GLORIA CORDES LARSON
President of Bentley University

FOREWORD BY ROSABETH MOSS KANTER

PREPARED U

HOW **INNOVATIVE COLLEGES** DRIVE **STUDENT SUCCESS**

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How Innovative Colleges Drive Student Success

Gloria Cordes Larson, Esq.
President, Bentley University

Foreword by *Rosabeth Moss Kanter*

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For the Bentley community – the hearts and minds behind PreparedU.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gloria Cordes Larson, Esq., was elected to the presidency of Bentley University after a prestigious career as an attorney, public policy expert, and business leader. She was drawn to Bentley because of its inventive approach to redefining business education—by fusing its core business curriculum with the arts and sciences—and its strong focus on ethics and social responsibility.

During her tenure, the institution has reached a number of milestones centered around the content and value of a business education in the twenty-first-century marketplace. President Larson also launched the Center for Women and Business at Bentley in 2011, with a mission to advance shared leadership among women and men in the corporate world and to develop women as business leaders. Currently, she serves on the boards of directors of two public companies, Unum Group and Boston Private, as well as a number of nonprofit boards.

Before joining Bentley, Larson was co-chair of the Government Strategies Group at Foley Hoag LLP. She led a business advisory cabinet for Massachusetts Democratic governor Deval Patrick and served as secretary of economic affairs under Massachusetts Republican governor William Weld. Larson also oversaw business and regulatory issues as deputy director of consumer protection at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington DC.

President Larson has been named among *Boston* magazine's 50 Most Powerful People in 2015, the *Boston Business Journal*'s Power 50: Influential Bostonians, and *Boston* magazine's 50 Most Powerful Women in Boston. She is the recipient of the International Women's Forum's Women Who Make a Difference Award (2015) and the Associated Industries of Massachusetts's Next Century Award (2015), as well as the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce's inaugural Collaborative Leadership Award and Academy of Distinguished Bostonians Award.

BENTLEY UNIVERSITY is one of the nation's leading business schools, dedicated to preparing a new kind of business leader—one with the deep technical skills, broad global perspective, and high ethical standards required to make a difference in an ever-changing world. Our rich, diverse arts and sciences program, combined with an advanced business curriculum, prepares informed professionals who make an impact in their chosen fields. Located on a classic New England campus minutes from Boston, Bentley is a dynamic community of leaders, scholars, and creative thinkers. The graduate school emphasizes the impact of technology on business practice, in offerings that include MBA and master of science programs, PhD programs in accountancy and in business, and customized executive education programs. The university enrolls approximately forty-two hundred undergraduate students and a thousand graduate students. *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* ranks Bentley among the top ten undergraduate business programs in the country. The *Princeton Review*'s annual best colleges

guide names Bentley as number one in the nation for career services and internship opportunities. Bentley is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges; AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business; and the European Quality Improvement System, which benchmarks quality in management and business education.

FOREWORD

Save the planet, or get hired? Develop deep expertise, or become a broad thinker? Be work-ready for today's jobs (based on yesterday's ideas), or create new ideas for the future?

Gloria Larson says you don't have to choose. You can have it all. Well, you can if only colleges and universities would finally "get it," and start connecting areas of knowledge and types of experience in powerful new ways.

A wise (and very successful) friend was responsible for commissioning young entrepreneurial talent to carry out Internet technology projects for his very old, very large company. At first, he issued requests complete with detailed specifications. The results were mediocre. Then he saw the flaw in his reasoning. In rapidly evolving fields, if he knew what to ask for, it was probably already obsolete. He needed not each company's last idea but its next idea. Instead of behaving like a teacher giving out assignments, he started turning the young tech firms into partners, cocreating new, cutting-edge solutions.

High-performance workplaces that seek constant innovation thrive on this kind of collaborative approach. So do Millennials entering the workforce in large numbers. I think of them in terms of my three Ms of motivation: mastery (stimulating challenges), membership (inclusion in the community),

and meaning (a sense of purpose). The fourth M of money must be fair and sufficient, but often isn't the driver of great work.

