

Inaugural Address
Gloria C. Larson
Seventh President of Bentley College
March 28, 2008

Chairman Terry Carleton, Governor Deval Patrick, Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Cleve Killingsworth, Monsignor McDonnell, Dr. Reverend White-Hammond, members of the Board of Trustees and esteemed delegates; faculty, students and staff; family, friends and colleagues; and all other distinguished guests -- welcome to Bentley! A very warm welcome also to my former boss, Governor Paul Cellucci, and to the Mayor of Waltham, Jeanette McCarthy. It is such an honor to stand before you on what is for me such a special occasion.

I want to offer my sincere gratitude to so many of you. First, to the members of the Board of Trustees for the confidence you have demonstrated by entrusting me with the leadership of this great college. // Have I told you how thrilled I am to be here?

Thank you to our very distinguished speakers. You all exemplify the true meaning of our three-day celebratory theme of "Service and Leadership", each in your own highly admirable way.

Thank you too to the members of the committee that planned this three-day call to service, leadership and institutional celebration. It was led by Professor Chip Wiggins and Dean Andrew Shepardson, joined by Professor Lynne Durkin, and I know I will forever be in their debt. //

And thank you as well to our terrific students and many other members of the Bentley community who took part in Wednesday's Day of Service. What a fabulous display of Bentley's good works here in Waltham and across the world.

I'm so very fortunate to share this day with my husband, Allen. We both want to thank the faculty, students, staff and alumni of Bentley College. You have welcomed us with open arms over the past seven months. We are so happy to join you on this beautiful campus, all the more because of the record breaking, winning season our men's basketball team has had. // Of course, our Labrador retrievers, Harry Jr. and Sally, are delighted to be part of the Bentley family too.

I'm also so pleased to have my mom join me from Charleston, S.C. The daughter of a New Mexico rancher, she won the debate that "girls don't need a college education" with her grandfather in the early 1940's, and off she went to Colorado Women's College at age 16. Both she and my late dad, an Air Force General, are true members of the "Greatest Generation". They inspired my sister and me to do well in school, but to strive to do better in life; to care as much about family and community as our careers; and to chart a highly independent course - - just as they did - - along the way. I believe my taking over the Bentley presidency fully qualifies when it comes to charting that "highly independent course"!

This is a day for the entire Bentley community to look forward with enthusiasm and confidence, a day also to look back with respect and admiration on our tremendous heritage. Closing in on our 100th anniversary, we are fortunate to be an institution young enough that much of our history can be remembered by many of those with us today. On the dais here among

the members of the Board of Trustees, for example, are those who personally recall our founder, Harry Bentley, and admire him as the legendary figure I have heard so much about.

Among the institution's former presidents here today are nearly 40 years of distinguished leadership of Bentley College. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for the institution they have handed down to us. //

Let me begin with two simple words: "Only connect..." Two simple words – "Only connect."

These two ordinary words are the epigraph of one of the 20th century's landmark novels, *Howards End*, by E.M. Forster. What does this novel, published in 1910, have to do with Bentley College today? After all, this work is set in Edwardian England, seemingly eons before the advent of information technology as we understand it; when accountancy was a trade called bookkeeping; when the other business disciplines were even less sophisticated; when a concept of diversity that includes gender and ethnicity did not exist; and when social responsibility was defined by aristocratic *noblesse oblige*.

Bentley College, by contrast, is the model of a 21st century business university, with a comprehensive and highly integrated business and arts and sciences curriculum; industry leading technology and a reputation for information technology expertise; innovative teaching and research agendas; leadership in business ethics, corporate social responsibility and service learning; and a profound commitment to preparing a diverse student body for leadership in

complex, global organizations.

The bridge between the two lies, I believe, in the universality of this idea of “Only connect.”

Howards End is in part a study of transformation in a dynamic society. This is something we grapple with today, even as the change *we* see involves the instantaneous spread of information on the internet across an increasingly interconnected planet. The “only connect” that Forster encouraged was the connection between detached contemplation of the world and engagement with it and, more broadly, between disparate groups that struggled to identify a common purpose in a stratified society. These are ideas that resonate now more than ever, given the growing need for groups to work together to address global ills and achieve so many common goals.

