of BMO Harris (left), and others including Dan Harvey of Wintrust, Tom Grottko from Crowe, and Sean Keenan from CIBC. We had exceptional attendance and both JC and Laura were enormously helpful in communicating the merits and benefits of this profession. My thanks to both for their time and candid thoughts. As in the fall, testimonials were again provided by past graduates, Andrea Matsudaira, Andrew Oates, Jennifer Gigot, and Dhruva Murali with great success. My thanks to these former students who continue to provide value to the profession and to this program every day.



Finally, we were able to conduct our Cybersecurity conference in April as well. This year’s conference was conducted virtually. Dr. Ning Wang, of Offensive Security (pictured right), was the keynote speaker and did an exceptional job of conveying the challenges, trends, and risks associated with this discipline. In addition, moderators and panelists included John Byrne of AML Rightsource and an advisory board member of our program, Scott Petinga of Fiserv, Jack Burbach of Wintrust, Kevin Dauer of the FDIC, and Byron Franz of the FBI. They all provided excellent commentary from their unique perspectives. I am happy to report that we had almost 200 people in attendance for this important conference.

## Curriculum

Our curriculum continues to be enhanced each semester. I recently finished a textbook which will be nationally marketed in January, however I have been using the pre-publication version in classes with positive feedback. The book is entitled “Fundamentals of Commercial Banking: An Applied Approach,” Cognella Publishing. Obviously, this semester courses had to be modified to accommodate distancing, due to COVID. Although this was a considerable effort, the results were positive.

I continue to use a bank simulation in the introductory course. I find this is the best way to understand some of the more abstract concepts. Ultimately, students learn how to manage a bank, and learn much about how the economy plays a role. A tremendous learning experience considering the current economic environment, which is a rare opportunity to apply what is occurring in the real-world.

We had a very successful Loan Portfolio Management class this past semester. Students had the opportunity to analyze 5 loan prospects each and present these to a committee of actual bank lenders. The loans are actual small business loans and affords the students the experience and exposure to make underwriting decisions as well as present these to professionals. These loans are provided through our partnership with the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative (WWBIC) in Milwaukee, a community development financial institution, and in conjunction with Townbank, a Wintrust bank. Many thanks to John Hazod of Townbank, and former banker Rick Broerren, as well as Jeff Ticknor of BMO Harris, Michael Hetzel of WWBIC, along with Paul Schleicher, Keith Baisden, George Justice, and others at Townbank for their time and excellent commentary to students' presentations. Their feedback is invaluable in helping students to improve both their analysis and presentation skills during the semester. Next year I hope to incorporate some international loans to integrate into the workload.

In the bank risk management class, we again conducted primary research co-branding with Crowe, focusing on the analysis of bank performance. My hope is that this research will continue to evolve into industry offerings from this partnership. We utilized several guest speakers throughout this course as well as regulatory risk training that is used in banking. As this is typically the last core course taken prior to graduation, it establishes the tone for a firm understanding of the risks banks face and arms the students with knowledge that will aid them and the banks they work for, as they begin their careers.

We endeavor to make the curriculum very robust, current, and challenging as well as truly unique for our students. This prepares them well for the profession and, in my opinion, sets them apart from others.

## Support

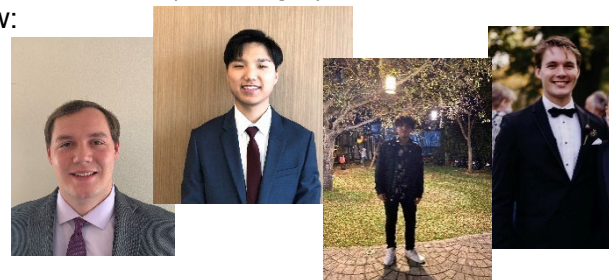
The Commercial Banking Program continues to be self-funded, thanks to the generous support of our Founders, Advisory Board Members, and Friends of the Program. Your continued contributions are so important and allows me to create even more unique "applied" opportunities for our students. This not only helps to ensure students exceptional careers, but it provides the industry with knowledgeable financial professionals, and helps to "define a new generation of bankers." I appreciate your contributions and ongoing support.

Please support our program by clicking on the link below and selecting "Commercial Banking Program Operating Fund" from the drop-down box and contribute any amount you can to support our efforts.

<https://give.marquette.edu/business>

## Exposure and Results

This year is our largest graduating class at 16 students, graduating with the Finance/Commercial Banking degree. Below is a collage of some of the graduates in this group. Congratulations to: (left to right) top row: Alex Flament, Dennis Lan, Javier Gutierrez, Edward Mordini, middle row: Matthew Wong, Liam Schmidt, Kyle Raddatz, and bottom row: Patrick Magee, Rafael Lopez, and Marleen Lopez-Andrade. Not pictured are Andrew Oates, Sahil Asim, Alejandro Comacho Quintanilla, Sam Schalke, Peter Jackowski, and Michael Challenger.



We continue to market the program through various media channels, NPR Marketplace, Wallet Hub, AdvisorSmith, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Milwaukee Biz, and others. However, the most important marketing source, is you! Please pass this newsletter along to organizations and individuals who you think would be interested in this program and encourage them to reach out to me. I appreciate your support.

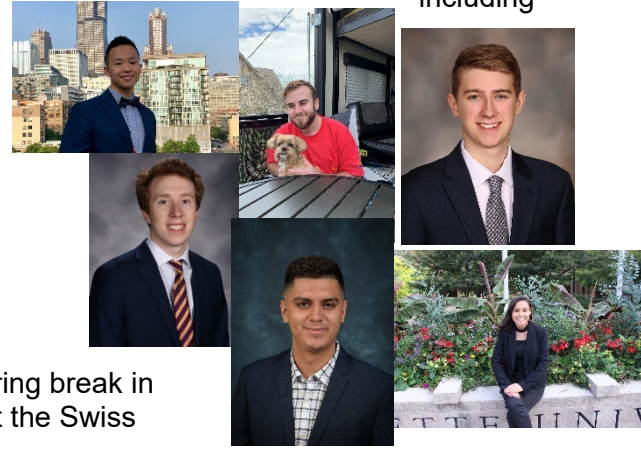
## Plans

Our plans for this next year, will be to return to our standard activities. This includes field trips to Chicago, and elsewhere. Our trip to Zurich Switzerland, which was postponed this past year, will occur during spring break in 2022. We are excited at the possibilities of visiting and learning about the Swiss banking system.

In addition, we are working on structuring internships with an international group, Eskala, for Central America internships for students. We anticipate this beginning as early as this summer.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly at Dr. Kent Belasco, Director of the Commercial Banking Program, and Assistant Professor of Finance at: [kent.belasco@marquette.edu](mailto:kent.belasco@marquette.edu), 414-288-6882 (office) or 630-817-8270 (mobile) or visit our website at <https://www.marquette.edu/business/banking/>

**Thank you for your continued support! Have a great and safe summer! I look forward to hearing from you soon.**



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John J. Byrne, CAMS, Esq.

