

GSB Connection

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



Message from the CEO

Honoring Our Legacy, Shaping What's Next

Paul C. Katz, President & CEO

If you gave me a choice between running another marathon and going through our two-week session, I'm pretty sure I'd recover faster from the marathon.

But session manages to be exhausting, energizing, and fulfilling all at once. And what makes those two weeks, so rewarding is the purpose behind them.

Yes, we teach banking. But our responsibility is much bigger than helping someone become a better lender, CFO, technologist, or risk officer.

We want students to leave GSB better prepared to lead—to make tough decisions, develop people, strengthen their institutions and, ultimately, make a meaningful difference in their community.

That's why we're relentlessly focused on the student experience. Every decision we make—from the curriculum and faculty to our facilities and even the rhythm of the entire program—begins with one simple question: Does this improve the experience for our students?

This year, you could feel the energy and see the progress. Artificial intelligence is more deeply embedded in the curriculum. New electives connected. Our learning environments were state-of-the-art, I mean, other than a few sessions in a bomb shelter. And the best proof came from our students, whose enthusiastic feedback confirmed that the changes are resonating.

But we won't stand still. This month, we'll sit down with alumni, faculty, and our advisory groups and grind through an exhaustive amount of data and feedback, looking hard at what worked, what didn't, and where we can get better.

We want the GSB experience to remain transformational while getting even better. That means honoring the legacy that has made GSB special for generations while continually challenging ourselves to earn that reputation with every new class. ●

Where Will GSB Be Next?



We're hitting the road! Here's where you can find GSB at upcoming industry events. If you'll be there, we'd love to see you!

IBAT Annual Convention

Independent Bankers Association of Texas
September 19–22 | San Antonio, TX

Bank Management School

Ohio Bankers League
September 20–25 | Columbus, OH

Young Bank Leaders of Kansas Annual Conference

Kansas Bankers Association
October 1–2 | Manhattan, KS

Commercial Lending School

Minnesota Bankers Association
October 5–9 | Brainerd, MN

Converge Cyber + AI Conference

SBS CyberSecurity
October 6–7 | Omaha, NE

Peer Group Consortium

North Dakota Bankers Association
October 13–14 | Bismarck, ND

The Main Event

Ohio Bankers League
October 26–28 | Columbus, OH

Next Generation in Banking Conference

Missouri Bankers Association
October 27–28 | St. Charles, MO

Emerging Leaders Summit

South Dakota Bankers Association
October 28–29 | Deadwood, SD

Bank Management and Directors Conference

Michigan Bankers Association
November 3–5 | Grand Rapids, MI



GSB Alumni Spotlight Profile

Lisa Witte

Chief Financial Officer & Executive Vice President | United Prairie | Mountain Lake, MN



For Lisa Witte, growth starts with curiosity.

Eighteen years ago, while studying finance and economics at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Lisa was looking for an opportunity to put her education into practice. A family friend connected her with United Prairie, and after a brief meeting, she accepted a part-time teller position.

She has been there ever since.

Today, Lisa serves as Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President, helping shape the financial strategy and future of the organization. Along the way, she has built a career around a willingness to challenge assumptions, explore new ideas, and continually improve.

"The most rewarding part of my role is collaborating with other team members, exploring new initiatives, and implementing change," Lisa says. "We continually strive to make United Prairie Bank a better place to bank and work."

That approach has earned recognition beyond her organization. In 2025, Independent Banker named Lisa among its 40 Under 40 Community Bank Leaders, recognizing emerging leaders making an impact through innovation, efficiency, community involvement, and more.

Building Expertise & Broadening Perspective

Lisa's GSB journey began in 2018, when a growing leadership role in asset liability management brought her to Financial Managers School.

As she took greater responsibility for ALCO, Lisa wanted to deepen her understanding of asset liability management and strengthen the effectiveness of her bank's ALCO meetings. Financial Managers School provided the technical foundation, industry practices, and resources she needed as she continued developing as a CFO.

What began as an investment in financial expertise soon became part of a much broader leadership journey.

"The programming was informative, engaging, and a great networking opportunity," Lisa says. "I saw GSB as the next step to provide an unmatched opportunity to expand my perspective as an executive leader across all areas of banking leadership."