Still, I realize that it may seem surprising to hear the new president of a major modern day business school quote a 100 year old novel. The reason is that for almost one hundred years, we at Bentley have pioneered the types of connections that Forster championed and done so in ways that few other institutions and in particular business schools can. One of the strongest and most significant of these connections has been between the arts and sciences and the challenges of business education. The arts and sciences are essential to our mission at Bentley, and it is indicative of their central role that a literary work like *Howards End* can have so much resonance for a business institution today.

Today there are so many other internal and external connections that Bentley makes in particularly powerful, “only connect” kinds of ways.

- We connect information technology knowledge across *all* the business disciplines;
- We connect scholarly research with real world application – the world of theory and practice;
- We connect Bentley with the corporations who partner with us in so many ways;
- We connect Bentley to our alumni, alumni to alumni and alumni to students; and
- We connect Bentley with Waltham and Boston, with Bayou LaBatre and Ghana - - and any community we can both serve and learn from.

The need to make these “only connect” types of relationships is reinforced by the ideas of my good friend Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, who, by the way, holds an honorary Doctorate of Laws from Bentley. A leading management thinker, she too has explored the concept of connectedness. Indeed, in her book *World Class*, she distills what I believe a Bentley education is all about.

She tells a story about a friend who lives on Martha’s Vineyard and whose five-year old son asks his dad, “are we connected to the world?” Professor Kanter writes that “the answer to that question is, of course, yes. We are all connected to the world in many and various ways.” But in a world economy defined increasingly by change, she goes on to say, how well you connect to this world may be one of the most defining issues of our time.

We have been a leading institution for decades in making these and other connections across the spectrum, often one of, if not the first, to do so:

- 1976 – the connection between business and corporate ethics through the founding of our Center for Business Ethics;
- 1985 – the connection between technology and undergraduate education, introduced through a laptop computer requirement for students;
- 1987 – the connection between education and internationalism through today’s Cronin International Center;
- 1991 – the connection between the college’s mission and our commitment to diversity that led to the founding of the Multicultural Center;
- 1991 – the connection between education and service to the community with the launch of the Service Learning Program;
- 1995 – the connection between the curriculum and application of information technology in business with the opening of the Trading Room, the first of our constellation of technology based teaching and learning labs; and
- 2003 – the connection between the college and our deep roots in ethics, civic engagement and social responsibility with the formation of the Alliance for Ethics and Social Responsibility.

Innovation has long been a key part of our identity, but as we look ahead to 2008 and beyond, what does our future hold? Bentley’s ability to make these types of groundbreaking connections in ever more meaningful ways is precisely why I’m here. I believe one of my most important roles as president is to further Bentley’s connections to the worlds *I* know, the worlds

of business, education, government, law, non-profits and society more broadly, and to draw on my own experiences to represent these worlds here. I want to enhance the connections that already exist with our many constituents and partners, and help build new ones in the singular ways that we are so well positioned to do. This afternoon I want to give you a sense of how we are connecting and contributing today to those worlds that are important to us, as well as what our role can and should be in the days, months and years to come.

Bentley's strategic drive over the past decade has been to become a nationally and internationally recognized business university. My immediate predecessor, Joe Morone, built on our historical roots in technology to distinguish us as the business school for the information age. He encouraged academic research and spearheaded the establishment of PhD programs in business and accountancy – key elements of our university model. Central to this strategy has been four domains of excellence: information technology; business and the arts and sciences; ethics and social responsibility; and global commerce and culture.

These strategic domains have continued to evolve. Our present focus is better described not as comprising four separate domains but as sets of overlapping connections that define what we do: business and IT, business and the arts and sciences, and business and society, with our global agenda informing all. We believe that the best business education and research connects to and ultimately helps to build a better world. It's this message about who we are and what we have to offer the world that, as President, I intend to share with audiences like this across the globe. //

Our teaching mission is undeniably central to what we do. We seek to educate undergraduates who are *informed*, *inspired* and *engaged*, students who want to develop connections to and ultimately help build that better world.