To accomplish noble purposes such as reducing greenhouse gases or ending childhood hunger requires management blocking and tackling. To be successful financially requires thinking beyond the bottom line and understanding all the others who could block the business if not tackle the opportunity. The lines between fields in practice become barriers to overcome, getting in the way.

Entrepreneurs who create new ventures must be multifaceted and aware of their responsibilities to many constituencies beyond their immediate customers. Uber's founder started learning this when his ride-sharing company's growth as a technology platform was jeopardized by its failing to be responsible to stakeholders such as drivers (who felt they were more than independent contractors) or government officials (who felt antagonized by Uber's initial "rules don't apply to us" stance).

That's the point of the "hybrid learning" that Larson describes: connect important technical skills with the ability to think broadly and responsibly about the world via the liberal arts. Every business, nonprofit organization, and government agency I know is busily trying to get rid of "silos" in which homogeneous groups close ranks and talk only to one another. Why shouldn't the colleges and universities that educate future leaders help them become boundary crossers rather than sticking them in the silos of picking one major field or being on only one track? Companies are in trouble when manufacturing doesn't talk to marketing; communities have problems when the FBI has information not shared with local police. The Internet by itself doesn't erase the walls between groups or the

borders between nations; that requires people who can build bridges. College—and maybe earlier education too—can lay the foundations for people who can speak many technical languages, relate to many diverse people, and know the importance of teamwork by experiencing it.

Larson has evidence that employers are coming to prefer people who have hybrid educations—technical and liberal arts. She argues that parents and prospective students should prefer this too, seeking places that cultivate that fusion. To make a sweeping generalization, the twentieth century was the age of specialized knowledge, when many fields became "professions" complete with their own certifications; the twenty-first century is the age of interdisciplinary knowledge, when the true skill is to find the connections, in order to tackle problems or build business opportunities that couldn't be handled by any one profession alone.

A college degree has long been essential; there is a significant disparity in life chances between those with and without a college degree. But college degrees, or even graduate degrees, haven't always been relevant to the work—or life—afterward. Sometimes getting a degree has been ticket punching to get in the door where the real learning begins. We can't afford that system any longer. College is too expensive; time is too precious. So colleges and universities must be held to the new standard of relevance.

Warren Bennis, a former university president and leadership guru, once said that a university is harder to change than a graveyard. An institution whose basic structure was laid down centuries ago in monasteries can be very hard to change. That's why it is exciting and heartening to see the experiments,

reinventions, innovations, and soul-searching going on today in the quest to make higher education relevant to the work of this unfolding digital century. For that we can even think beyond Millennials and find ways to educate Boomers at late stages in their careers (financiers, lawyers, senior executives) in applying their capabilities to addressing major social and environmental problems, which is the premise behind the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative.

This book offers one university's story as a call to action to others. It shows how Bentley University, which originated as an accounting school and found fame through its emphasis on business ethics, has seized upon the marriage of liberal arts with professional management disciplines and the partnership of classroom and company experience. The goal is to better prepare students to be ready from day one to think creatively and collaboratively, advise decision makers, dream up improvements, move easily between for-profit and public or nonprofit sectors, and start small enterprises or change large ones.

This is also Gloria's story. (Note that she's on a first-name basis with all the students.) She provides illuminating glimpses of her own stellar journey across fields and sectors to have impact. But the understanding of many fields that took her almost a lifetime to accomplish—parents who are Baby Boomers will identify with that—now can be nurtured as part of the higher education process. This will produce graduates much better able to master challenges already visible as well as the ones sure to lie ahead.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter
Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor of Business Administration,
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Let me start where the idea for this book began, and that's with David Perry, formerly chief marketing officer at Bentley University, and now chief marketing officer at University of Utah Health Sciences. Perry recognized early in our work together that Bentley's distinct integration of business and the arts and sciences, coupled with hands-on learning, technology, and career planning, was an especially powerful antidote to the pervasive perception among employers that today's college graduates are ill-prepared for the twenty-first-century workplace. The market research he commissioned validated Bentley's PreparedU approach to undergraduate business education, leading both of us to believe that ours was a story worth sharing with parents, students, business leaders, and educators. I will be forever grateful to Perry for his vision, creativity, and ever-present sense of humor—all of which inspired me to write this book.