She graduated from the Graduate School of Banking in 2024, then returned to GSB in 2026 for the inaugural Advanced Financial Managers Forum.

Each experience met Lisa at a different point in her career. Financial Managers School strengthened her financial expertise. GSB expanded her

perspective beyond the finance function and challenged her to think more broadly as an executive. The Advanced Financial Managers Forum brought her back together with fellow finance leaders to explore today's economic environment, financial performance, and risk.

Together, those experiences reinforced a lesson that continues to shape how Lisa leads: progress requires a willingness to challenge your assumptions.

"Banking is changing, and we continually need to reassess what we believe as fact," she says. "What once worked or didn't work may not be true five years later. We continually need to pivot, reassess, and have the courage to try something new."



"GSB made me a better leader, sparked more curiosity, and fostered a mindset of continuous growth and development."

Turning Learning Into Action

For Lisa, GSB shaped not only how she approaches financial strategy, but how she thinks, leads, and navigates change.

She points to changes in strategic planning, operational models, incentive plan design, and even conversations around rebranding as areas influenced by the ideas and relationships she developed through GSB. Just as important has been a deeper understanding of her own leadership style and how she can continue improving.

"GSB made me a better leader, sparked more curiosity, and fostered a mindset of continuous growth and development," she says.

The relationships have proven equally valuable. Lisa regularly turns to connections she made through GSB to exchange ideas, discuss organizational initiatives, and compare approaches with bankers operating outside her market.

Those conversations provide something increasingly valuable for leaders navigating a changing industry: perspective.

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Investing in What Comes Next

Lisa now brings this perspective to the GSB Banker Advisory Board, where she provides feedback on programming, supports alumni engagement, and helps GSB continue responding to the evolving needs of the industry.

For Lisa, giving back is closely connected to the future of community banking itself.

"The future of community banking is dependent on all of us to continually invest in our future leaders and keep up on innovation to remain a pillar in the communities we serve," she says.

That commitment to growth now extends beyond her own career as she helps invest in the next generation of community banking leaders.

Her advice to bankers considering GSB is equally straightforward.

"There is never a perfect time to enroll in GSB. We all have commitments and families," Lisa says. "I encourage you to just give it a go. I am certain you will find it worth your time."

Beyond the Bank

Outside of work, Lisa appreciates the simple things that help her recharge. You'll often find her outdoors, spending time on the water, playing a round of golf, taking a walk, or simply enjoying time with family and friends.

She also enjoys trying new things, from picking up a new hobby to exploring a new destination. This sense of curiosity keeps her seeking out fresh perspectives, embracing new experiences, and trying something different.

It is fitting, then, that when asked to describe her GSB experience in one sentence, she returns to the idea that has defined so much of her career:

"GSB was a pivotal experience introducing new ideas and new connections to broaden my horizons." ●



Photo Caption: (Above) Lisa with her husband and three children. (Below) Lisa and the United Prairie team supporting the Mankato Area United Way. (Bottom left) Lisa participating in FISim, GSB's bank management simulation and capstone project. (Bottom right) Lisa with connections she made in Madison during her time at GSB.