Informed because of the mastery of business and critical analytical skills, including the effective use of information technology; *Inspired* because of an equally rigorous education in liberal arts that encourages the understanding of perspectives, methods and the role of creativity across a variety of disciplines; *Engaged* because of a commitment to ethical behavior, to building a diverse society, and to serving a broad range of societal goals that go well beyond traditional shareholder needs.

How do we foster these three qualities? It is through, of course, the critical connections we make by what and how we teach our students, as well as how we connect them to the larger world. They come to Bentley *because* we are a top ranked, national leader in business education; when they graduate, they leave with that business education and a lot more.

What is so distinctive about our undergraduate experience? What makes our students *informed*, *inspired* and *engaged*? Certainly it begins with business expertise. We want all our students to be *informed* in the core business disciplines that are our heritage and our anchor – accounting, finance, management, marketing and newer areas like information process management and information design. Always a dynamic process, we have just updated our General Business Core. Earning a Bentley degree means having the very latest professional knowledge, understanding of technology and analytical skills that global employers now expect

from a business education.

We seek to *inspire* our students as well. Providing a creative and highly demanding liberal studies curriculum, Bentley fosters learning within and across disciplinary lines.

Our new Liberal Studies Major, or LSM, represents a particularly novel approach to integrating our business and arts and sciences curricula, enabling our students to make their own meaningful connections across subjects in these disparate fields. So what does this mean in practice? By pairing a primary business major with a thematically related liberal arts major - - like marketing and global perspectives - - students add coherence and value to their undergraduate experience, while also developing strong communications skills. Our students have already recognized the merits of this new credential, making the LSM Bentley's third most popular major after management and finance.

It's curricular innovation like this that brought a team from Stanford University funded by the Carnegie Foundation to our front door. Acknowledging that business is now the largest undergraduate major in the country, the Carnegie group selected Bentley as one of just a handful of institutions to study. They said that "after reviewing dozens of undergraduate business programs", they are convinced that "Bentley College offers one of the strongest and most interesting examples of integrating business education and liberal learning."

Understanding business ethics, corporate social responsibility and global commerce and culture is also central to our academic mission. Fundamental underpinnings of the entire

curriculum, these areas of study couldn't be more timely. They provide a moral compass, a sense of accountability and broad cultural awareness, encouraging our students to become *engaged* global citizens in all they do.

Business leaders routinely applaud our connected approach to business education, and in particular our efforts to ground our students in ethics and globally responsible business practices. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu CEO Jim Quigley echoed this sentiment when he delivered the Raytheon Lecture on Business Ethics here last fall. Noting that Bentley is one of Deloitte's top recruiting schools, he said that we "demonstrated extraordinary vision" in establishing the Center for Business Ethics some thirty years ago, and that a college campus should be "a place of learning not just of knowledge but also of values."

One of those values is that of diversity. Our students come from, study and live in an increasingly heterogeneous environment. They understand diversity not just as a moral imperative, but as the critical currency of global business success, as well as success in life. At Bentley, we are committed not only to increasing access for underrepresented groups, but to assuring that all of our students succeed.

Another value we seek to reinforce in our students is the need to be a contributing member of society. In addition to participating in many campus activities, large numbers of our students seek out domestic and international volunteer work through their courses and our Service Learning Center. This work benefits our neighborhoods and communities, and clearly

benefits our students too, helping them grow into *engaged* and committed civic leaders.

It's *this* business school's core values and connected education mission that led me here. For while I've found much professional satisfaction in law and government, it's been working with public and private sector leaders to build a new convention center on Boston's waterfront, to develop a leading public policy center, MassINC, and to support human service organizations like Rosie's Place that have been the richest rewards of my career. I want all of our students to experience firsthand how important and gratifying it is to do well in their studies, while making a personal commitment to a better world.