I am also tremendously indebted to Doug Hardy, who spent the better part of two years bringing this book to life. His dedicated efforts included countless interviews with alumni, faculty, staff, employers, and others associated with Bentley and the additional schools featured; wide-ranging research that underpins many of the book's conclusions; and the seemingly endless rounds of drafting and editing that led to the

"final" draft we ultimately handed off to the capable editors at Wiley. This is truly Doug's book as much as it is mine.

Thank you's go as well to Bentley's chief marketing officer, Val Fox, for seizing the opportunity to expand the book's reach and narrative, and to Chris Joyce, special advisor to the president, for his steely-eyed editing and many good suggestions around content. Both are talented writers in their own right, and this book is better for their significant efforts.

Perhaps my most obvious—and necessary—thanks go to the many outstanding teacher-scholars at Bentley. It is our faculty, after all, who are defining and delivering an exceptional business education on a daily basis—one that is designed to meet both current and future organizational and societal needs. The university's fusion of business and liberal arts is at the core of this unique model, and it is our faculty who most own the model and its resulting success for Bentley graduates.

I'm grateful as well to our school's dedicated student affairs professionals. They provide our students with a learning environment that both complements and extends the classroom experience, making student life an equal partner in a holistic Bentley education.

Thank you also to the now many thousands of Bentley students and alumni I've been privileged to know over the past decade. I reserve particular praise for the Millennial generation I got to know especially well. I continue to believe that Millennials are the most socially and globally conscious generation, inspiring me more every day to believe that the world will be better for their presence in it. Because of them, I chose to come to Bentley, and it's our students who have collectively helped make this the most rewarding chapter of my long career.

In addition to my Bentley colleagues, I thank and express my admiration for the higher education colleagues from other schools featured in this book, who are connecting the dots in smart, novel ways between what's taught in the classroom and the fast-paced, globalized world our graduates will enter. Many other additional educators across the country are doing so as well, recognizing that today's graduates need a different kind of college experience than previous generations, and it is gratifying to see so many colleges and universities rising to the occasion.

I reserve my last thank you's for my immediate family. Love and gratitude go to my husband, Allen, for supporting me in every way imaginable through many divergent career turns, including my late career foray into higher education. Always willing to lend a helping hand, he spent many hours over the 2016 Christmas holiday break reading an *almost* final draft of this book, asking thoughtful questions and offering the insightful suggestions that most often come from someone a step or two removed from the process. Love and gratitude go as well to our three English Labradors, Harry Jr., Sally, and Teak, who offered no critique whatsoever of PreparedU, opting instead for belly rubs and trips to the kitchen treat jar when they sensed I needed a break.

INTRODUCTION

In fall 2006, I traveled from Boston to Charlottesville, Virginia, to interview second-year law students at my alma mater, the University of Virginia School of Law (UVA). As a partner at the law firm Foley Hoag, I often helped screen prospective summer associates—a traditional test run for entry-level jobs at law firms. Even though it was always an arduous day, interviewing twenty or more candidates, I looked forward to meeting the students and considering each one's potential future. I had made trips like this several times, but in fall 2006, I experienced something new.

