

Commercial Banking Program Update

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This has been an exciting and busy spring semester, and one in which much progress has been made in the program. As we are now in our second year of the program, we continue to add new students with a desire to enter the commercial banking profession. Each semester presents new opportunities for us, and to all of you, our treasured partners. This 3rd issue will provide you with a good update of what has transpired during the semester and the important milestones achieved for our program.

Student Enrollment

As of the Spring semester, a total of 29 students are enrolled in the program. Although 5 students have graduated this year, we hope to be at about 40+ students, total, by the end of the Fall term. As you will see in future sections we have sponsored a number of activities to attract students to the commercial banking program. The vision statement of the College of Business Administration, as articulated by the Keyes Dean of the College of Business Administration, Dr. Brian Till, is to become the “**destination business school.**” Our focus is just that, to attract prospective students to Marquette University, because of the Commercial Banking Program. We have had much success in marketing the program and expanding the message throughout the Midwest of the need for, and importance of this program. To that end we continue to reach out to feeder high schools, as well as through the myriad of partners we have to deliver on our objectives of “providing talent to the industry and securing excellent careers for our students.”

Advisory Board

Our Advisory Board continues to grow in size and expertise. Most recently Capital One has joined the board. We continue to rely on the advisory board for guidance, hosting field trips, interviewing prospective students, speaking in class, evaluating student presentations, mentorships, panelists and on and on. I am very pleased with the composition of the advisory board encompassing community, regional, and money center banks, as well as accounting firms, investment banking firms, and all major industry associations, providing excellent diversity of expertise to the program. This semester two of our advisory members were awarded the Milwaukee Area College Internship Council awards for providing and supporting college internships in the Milwaukee area. Receiving the award were Jeff Ticknor of BMO Harris and Doug Gordon of Waterstone Bank. In addition to this Jayne Hladio of US Bank and BMO Harris were honored at the annual Tempo mentorship awards in Milwaukee. The board continues at 22-strong and now includes a student representative. At the most recent advisory meeting on May 3rd, the first commercial banking program graduates provided their insights, experiences, and commentary on the program to the advisory board.

Activities

This semester was filled with a number of milestone events for the program. The first of which was the inaugural commercial banking conference hosted by the Commercial Banking Program on January 31st. The conference was held at Marquette University on the topic of Fintech. John Waupsh, author of the book, Bankruptcy, was the keynote speaker. A panel discussion followed immediately thereafter moderated by John and Michael Vesel of Wipfl, as shown in the picture to the left. Panelists included Mike Adam of Bankmybiz, Kelly Brown of American Deposit Management, Wayne Miller and Jack Novielle of FIS, Joseph Fazio of the Commerce Bank, Doug Gordon from Waterstone Bank, Dave Werner from Park Bank, and Michelle Toll of the State Bank Group. We are in the process of planning our next conference in the fall on Financial Crime and AML. We are planning one conference in Washington D.C. and then we will repeat it on campus in March. The first conference was very successful with 138 individuals in attendance which we hope to repeat again next year.



This also was the first year that students in the program competed in the annual Conference of State Bank Supervisors (CSBS) case study competition. Students were required to partner with a community bank and develop a case study regarding their usage of information technology, and what impact it has had to their organization. Although we did not win the competition, we had a very good showing and the experience has provided us with a wealth of information for our entry next year.

As part of our recruitment effort our first annual golf outing was held on April 28th hosted by the Commercial Banking Club in conjunction with the Commercial Banking Program. Approximately 30+ students and bankers participated in this event, including several bank sponsors, which was held at the Brown Deer Country Club. Our objective is to allow prospective students to network, in a relaxed environment, with bankers to learn more about the profession, get to know key people, and to learn about the Commercial Banking

Program. As can be seen from the picture to the right we had a good turnout and are anticipating more students applying to the program in the fall as a result.

Curriculum

The Spring term saw the delivery of the final core course in the program, Bank Risk Management. This capstone course is designed to educate the commercial banking students in the myriad of risks that commercial banks face on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the regulatory environment is a key focus, as well as the importance and process for bank examinations.

As part of the regular curriculum, in the Introduction to Commercial Banking class, we again conducted field trips to Chicago to visit the Federal Reserve (Money Museum) as well as hear, first hand, about monetary policy and career paths at the Fed. In addition, we visited two banks during this trip. Wintrust Bank, pictured below, and BMO Harris each hosted over 30 students during the trips. These visits are always well-received by the students, many of whom have never stepped into large LaSalle Street banks, not to mention the Fed. Many thanks to our two hosts for their excellent presentations and interest in our students. The reflections I require from these visits are always most complimentary and have stirred a strong interest in commercial banking.



With the new relationship with Wintrust Financial Corp. (Town Bank in Milwaukee) and Marquette University, Town Bank will set aside designated funding to allow commercial banking students to be involved in the administration of low-cost small business loans in the



community. This will continue to enhance our “experiential” approach to learning by allowing students to work with actual clients and money to learn, first-hand, the credit analysis and underwriting process. I am in the process of re-designing the Bank Leadership class to incorporate this outstanding opportunity into the fall semester. Last year we began this process with the Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative (WWBIC), and they will continue to be a part of this process, with Town Bank, to truly create applied education that will set our program apart from others, and become the destination business school we seek. We will utilize a number of sources to enhance the critical lending education that I believe is important for a career in commercial banking, including Andy Keusal’s, “Breaking into Banking” as a foundation, Town Bank seasoned lenders, and WWBIC staff to provide real-world experiences and guidance in the process, in addition to experienced co-teachers to shepherd and hone credit presentation skills.

Finally, commercial banking relies on unique skills that are critical to entering and sustaining a career in commercial banking. These skills include interviewing skills (internships and full-time), credit and loan package write

ups, loan presentation skills, as well as sales skills. I will be engaging a consulting professional to conduct workshops tailored to these specific skills necessary for students to be successful in both the program and in their careers.

Support

One of our major objectives is to ultimately endow the Commercial Banking Program. Endowment guarantees that the program will continue to run in perpetuity which, I believe, is critical to our industry for the future. Although we have not accomplished that goal as yet, I am happy to report that we have made some considerable strides towards that goal with a number of recent pledged funds over the next several years. At present we are at about 20% of that objective. This may not sound like a lot but it is beginning to provide us with some guaranteed operational funding which allows me to design, build, and deliver on the education that you require in future bankers.

Results

In short, it has been a very good year and a great spring semester. Many of our objectives have been accomplished and we are well on the way with others. The most important objective that we focus on is to deliver exceptional talent to the industry. That is the one objective that is not arbitrary.

I am happy to report the first graduations from the Commercial Banking Program have just occurred on May 20th with 5 students receiving the distinction of being the “first” to achieve this goal. The students, pictured to the right, are **100 percent** placed with exceptional commercial banking opportunities at BMO Harris, Wintrust Bank, Wells Fargo, and First Midwest Bank. Good luck to the graduates pictured: Dan Attwood, Sam Dykes, Brandon Santos, Jennifer Gigot, and Michelle Frederick. I could not be more proud of their accomplishments and am excited to track their career progress in the years to come. They will be exceptional examples of what we offer in this program.



In addition, **100 percent** of the students in the program seeking internships have attained them. This not only will provide them with exceptional banking experience, but will provide you with opportunities to evaluate future employees.

Have a great summer to you all! Thank you for your continued interest and support. To learn more, please contact Dr. Kent Belasco, Director of the Commercial Banking Program, and Assistant Professor of Finance at: kent.belasco@marquette.edu, 414-288-6882 (office) or 630-817-8270 (mobile).

