

# The “Marquette Banker”

Issue #12– June 2024

“A new generation of bankers”



College of Business Administration  
Commercial Banking Program

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

Spring was packed with many exciting activities and milestone events for the program. Among them were our annual study abroad trip to Zurich Switzerland, our trip to Chicago, an annual Artificial Intelligence and Banking conference, a recruiting networking event, five executive chat speakers, and the funding of our commercial banking certification program. The Commercial Banking Program is thriving with increased interest in commercial banking careers from our students, with continuing demand for talent from the banks. Students continue to be hired by our financial institutions, which is most appreciated and the purpose of the program. From a College of Business Administration, Tim Hanley, our acting Dean for the past 4 years is retiring effective June 30<sup>th</sup>. Replacing Tim will be Andrew DeGuire who will join the college as of July 1, 2024. Tim will be missed, but we are excited for Andrew to join.



## Student Enrollment

This year has been strong in terms of student applications to the program as well as subsequent additions to the program. I try to add fifteen students to the program per year, and this year has been the highest number we have experienced, to date, at 23 students, with another three in process. This, in part, reflects the growth in enrollment in the College of Business that we have experienced, and the prospects of exceeding that again are anticipated for 2024, but also the number of events we have been sponsoring and hosting, more advertising and recruiting. I anticipate this trend will continue given some of the other activities and initiatives in process, which will be outlined further within this newsletter. Overall, 113 students have been accepted into the program over the years.

## Advisory Board/Founders

Our advisory board remains strong at 26 professions, representing seventeen banks, four associations and five related fields. Doug Gordon of Waterstone Bank and longtime advisory board member has recently retired. We congratulate Doug and thank him for his years of service to the Commercial Banking Program, although not completely done. We are pleased to have Doug’s son, Ryan, CFO of Waterstone Bank join the advisory board in his place. In addition, Todd Nicklaus, Chairman and owner of Incredible Bank, has also joined the advisory board. Todd and Camille Nicklaus, further, have joined the Founders group at the platinum level, with their most generous contribution in support of our efforts.

## Activities and Plans

As indicated at the start of this newsletter, it has been a busy semester. We continue to conduct a variety of career events for our students, and many other events that are outlined below.

### *Career Events*

This semester we hosted a network event in April for second semester freshmen and sophomores. The purpose of these sessions is to meet with banks to network and learn about the commercial banking career from a variety of banks. This semester was well attended by students with four banks represented, including BMO, Townbank, Ixonia Bank, and PNC.

In addition, our Careers in Finance event occurred in March. This included over 150 students, sophomores and Finance majors, exploring the various opportunities within the field, banking included.

***Field trip to the Federal Reserve and BMO in Chicago***

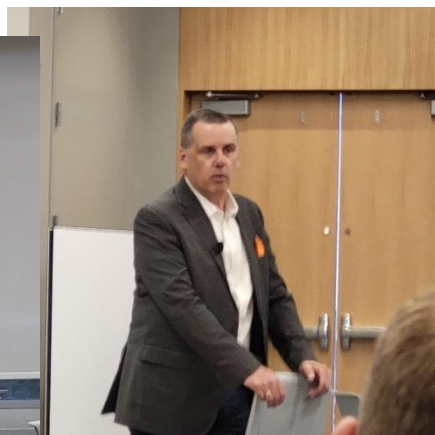
Once again, we travelled to Chicago for our semester field trip to Chicago. We had a group of approximately twenty-five students attending. Our first stop was the Federal Reserve Money Museum, and a Fed presentation. After lunch we visited BMO Tower. This event was hosted by Melissa Will and we were fortunate to have three Marquette Commercial Banking Program alum attend and share experiences and advice to the students in the room. Pictured left are Melissa Will, Dhruva Murali, Jack Richardson, and Sam Schalke of BMO.



***Executive Chat Series***

Through our Commercial Banking Club, we had a robust schedule of banking executives who came to talk with students about their careers and journeys in the banking profession. This semester we were fortunate to have presentations from Keith Moser of the OCC (not pictured) and pictured below from left to right, Randy Hultgren CEO of the Illinois Bankers Association, Lou Banach SVP of Associated Bank, David Kucera, regional president of Capital One, and Bob Hau, CFO of Fiserv. In addition, panels of bankers were conducted from Ixonia Bank and BMO.

These were well attended and provided students with outstanding examples of career journeys success, and networking opportunities with high-level professionals.



***Annual Artificial Intelligence Conference***

Our sixth annual banking conference was held on April 18<sup>th</sup>, entitled Artificial Intelligence in Commercial Banking. This event was hosted on site as well as virtually. Approximately one

hundred individuals were in attendance listening to keynote speaker, Nathan Lasnoski, CTO and co-founder of Concurrency (left), and speakers Sarah Grooms of Wintrust, Ryan Miller of the ABA, Stephen Nickolson of the NBS Group, Thomas Eck of Fiserv, and John Rose of the Federal Reserve of Chicago (on screen)



pictured right. Tom Grottke of the NBS Group, served as moderator for the Q&A portion with the keynote. Obviously, a timely topic and well received by the audience.

### ***Zurich Switzerland Study Abroad Trip***

For the third consecutive year, I led a study abroad trip to Zurich Switzerland. This year 19 students joined the trip, hosted by ZHAW University of Management and Law in Winterthur Switzerland. New company visits included this year were the Lindt Chocolate Factory (left), a cheese factory, and UBS, which were well received and provided much educational and cultural background, making this a highly successful trip. In addition to outstanding university professors in the classroom, providing much depth on the Swiss economic system, COVID implications, UBS strategic focus, and other topics, we again visited the Swiss National Bank, Landsbank, Victorinox as well as a trek up Mt. Rigi, and walking tours of old town Winterthur and Zurich.



