

GSB Connection

The Official Newsletter of the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison



Leading Through Innovation

Built for the Demands of Modern Banking

Effective bank leadership has always required adaptability to shifting regulations, evolving technology, and an increasingly complex talent environment. Along with these ever-changing variables, agility is vital. Today's leaders are expected to manage risk and drive growth while navigating institutions that are increasingly more closely scrutinized.

The Graduate School of Banking prepares leaders to consistently meet these challenges. Since 1945, GSB has paired rigorous multi-disciplinary academic grounding with practical, immediately applicable frameworks preparing graduates to lead with greater clarity, confidence, and impact.

The Bank Technology Management School, the Human Resource Management School, and the Graduate School of Banking reflect GSB's commitment to all disciplines of bank leadership. Each is built around the core principle that professional development should translate directly to organizational results. These programs represent only part of the curriculum that GSB has become known for and continues to build.

Technology Leadership with Accountability

The scope of technology leadership in banking has grown considerably. The **Bank Technology Management School, April 13–17, 2026**, equips IT and security leaders with the knowledge to confidently make decisions involving data governance, regulatory compliance, AI integration and capital allocation, all areas that directly affect bank performance and standing with examiners.



"GSB's Bank Technology Management School provided me with practical insights into performance data, risk and vendor management, and how to effectively leverage AI to improve processes throughout my bank."

- Whitney Verhage,
CSR/IT Officer, Centera Bank

Talent as a Driver of Bank Performance

Talent decisions shape outcomes across every dimension of a bank's performance from productivity and compliance to culture and long-term profitability. The **Human Resource Management School, April 20–24, 2026**, arms HR leaders with the essential strategies to connect their work directly to these outcomes.

"Attending GSB's Human Resource Management School was the single best professional experience I have found for developing my HR skills in the banking industry."

- Lorie Hulsey,
SVP/Director of Human Resources, First Oklahoma Bank



The Graduate School of Banking: A Foundation for Executive Leadership

The flagship **Graduate School of Banking, July 26–August 6, 2026**, is where the underlying principles of all GSB programs come together. This two-week immersive program brings together experienced bankers, renowned faculty, and industry advisors who know the realities of today's banking environment. Students work through current challenges, alongside a high-caliber cohort, building both the strategic depth and the professional relationships that continue to generate value long after the program ends.

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GSB Alumni Spotlight Profile

Seif Amin

Senior Project Manager | Central Bank of Egypt



Building the Systems Behind Modern Banking

A continuing thread that has run through Seif Amin’s career has been the draw to environments that cultivate meaningful change. His fascination with how financial systems can support economic growth, particularly in rapidly evolving economies, has been a defining leg of his professional journey. It is this focus, along with his desire to be a conduit of, and contributor to, positive change that led to his role as Senior Project Manager for Banking Operational Restructuring and Transformational Projects, Central Bank of Egypt.

Amin acknowledges the essentiality of a well-functioning banking sector in enabling investment, facilitating trade, and supporting businesses and households as economies grow and modernize. He also credits his work at Central Bank of Egypt with shaping his perspective on banking while developing his understanding of the role financial infrastructure plays in the broader economy.

“Central banks sit at the heart of the system shaping the frameworks and platforms that allow the broader banking sector to operate efficiently and securely,” he says.

Many of the initiatives he worked on early in his career were large-scale technology projects focused on modernizing infrastructure, improving operational systems, and strengthening institutional capabilities. It was these projects that connected the dots for him at the intersection of technology, operations, and institutional transformation.

He explains that this revelation was a natural progression to him leading complex transformation projects where digital systems, operational processes, and institutional strategy converged to strengthen the financial system.

“What I find most rewarding is seeing complex ideas turn into systems that people rely on every day,” he says. “Seeing those ideas evolve into operational systems that deliver real value is deeply satisfying.”