Unlike any recruiting trip in the past, I found students with a focus on the larger world outside of law school and law firms. When my peers and I interviewed for our own first jobs out of law school in the 1970s, the conversations were entirely about what we were studying, what we had done in the summer between school years, and what we hoped to accomplish in our legal careers. We talked almost exclusively about the practice of the law. Never in my various interviews with potential employers did I mention that my inspiration to be a lawyer was the character of Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird,* a man who simply wants the law to be fairly applied in society. It was that idealism that helped shape my future and encouraged me to explore the highly dramatic politics of the era, including the

civil rights, antiwar, and women's movements. These topics, my worldview, and my motivations were rarely, if ever, part of the interview process when I was a young aspiring lawyer.

In 2006, I was astonished at the breadth of the students' vision and their willingness to share that with a recruiter.

But at UVA in 2006, I was astonished at the breadth of the students' vision and their willingness to share that with a recruiter. Many had already worked in a wide variety of jobs around the world, some digging wells in the Peace Corps and others analyzing data at the World Bank. One young woman had studied ballet for years, and others had pursued studies in the sciences. They all had arrived at law school with much broader experience in the world than had my generation, and consequently had a more expansive view of career possibilities for themselves—not only in terms of personal success but also in terms of making a positive impact through the practice of law. They wanted to work at a law firm where ethics, integrity, and a sense of social responsibility were clearly enunciated values. And they all, every one, felt passionately about using the law for something bigger than themselves.

They were already global citizens, and they changed my impression of what made the "perfect" associate.

Flying back from UVA, I finished reading Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat.* Several of the forces Friedman identified as reshaping the world seemed immediately relevant to the students I had just met, namely *connectivity, vast information,* and *collaboration* (all three of which were just

converging in the rise of social media). In addition, Friedman observed that all kinds of integrated processes, from manufacturing to transportation, were being separated into distinct, easily copied components. In the new world, everything was globalized . . . and these students understood that idea at a gut level. At a young age, they had traveled extensively, and many had worked abroad.

In the final pages of *The World Is Flat* (second edition), Friedman recalls dropping off his eldest child at college for the first time. He wrote, "I can honestly say it was one of the saddest days of my life. And it wasn't just the dad-and-mom-dropping-their-eldest-child-off-at-school thing. No, something else bothered me. It was the sense that I was dropping my daughter off into a world that was so much more dangerous than the one she had been born into. I felt like I could still promise my daughter her bedroom back, but I couldn't promise her the world—not in the carefree way that I had explored it when I was her age."[1]

I closed the book and realized, *Oh my God, this is what I've just witnessed. I'm seeing those changes in these students and in the young associates at Foley Hoag.* The world Friedman described was profoundly different from the world experienced by my generation, the Baby Boomers, and by those of Generation X, who followed us. We grew up in a world of work that was relatively stable, even predictable. These young people grew up in a world of relentless change.

Friedman didn't just mean that the world was more physically dangerous for his daughters; he had written in his newspaper column that globalization destroyed the vocational "moat" that had surrounded educated Western professionals. Industries like textiles had exited the West for developing nations in the 1980s and 1990s, and by the 2000s, it was the

turn of educated professionals to feel new competition. Highly skilled jobs like analyzing medical scans, writing software, and drawing up contracts would be outsourced by US hospitals, tech companies, and law firms to skilled but low-cost professionals in China, India, and other emerging economies.[2] The law students I met were of the same generation as Friedman's daughters, and they too faced a world ready and able to compete for their jobs.

Rather than go into a defensive crouch, however, the members of this generation took an expansive view of their role as global citizens. They saw that open-mindedness and ideals, combined with entrepreneurial spirit, were the way to thrive in the globalized world that they had inherited. This cohort, popularly called the Millennials, had a categorically different view of the world and their place in it.

Back at Foley Hoag, I sometimes sparred with other hiring partners about the candidates' qualifications. I would say, "I don't care if this candidate's GPA isn't as good as the other candidate's! You need to hire this candidate because she has such a holistic view of the world and the practice of law in it. This candidate will lead with her ethics and always do the right thing in her work."