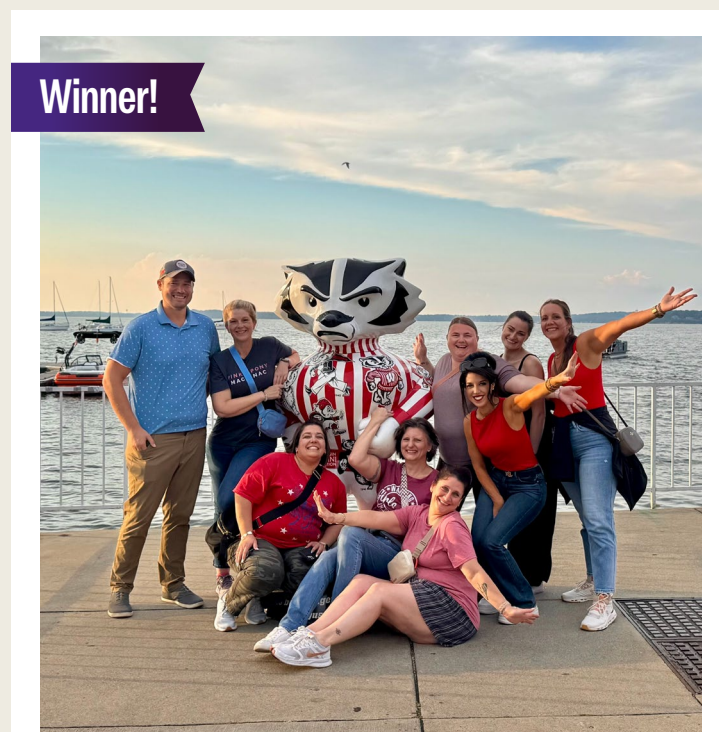


GSB Photo Contest Winners

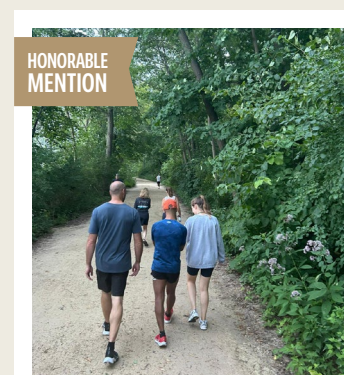
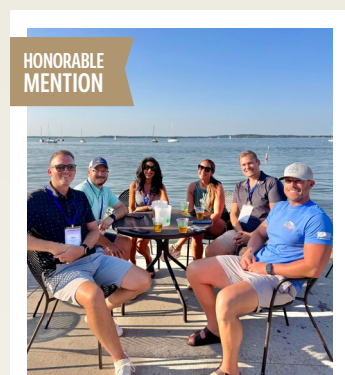
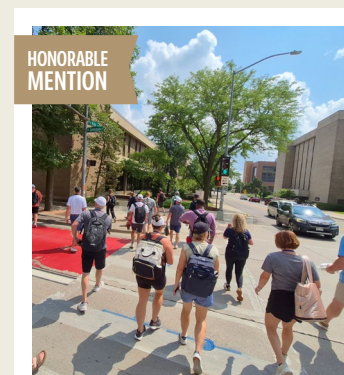
New this year, GSB invited students to help capture the student experience through our first-ever photo contest. During Session 2026, students submitted photos showcasing the connections they built at GSB and the memories they made in Madison.

We loved seeing GSB through our students' eyes. Congratulations to our inaugural winners!

A selection of honorable mentions is featured below, highlighting even more moments from Session 2026. Keep an eye out for these and other student photos in future GSB communications. ●



“Making Memories in Madison” Category Winner:
Julie Parrish, Class of 2027



GSB Announces Educational Alliance With SBS CyberSecurity



GSB is pleased to announce a new Educational Alliance with SBS CyberSecurity, building on a longstanding relationship focused on cybersecurity and technology education for the banking industry.

Through this alliance, SBS CyberSecurity will continue its support of GSB's Bank Cybersecurity School and Bank Technology Management School while helping expand opportunities for education, professional development, and industry engagement.

SBS CyberSecurity has a long history with GSB, including its co-founders serving as GSB faculty. Today, that connection continues through SBS leaders and experts who share their expertise with GSB students, including CEO and faculty member Chad Knutson. ●



Amber Van Til Appointed to Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Congratulations to Amber R. Van Til, president and CEO of the Indiana Bankers Association, on her appointment to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the state's higher education coordinating agency. Her term runs through June 30, 2030.

"Having spent my career working with Indiana's business community, I've seen firsthand the importance of aligning higher education with workforce needs. Strong partnerships between educators, employers

and policymakers are essential to preparing the next generation of leaders and keeping Indiana competitive," Van Til said.

Amber is a longtime member of the GSB community, serving as a trustee and past chair of the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Herbert V. Prochnow Educational Foundation.

Congratulations, Amber, on this appointment! ●

Share Your Institution's News With GSB

Have something worth celebrating? We'd love to hear about it and share it with the GSB community.

Send us your financial institution's latest news, including promotions, new hires, retirements, awards, community involvement, and other milestones. Simply send us a press release, social media link, or a few details and a photo to be featured in an upcoming issue of GSB Connection.

Share your news with us at info@gsb.org. ●