Amin finds the collaboration that evolves equally rewarding. “Large initiatives require bringing together people from different disciplines, technology teams, operations specialists, and leadership, and aligning them around a shared objective,” he says. “When that alignment happens and a team successfully delivers something meaningful together, it creates a strong sense of accomplishment.”

While delivering purposeful outcomes is primary goal, Amin’s broader goal is to be a changemaker in the banking industry, positively impacting it and preparing it for the future by making it more modern, resilient and agile in change management.

“Banking today is undergoing a period of significant transformation,” he says. “Technology is reshaping how institutions operate, how financial services and payments are delivered, and how financial infrastructure is designed.”

Seeking a Deeper Understanding

It was Amin’s commitment to being on the forefront of change in banking technology prompted him to attend GSB’s Bank Technology Management School in 2022. Coming from Egypt, he was particularly interested in observing the scale and diversity of the U.S. banking ecosystem.

“The role of community banks stood out in particular,” he says. “In many countries, banking is often associated primarily with large institutions, but community banks in the United States play an important role in supporting local economies.”



“Digital transformation is not simply about implementing systems,” he says. “It requires alignment between leadership, governance, and institutional priorities.”

Amin adds that the curriculum also shifted his perspective of banking, expanding beyond technology and operations to include governance, regulation, and institutional design.

“Digital transformation is not simply about implementing systems,” he says. “It requires alignment between leadership, governance, and institutional priorities.”

Learning about how banks in different countries approach similar challenges, such as managing modernization, risk and technological change also provided valuable insights.

Those insights were instrumental to the creation of several major initiatives Amin has helped lead, including the implementation of IBAN (International Bank Account Number) in Egypt, development of a fully automated national currency

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NEW Program

Advanced Financial Managers Forum

May 19-21, 2026

Designed exclusively for Financial Manager’s School alumni serving in senior financial leadership roles, the Advanced Financial Managers Forum moves beyond the fundamentals to help you tackle the “heavy lifting” of bank financial management. You’ll learn how to drive long-term profitability, master liquidity judgment, sharpen investment strategy and portfolio positioning, execute on earnings, and perfect board-level communication while earning up to 18 CPE credit hours. Enrollment is limited to ensure to ensure meaningful dialogue with fellow alumni. ●

Enrollment deadline is April 19, 2026. Enroll at gsb.org/forum



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hub, major core banking and ERP implementations, the establishment of a card services center at the central bank, and a center designed to strengthen banking training environments.

In addition to the educational component of his GSB experience, another substantial takeaway was the friendships and professional network he has built.

“What stood out immediately was both the quality of the discussions and the people participating in them,” he says. “The group included professionals with deep experience in banking and financial technology, and the openness with which everyone shared their perspectives made the experience especially valuable. It created connections with professionals I remain in contact with today, which speaks to the collaborative environment the program fosters.”

Amin says the experience also reinforced the value of intellectual curiosity. “The experience helped me recognize how energized I am by environments where I am surrounded by thoughtful and experienced people who challenge the way I think,” he says. This has sparked his exploration of AI and its potential to reshape industries in the years ahead.

Balancing the Demands

While Amin admits work in banking and large-scale transformation work can be demanding, he creates a sense of balance by spending time with close family and friends. “Those moments when life slows down help keep everything in perspective,” he says.

He also enjoys outdoor hiking, climbing, kitesurfing and travel. And, as in his professional life, Amin is drawn to experiences that combine exploration with a bit of challenge. ●

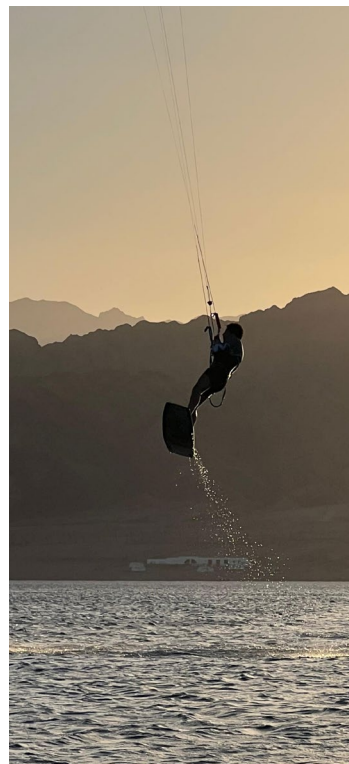


Photo Caption: Seif out on the water kitesurfing.



