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CONTACT: Jen Kochan, Communications Director

jenk@cues.org

Five Rising Credit Union Leaders Named Finalists in 2026 CUES Emerge Competition

MADISON, Wis.—August 13, 2026—CUES and partner Currency Marketing are pleased to announce the Final Five selected to compete for the title of 2026 CUES Emerging Leader. CUES Emerge is designed to equip rising credit union professionals with the skills, confidence, and visibility to accelerate their careers. Through live and online learning, peer collaboration, and mentorship, participants sharpen their ability to develop and present business cases that advance innovative ideas within their credit unions and communities.

After completing the education phase, participants self-selected into the competition phase by submitting their business case for review by a judging panel of industry leaders. The panel then narrowed the field to the following five finalists invited to present their ideas during a live online Pitch Show:

- **Nicole Baker**, Member Center Manager, Community Choice CU, Michigan
- **Christina Mullins**, Senior Lending Resources Specialist, State Employees' CU, North Carolina
- **Elizabeth Seelbach**, Director of Strategy, Resource One CU, Texas
- **Justin Thompson**, Marketing Automation Analyst, Royal CU, Wisconsin
- **Brandon White**, Manager Financial Crimes Analytics, Wings CU, Colorado

“The 2026 CUES Emerge finalists represent the next generation of credit union leadership,” said Maegan Monson, CUES Event Manager. “Their business cases reflect the creativity, strategic thinking, and commitment needed to address real challenges facing credit unions today, and we look forward to seeing them bring those ideas to life during the Pitch Show.”

“CUES Emerge continues to build on a strong foundation of leadership development, peer connection, and practical innovation,” said Tim McAlpine, CEO, Currency Marketing. “The Final Five have already demonstrated the discipline and vision this program is designed to encourage, and the live pitch experience gives them a powerful platform to share solutions with the industry.”

Business cases will be presented during the CUES Emerge Live Pitch Show on October 7 at 2 p.m. EDT; 1 p.m. CDT; 12 p.m. MDT; and 11 a.m. PDT, with the Final Five participating remotely. Watch the livestream and follow the competition at [CUESEmerge.com](https://cuesemerge.com).

Following the Pitch Show, judges will identify the Top Three before naming the ultimate 2026 CUES Emerging Leader. Each of the Top Three will receive a tiered educational package and scholarships toward CUES Advanced Management Program from Cornell University, to support continued development and growth within the industry.

CUES Emerge was launched in 2020 and built on the success of CUES Next Top Credit Union Exec, a program created through CUES and Currency Marketing’s long-standing partnership. Participants who successfully complete the online courses, Mastermind sessions, and a business case earn the Certified Credit Union Manager designation in recognition of their commitment to their careers, credit unions, and the movement.

Keep up with the final stages of the competition and learn more about the 2026 cohort at [CUESEmerge.com](https://cuesemerge.com) or search [#CUESEmerge](https://twitter.com/CUESEmerge).

To learn more about CUES, visit cues.org. To learn more about Currency Marketing, visit currencymarketing.ca.

About CUES

For over 60 years, CUES has advanced the credit union movement by developing exceptional purpose-driven leaders who meet the unique needs of their organizations and the communities they serve. CUES partners with the credit union system to elevate the leaders of today and tomorrow through exclusive networking and event opportunities, programs that facilitate personal and professional development, and unmatched digital and in-person learning

experiences. Visit [CUES.org](https://www.cues.org) to learn how CUES plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of credit unions.

About Currency Marketing

Currency Marketing (<https://www.currencymarketing.ca/>) is the leading credit union-focused financial education firm. The It's a Money Thing Financial Education Program helps credit unions attract, educate and inspire young adult members, and provides education and financial training for members and staff. In addition, Currency Marketing partners with CUES to manage the CUES Emerge program aimed at celebrating the best emerging credit union leaders and their ideas.

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