Bentley is also well known for the many ways in which we connect classroom theory to practice. One of the most exciting recent examples is our Corporate Immersion Program, developed by the Center for Marketing Technology. Taking experiential learning to a new level, undergraduate and graduate students use the latest online and collaborative tools to address market challenges and opportunities brought to us by our corporate partners. Significantly, our partner organizations - - companies like Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, Welch's and FreeFi Networks - - attend and participate in every class. Immersion projects breed deep, personal connections to our partner company concerns, helping students develop a real passion for their work.

Over the past seven months, I've gotten to know many of our students by going into classrooms, attending meetings and hosting them in my home. They amaze me every day because of what they are learning and doing at Bentley, because they are already *so informed*,

inspired and *engaged*. These are views shared by our top employers as well. They tell us often that Bentley students present themselves compellingly on the basis of their skills, accomplishments and strong connection to the outside world. This is a key contributor to our remarkable 95% placement rate for our undergraduate students.

Can we do more in the future to help make our students better *informed, inspired* and *engaged*? Of course we can, and we will. Faculty are now looking at ways to introduce each entering class to a compelling societal issue examined through the prisms of the various management, finance, history, government, natural science and other courses they will take. Another opportunity is through the expansion of our Corporate Immersion Program and similar experiences, bringing new business, non-profit and public sector partners to the program and broadening the range of issues involved. Similarly, we can and should find ways to expand our nationally recognized Service Learning Center programs, enabling even greater numbers of Bentley students to apply their developing business skills to community needs. These and other efforts to further enrich our undergraduate experience will be priorities for me.

Now let me turn to the McCallum Graduate School. Long known in New England for our Evening MBA and one of the most extensive Master of Science programs in the country, our full and part-time programs are designed to help working professionals gain the additional business and leadership skills they need.

Looking to the future, I believe we can and should create a flagship fulltime MBA program that will emphasize ethical leadership, the transformative role of information

technology, the tremendous potential of corporate social responsibility, and globalism in ways that are Bentley's own. Leveraging our institutional strengths in business processes and information technology, business and arts and sciences, ethics and social responsibility and field-based learning, we can offer our graduates new and progressive ways of thinking about and addressing complex issues.

I have personally experienced the power of professional leadership that is defined by ethics and broader societal goals. Early in my career and at the very age of many of our MBA students, I was fortunate to work in Washington for one of the few women who held a presidential appointment. A commissioner at the Federal Trade Commission, Pat Bailey was in line to become the first woman chairman. She chose to publicly challenge a new Administration's policies on key issues, losing her place in FTC history. Pat didn't become chairman, but she was widely respected as a commissioner for her independent views on consumer and antitrust matters. Working for Pat, I learned all about courage of conviction, sticking to principles and ultimately trying always to do what is right. I'm so pleased my longtime mentor and friend, Pat, could join me here today. // Pat, you inspire me still.

Instilling this kind of principled leadership in our graduate students must be our goal. This has been an era that has seen numerous corporate financial and other scandals. At the same time, there has been a growing recognition that the business community *must* step in and help address common global goals. We want our graduates to be forward thinking and dynamic *next* generation business leaders. These will be ethically grounded leaders who combine "left brain" analysis and business process skills with "right brain" qualities of creativity, empathy and an

appreciation for other perspectives. These will be leaders who will create and lead better organizations *and* help build better communities wherever in the world they go.

I couldn't be more proud that we are already well-ahead of so many in the graduate business school pack in this regard. We were recently included on the Aspen Institute's prestigious "Beyond Grey Pinstripes" international listing of the top 100 Global MBA programs for our focus on issues of social and environmental concern. Bentley is also one of a small number of schools accepted for membership in the U.N. Global Compact Academic Network because of our early adherence to its Principles for Responsible Management. We can do even more through our fulltime MBA and other graduate programs to build leadership around these and other value-based goals, and we will.

