Kent State University’s College of Business Administration Spirit of Women in Business Conference is a premier event that targets business professionals in Northeast Ohio to advance their careers by increasing their business acumen and networking skills. Featuring a dynamic keynote speaker and innovative breakout sessions, the March 9 event offers valuable information for professionals across all sectors.

“We target business professionals who want to advance their career, taking proactive steps to further enhance their business expertise,” says Cathy L. Z. DuBois, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Administration at the College of Business Administration, Kent State University. “The event is focused on professional development, combining research-based knowledge and practical takeaways for attendees.”

**Beyond salary**

The theme for this year’s conference is “Navigating and Negotiating” — essential components of anyone’s career. In today’s workplace, individuals must take charge of their career path, proactively creating and negotiating opportunities.

“Negotiation is not just a tactic applicable to salary discussions,” DuBois says. “It’s really about getting your ideas heard in the workplace — an issue that’s important to both men and women.”

The event’s keynote speaker is Deborah Kolb, Ph.D., Deloitte Ellen Gabriel Professor for Women in Leadership (Emerita) at Simmons College School of Management. A senior fellow and co-director of the Negotiations in the Workplace Project at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, Kolb is the author of “Negotiating at Work: Turn Small Wins into Big Gains.” Her presentation will provide a framework to help attendees identify opportunities to negotiate, provide practical tactics to get negotiations off the ground and navigate to achieve the outcomes they desire.

“It’s important to realize that there are many opportunities to negotiate,” Kolb says. “And when we do negotiate, we do well for ourselves and for our organizations.”

**Practical development**

Breakout sessions will be led by carefully selected professionals from Northeast Ohio including: Kim Riley, president of Hylant Cleveland; Lisa Waite, president of Waite Communications & Professional Development; Linda Hetson, vice president of professional services at Akron Children’s Hospital; organizational behavior expert Nurete Brenner; an executive leadership panel from Penske; and many more. Each session is interactive, providing valuable information such as networking beyond your bubble, actualizing your leadership potential and leveraging success through effective communication.

Networking opportunities are available during breaks and after the event. “It’s not just about coming to hear a highly regarded keynote speaker,” DuBois says. “We have designed a rich array of professional development into the six-hour event.”

Also at the conference, a successful business leader who is an alumnus of the college will be recognized and honored.

“It’s important for everyone to be exposed to the idea of negotiating at work,” Kolb says. “I’m passionate about it and I’ve spent my career thinking about it. I expect the audience will be very receptive to this message. It’s an opportunity to work with leaders on the issue of negotiation.”

For more information and to register for the sixth annual Spirit of Women in Business Conference scheduled for March 9 at the Kent Student Center, visit http://business.kent.edu/about/swib.