Women’s History Month: Honoring Women Advancing the Banking Industry

GSB celebrates Women’s History Month by recognizing the contributions of all the many women whom, over the decades, cemented GSB’s reputation as the premier destination for leadership development. Thank you to our GSB faculty, advisory board members, students, alumni, and staff who have individually and collectively exemplified leadership, mentorship and friendship, resulting in stronger banks, relationships and communities. ●



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Graduates also receive the Executive Leadership Certificate from the Wisconsin School of Business, recognizing their readiness to lead at the highest levels of the organization.



CENTER FOR
PROFESSIONAL
& EXECUTIVE
DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Development That Delivers

While the Bank Technology Management School, the Human Resource Management School, and the Graduate School of Banking serve different professional roles, they are connected by GSB’s consistent commitment to forward-looking leadership development that results in tangible, measurable outcomes. ●



“I will tell you that of my master’s degree and my bachelor’s degree, the Graduate School of Banking program was the most applicable and useful curriculum. GSB is one of those programs that stays in front of all the trends. Whether you are at a rural ag bank or at a larger institution, there’s so much for you to learn and bring back to your organization. It’s life changing.”

*- Tim Dively,
Digital Services Consultant, Clifton Larson Allen (CLA)*

96%

percent of GSB graduates would recommend the program to a colleague or peer.

Back by Popular Demand: AI Innovation Series June 8 – 12, 2026

The Graduate School of Banking's AI Innovation Series is a multi-day, fully virtual program designed to help banking leaders and professionals harness the power of artificial intelligence. Through expert-led sessions, real-world case studies, and hands-on applications, participants will explore how AI can transform their banking strategy, operations, compliance, customer experience, and workforce development. This course is open to all AI advocates or emerging leaders looking to spearhead AI initiatives in their institution. ●

Enrollment deadline is June 2, 2026. Enroll at gsb.org/ai



GSB-Wisconsin Hires Brandon Blackmer as Chief Financial Officer

The Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, consistently ranked among the nation's top banking schools, is pleased to welcome Brandon Blackmer as Chief Financial Officer.

In this role, Blackmer will oversee all financial management of the organization, including budgeting and fiscal management, reporting, audit and compliance, and overall strategic financial leadership, helping support the continued growth and long-term sustainability of GSB's programs and initiatives.

Blackmer joins GSB from a Chicago-based not-for-profit, where he served as the Vice President of Finance and Administration, managing financial stewardship, fundraising, compliance, auditing, capital investment strategy, and organization-wide fiscal operations. Drawing on his experience in financial operations in student affairs, consulting, marketing, and not-for-profits, Blackmer will play an important role in advancing GSB's financial stewardship and innovative programming.

"Brandon brings a financial leadership and operational perspective that will help GSB continue to grow and evolve," said Paul C. Katz, GSB President and CEO. "He's thoughtful, collaborative, and shares our passion for developing leaders who will shape the future of banking."

"This role creates an important opportunity to contribute to the stellar work already underway at the Graduate School of Banking as the team continues building the next generation of banking leaders. GSB has an excellent reputation, and I look forward to supporting the program's strong fiscal management and educational mission," said Blackmer.

Founded in 1945, the Graduate School of Banking at UW–Madison is sponsored by state banking associations across the central United States and the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In addition to its flagship Graduate School of Banking program, GSB offers specialty schools in Human Resources, Technology, Cybersecurity, Finance, and Digital Banking—as well as innovative programming in artificial intelligence and alumni engagement. ●

