

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GSBLSU Announces Hire of Dr. Michael J. Highfield as President and Chief Academic Officer

BATON ROUGE, LA – February 23, 2026 – The Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University (GSBLSU) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Michael J. Highfield as President and Chief Academic Officer, effective July 1, 2026.

Dr. Highfield brings more than 25 years of experience in higher education as a teacher, scholar, and Administrator. He began his academic career at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston before joining Mississippi State University (Starkville), where he served as Professor of Finance for 18 years and as Department Head of Finance and Economics for nine years. In 2023, he accepted the role of Provost and Executive Vice President at Mississippi College (Clinton), where he led university-wide academic strategy, guided institutional restructuring, and championed interdisciplinary program development, leaving a lasting and positive impact on the campus community.

Highfield has deep and enduring ties to banking education. He taught at the Mississippi School of Banking for 10 years and has been a distinguished member of the GSBLSU faculty for more than 15 years, earning the school's highest teaching honor in 2021. Since 2017, he has served as Vice President for Curriculum under an independent contractor agreement, providing strategic oversight of the academic program, leading curriculum innovation, recruiting and mentoring faculty, and helping position the school to meet the evolving needs of the banking industry.

John Naughton, CEO and Director of GSBLSU, stated, "This is a momentous day for our school. Mike's full-time addition to the GSBLSU team will allow us to expand educational opportunities for our alumni and deepen our service to the banking community. He is a visionary academic leader and a true gentleman. I cannot think of a better person to help us guide GSBLSU into its next 75 years."

Highfield earned his Bachelor of Business Administration and Master of Business Administration degrees from Mississippi State University. He later completed a Master of Science in Economics and a Ph.D. in Finance at the University of Kentucky. In addition to his academic credentials, he holds the Chartered Financial Analyst designation from CFA Institute, the Certified Treasury Professional designation from the Association for Financial Professionals, and the Chartered Banking Professional designation from the Graduate School of Banking at LSU

About GSBLSU

GSBLSU is a premier three-year executive education program featuring two-week, in-person sessions each summer on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Over the course of the program, students receive more than 180 hours of face-to-face instruction delivered by seasoned bankers, industry consultants, and leading academicians. The curriculum is designed to equip mid-career banking professionals with advanced strategic, financial, and leadership skills essential for today's evolving banking environment.

The school is sponsored by the State Bankers Associations of 15 Southeastern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Through this regional partnership, GSBLSU serves as a trusted educational resource for the banking industry across the Southeast and Mexico.

For more information on GSBLSU, including admission requirements and application for the 2026 Session (May 18-29), please visit www.gsblsu.org, or contact the GSBLSU office at 225-766-8595 or John Naughton at 225 747-0747.

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