



Western CUNA Management School Half a Century of Leaders

Media Contact:

Michael Steinberger
Associate Dean, Western CUNA Management School
617.694.5718 or michael.steinberger@pomona.edu

Western CUNA Management School To Celebrate 50 Years Of Developing Credit Union Leaders at 2011 Graduation Ceremony & Conference

Claremont, CA – When a handful of credit union leaders came together in 1960 to form Western CUNA Management School (WCMS), no one imagined that they would be creating one of the most important educational entities in the U.S. credit union movement.

On July 20th-21st, WCMS will celebrate this history -- and its 3,500 graduates over five decades -- with a special 50th Graduating Class Celebration and Conference. Sponsored by CO-OP Financial Services, the event will include a reception, breakout sessions and graduation ceremony. CUNA President and CEO Bill Cheney will serve as the 50th Graduating Class Commencement Speaker, and Google Vice President of People Operations Laszlo Brock will be featured as the Conference Keynote Speaker. Other Conference speakers will include long-time WCMS faculty members Martha Andresen, Harry Eggleton, Joe Melchione and David Tansey.

Since first opening its doors on the UCLA campus in 1960 with 42 students, WCMS has become one of the premier credit union management schools in the nation. In the process, it has helped prepare thousands of credit union management staff to become regional and national leaders for the credit union movement, serving in key senior positions at credit unions, chapters, leagues, CUNA and credit union professional societies.

CUNA President and CEO Bill Cheney commented, "For the past five decades, WCMS has helped produce new generations of leaders deeply committed to credit union principles and the continued success of our movement. By helping prepare tomorrow's credit union leaders to carry on the mission, philosophy and ideals of the credit union movement, WCMS is playing a vital role in improving the lives of millions of credit union members."

According to James Likens, WCMS president and dean, "Every year graduating students report that WCMS profoundly changed their lives. Some say they found a voice they had never before been able to express. Some say they realized for the first time that they are competent. Others say they feel a new connection to themselves, to others and to our movement. This kind of testimony is quite gratifying and reinforces the value this program brings to our graduates, their credit unions and members, and the movement as a whole."

Located at Pomona College, one of the nation's elite liberal arts colleges, WCMS serves credit union employees from the participating credit union leagues of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

*WCMS Celebrates 50 Years of Developing Credit Union Leaders
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Diana Dykstra, chair of the California and Nevada Credit Union Leagues, commented on her personal experiences with WCMS, "I found my voice at WCMS, which was vital to my becoming a credit union CEO. WCMS also showed me how to get involved in credit union service. I have had the privilege of serving on the WCMS faculty for the past 13 years, and that has shown me that we are producing extraordinary leaders who will move the credit union movement to the next level."

"We congratulate WCMS for 50 years of service," said Stan Hollen, President/CEO of CO-OP Financial Services. "The school's emphasis on high academic standards, combined with the credit union philosophy of people-helping-people, has had a profound influence on our industry."

WCMS' culture embraces high academic standards while emphasizing credit union philosophy. To set a tone that focuses on both subject content and philosophy, its program stresses "head and heart" -- understanding the best strategy and tactics while bringing passion and commitment to the service of credit unions and their allied institutions. It shares a vision and purpose with its sister regional CUNA management schools located at University of Wisconsin, University of Georgia and Texas Christian University.

WCMS' program is held over three years, with two-week terms during consecutive summers, led by a faculty made up of carefully chosen professors, consultants and credit union leaders. Students also complete two projects that analyze their credit unions. An important part of the WCMS experience is organized class activities that are planned and carried out by the students themselves. Against a crowded academic calendar, each class of students challenge themselves to plan and organize a fundraising social event for the entire school. The classes have a tradition of contributing the funds raised to WCMS for scholarships and important enhancements. Through these activities, WCMS students learn about leadership, teamwork and camaraderie, often forming professional networks and lifetime friendships. Most important, they experience the value of serving a cause bigger than themselves: the credit union movement.

For more information about WCMS' 50th graduation event, please visit <http://www.wcmspomona.org/50/index.htm>.

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