Those students stayed at the top of my mind as I considered another phenomenon taking shape in the early 2000s: the failure of traditional hiring processes to identify the qualities that are most needed at work today. Although I could find individual leaders—attorneys, doctors, executives, and government officials—who understood that we live in a profoundly changed

Although I could find individual leaders—attorneys, doctors, executives, and government officials—who understood that we live in a profoundly changed world, I saw too many institutions stuck in a twentieth-century mind-set while operating in a totally new twenty-first-century reality.

world, I saw too many institutions stuck in a twentieth-century mind-set while operating in a totally new twenty-first-century reality. Law firms, hospitals, large corporations, and government agencies—so many of them were still looking for the exact same skills and aptitudes they'd been hiring for years before.

There was one sector I knew that was embracing change, encouraging it, and urgently trying to predict what was coming next. That was the business community, and particularly those companies with a more entrepreneurial focus. With competitive advantage front of mind, far-thinking organizational leaders were alert and ready to take on the flat world.

Books about globalization and creative destruction filled the business best-seller lists. *The Innovator's Dilemma, Moneyball, Blue Ocean Strategy,* and *The Tipping Point* described how industries were coping with tectonic forces by reinventing themselves. At the same time, writers like Daniel H. Pink (*A Whole New Mind*) and Seth Godin (*Tribes*) were diving deep into human behavior and motivation, and finding

an eager business audience. That audience was very interested in understanding the next generation, both as potential employees and as potential customers.

The problem at the slower-changing institutions like the legal profession wasn't a fear of new technology; it was that they didn't feel much urgency. The status quo was protected by layers of tradition, incentives, and habits of behavior. Technology certainly brought efficiencies and increased productivity (for example, in legal research), but the professions adopted technologies that conformed to their way of doing things. Email and online calendars might have replaced paper, but habits of learning, serving clients, acquiring revenue, and more remained essentially the same. Lines of authority remained the same as well, and so did openness to new ideas . . . or the lack thereof.

I realized with rising concern that the problem was deeply embedded in the way students prepared for their professions. The education system itself had barely adapted to the new global realities. Those Millennial graduates were different, but the practices of many of the colleges and graduate schools they attended were pretty much the same as those at my undergraduate and law schools, Vassar and UVA, in the 1970s. Colleges and university graduate programs had also added email and web research, but introductory classes were still taught in big rooms, and students still wrote papers or studied business or law cases in brilliant abstractions. There was little hands-on learning during the school year, and almost none in which the stakes might be higher than earning a grade. Only during summer breaks and after graduation were students expected to learn how the world really works, by joining a business, law firm, hospital, or nonprofit. And the technical expertise taught by undergraduate and graduate schools was almost always

specialized. The amount of information crammed into a few years of classroom learning meant that classes didn't seem to relate that information to the globalized, interdependent, chaotic, and hyperconnected world that emerged in the 2000s.

Soon I was noticing evidence of this problem everywhere. The best and brightest law students studied little about macroeconomics, finance, or the impact of data analysis. Business students might get one semester of ethics training, but emerge with only a vague notion of how a business career should serve the world (beyond philanthropy). And solutions to problems like gender equality and work-life balance seemed as elusive as ever.

Business education, I thought, could lead the way out of this, if for no other reason than that at various points in history, business had shown itself to be responsive to a rapidly changing world. Over the course of my career, I have served on several corporate boards, worked at the Federal Trade Commission, and served as the economics chief of the Massachusetts state government. I had been exposed to many of the forces business was facing. I had witnessed how businesses change and adapt to survive. In corporate offices and on shop floors, great lessons were being learned, and even passed along through professional education. Business was especially interested in grooming future leaders who might cross traditional lines to solve big-picture problems or create breakthrough products.

Unfortunately, budgets for education and training in the corporate world were on the decline even before the Great Recession, and were then cut dramatically.[3] Many business leaders were reluctant, moreover, to invest in employees who might soon jump to a competitor. As hiring slowed