**Justification Letter:**

**The letter below can serve as a formal request to gain approval to attend the ABA Stonier Graduate School of Banking or incorporated as talking points in a discussion with your manager about this professional development opportunity.**

Dear [Approver Name],

I would like to request your approval to attend the ABA Stonier Graduate School of Banking, in partnership with the Wharton School. Graduates earn both a Stonier diploma and Wharton Leadership Certificate. I believe the program will broaden my perspective on many issues we face at the bank and enable me to respond more effectively to the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Stonier has long been regarded as the preeminent executive education program in the country. Throughout its over 90-year history, the school has graduated more than 26,000 senior-level bankers and regulators, including some of the most respected executives in the country.

* The curriculum is comprised of three one-week sessions held over the course of three years — with intersession projects. The coursework is comprehensive and includes lectures, group discussions, computer simulations, case studies and peer presentations.
* The goal of the program is to develop new strategies for a changing marketplace while improving students’ skills in all areas of banking.
* A Capstone Project held between Years 2 and 3 will enable me to apply the skills gained at Stonier to a major initiative within our own organization. The school will support me with a Capstone Advisor to help guide me toward success. After attending Stonier, my Capstone Project can be used to help accelerate our bank’s return on the investment.
* Stonier’s program attracts attendees from across the country and around the world and boasts a faculty that includes many of the most important thinkers, practitioners and experts in the industry. Together, they bring their in-depth knowledge and career experience in areas like strategic planning, financial management, economics and change management.

I am confident that attending Stonier will advance my management and leadership skills while enhancing my ability to serve our bank well. Additionally, I would be happy to share what I learn from Stonier with other emerging leaders at our bank. I hope you agree — and look forward to your decision.