### **A glimpse of planned activities for spring 2024 semester**

#### ***Washington DC trip***

We will continue to offer our trip to Washington DC in October. This year we hope to visit the ABA, Congress, once again with potential options from the Federal Reserve, OCC, and the World Bank. Marquette's Les Aspin Center for policy will be on our agenda as well, as this has been integrated as an internship

opportunity for students in the program interested in the regulatory and policy development aspects of the career.

#### ***Executive Chat Series***

We will continue to offer 4 to 5 speakers throughout the semester to speak to our students about their journeys and their experiences in the profession. We are in the process of identifying speakers for these sessions and if you are interested or would like to recommend a professional, please email me.

#### ***Career Night***

I will participate again in the freshmen Career Night to expose first semester freshmen to careers in Finance. This is a well-attended event and provides our young students with their first exposure to the breadth of careers in finance. A panel of professionals will be invited to impart glimpses of careers in this discipline to the young students. This will occur in November.

#### ***Careers in Finance***

We will host our semester Careers in Finance event again in October. We will have commercial banking roundtables for discussions with students. Please email me and let me know if you would like your bank represented at one of these tables.

#### ***Open House***

In October we will conduct an "open house" for freshmen and sophomores (and others) to expose them to the requirements and benefits of applying to the commercial banking program.

## **Innovation and Curriculum**

This semester we have made some significant strides relative to the content of the program and initiatives for the industry.

#### ***Certification Program for Commercial Bankers***

We are thankful to have received generous funding from the Todd and Camille Nicklaus family to begin the development of a professional certification to the banking industry. This contribution has enabled us to cover our start-up cost and bring the program to implementation. Working with SS&C Inc. and with an operational committee of bankers and regulators we have

begun to define the core educational areas necessary for individuals entering the profession. The Certified Professional Banker (CPB) is the designation planned, beginning with a pilot before implementation initially in the Midwest. We are excited to launch this process and provide the requirements necessary to implement a program that can address the educational gap that exists in commercial banking and provide a core foundation of knowledge with the potential of positively affecting the perceptions of the profession, but also instrumental in bringing talent to the community banks.

### ***Experiential learning***

This semester we expanded our Loan Portfolio Management course, offered in the spring, by partnering with MEDC, another community development financial institution, in addition to our current partnership with WWBIC. We are planning to build on the loans analyzed to take advantage of the revolving loan fund available to the program and build a portfolio of loans for on-going management experience for students.

Additionally, for the third year we have partnered with a small business in Honduras through the Eskala arm of Global Brigades. This year students were able to provide consultation to the small business to help them to manage their business more efficiently and to provide guidance and information to obtain capital for growth. These experiences provide the opportunity for students to speak directly to a client and exercise the skills they are learning in the program to get to know the customer and develop meaningful recommendations that provide value. This also helps to expose students to the challenges of third-world countries.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the partnership with the Les Aspin Center in Washington affords another significant opportunity for internships and policy development related experiences.

## **Executive Education**

As the program has matured over the last several years, and the depth of the curriculum has expanded, opportunities to provide team building exercises at some of our partner banks has evolved. This semester we conducted a month-long bank simulation exercise for Johnson Financial Group officers. This has afforded these bankers team-building opportunities as well as depth in managing a bank and competing with one another. Four teams were identified, and four quarters of activities ensued to produce the top bank amongst the competition based upon specified metrics. The Simarch bank simulation was utilized, which is the same model used in the commercial banking curriculum. Developer of the program Ziegfried Vermaack of Belgium has been most instrumental in the development of this exceptional simulation.

## **Support**

I am most thankful to all of you for your continued support of this important program. Your contributions make this program possible and allow me to develop exceptional materials, and experiences for our students, and exceptional talent to the industry. Please feel free to circulate this newsletter to others that you feel would be interested. As always, please use the link below to provide support to the program and select the Commercial Banking Operation Fund, when you select “please direct my gift to...”

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

## **Exposure and Results**

### ***Program Exposure***

Through external media interviews, internal media, LinkedIn, and other social media we strive to create and build awareness of our program nationally. Of course, word-of-mouth makes an enormous difference and we do count on our many partners to share this word in the circles you travel in. As the bank certification program ramps up, we will be using external marketing efforts to create awareness of the program and invite candidates to apply. This advertising will also help to broadcast our program to a wider audience in the banking industry, colleges, and universities. Marketing efforts will be shared in this forum once these are developed.

### ***Graduates***

This semester we had eight students graduating and moving into their careers, congratulations to them all. Pictured below are the students from the Commercial Banking Program graduating along with their career direction. From left to right are:

- Hai Nguyen – Wintrust
- Katherine Sullivan – Liberty Mutual, Massachusetts
- Garrett Lukoski – US Bank, CDO Portfolio Administrator, Milwaukee
- D’Angelo Alvarado – BMO, Chicago
- Max Paradiso – Crowe, Loan Review Consultant, Chicago
- Terrence Maday – Chicago Partners Wealth Advisors, Chicago
- John McNulty – PNC, Corporate and Institutional Banking Associate, Milwaukee
- Jason Haw – (not pictured)



I appreciate you forwarding this newsletter to other interested parties and to those colleagues and potential students who can benefit from this program.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me directly at Dr. Kent Belasco, Director of the Commercial Banking Program, and Associate 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 summer! I look forward to hearing from you soon.**

# FOUNDERS



College of Business Administration  
Commercial Banking

## \*\*\*Platinum Level\*\*\*

WINTRUST



**TODD & CAMILLE  
NICKLAUS**

## \*\*Silver Level\*\*



**JOHN K.  
BARRETT**



**JOHN J.  
BYRNE, CAMS,  
ESQ.**

## \*\*Bronze Level\*\*



**Ixonia Bank**