Meanwhile, our two-year old PhD programs in Accountancy and Business, were designed from the outset to emphasize this type of cross-disciplinary knowledge in business, technology and society, as well as to incorporate arts and sciences learning in differentiating ways. Currently accepting a third group of highly qualified candidates, the programs are exacting, distinctive and focused on applied research, and are already drawing significant notice in the academic and business worlds.

While our students at all levels represent Bentley's "heart and soul," the foundation of any great university is its faculty. We are fortunate at Bentley to have many preeminent teachers and scholars. As we continue to develop and refine the best global business education, we will also expand our opportunities to create and disseminate new knowledge to the business world

and worlds beyond. This is how Bentley's national and international reputation will continue to grow.

Like our teaching, our research regularly crosses disciplinary lines and routinely aligns theory with practice. Some examples of our recent work include research around the internet and privacy, new media practices, the unintended consequences of Sarbanes-Oxley regulations on corporate decision making, and gender distinctions in CEO compensation - - all topics of broad interest.

A recent piece in the *Financial Times* underscores the need for this type of academic work well, lamenting research that "isn't even cited by other academics." Noting the pervasive influence of scholarly law, medical and engineering journals on practitioners of those professions, the author urges business researchers to address topics that will actually assist business people and others in what they do. I strongly support Bentley's scholarly efforts to shape market behavior in so many vital ways.

Bentley's intellectual and technological centers will continue to foster new teaching, learning and research opportunities across our strategic domains. One highly promising concept is that of a cross disciplinary school of information, or virtual "I" school. A Bentley "I" school would bring together our many expert business and arts and sciences faculty interested in the shared exploration of the various dimensions of information, technology and society. Another emerging domain is economic impact assessment, a subject of keen interest to governments, businesses and non-profits everywhere in their pursuit of economic development goals.

A third scholarly domain of tremendous relevance is our deep and growing body of expertise in the area of ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility. I've talked with great enthusiasm about our myriad strengths in this domain. We will expand scholarly research and learning around globally responsible business conduct. As with our fulltime MBA program, this will be a top priority for me.

I have mentioned our global agenda a number of times, but always within the context of other ideas, programs, initiatives and strategies. This is intentional, as it reflects the way in which internationalism will increasingly permeate everything we do. It is an inescapable component of all our connections. At his inauguration in 1991, Joe Cronin put it well: "The world of commerce has expanded. No premier college can ignore the global imperative of our time. The compass points to places far distant from New England." Today the Cronin International Center bears his name. It defines new opportunities in faculty research and exchanges, study abroad and internships, curriculum development and experiential learning.

Looking ahead on internationalism, we will not move in a haphazard way. Moves overseas should build on our core strengths, representing logical progress toward our aspirations. Recruiting international faculty, establishing international university partnerships in strategic regions, developing study-abroad sites, and hosting conferences that reflect our areas of strength are all examples. So is building an active international alumni network to advise us and help execute our plans. We will build on our progress in the deliberate fashion I have described,

making critical connections and achieving wider recognition for our work.

The connections we make in the classroom and through our research are central to us, but of course, we make many other critical connections as well. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of his service as president, Dr. Adamian observed that “the final measure of a college’s success is the enduring influence it has on all whom it touches – students, faculty, society as a whole.” Today that influence, our many connections, are felt in widening circles and persuasive ways across the globe. Our connected approach to all aspects of a business education, scholarly work and external engagement is, in my view, exactly what’s needed in a complex, multidimensional world.

I’m so privileged to join Bentley at this propitious time. What we do at Bentley matters, and we can make it matter more. You have given me an unparalleled opportunity to lead what is already a premier institution to new and greater heights. I pledge to devote my whole being to realizing our goals and look to all of you as my indispensable partners. //

“Only connect...” – this is the unifying theme of *Howards End*. Forster amplifies his thinking later in this way: “Only connect! That was the whole Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted ... Live in fragments no longer.” Through teaching, scholarship and service, Bentley will continue to build a better, more connected world.

One hundred years after the publication of *Howards End*, Thomas Friedman writes in *The World is Flat*, that “[I]t is imperative that we be the best global citizens that we can be.”

Speaking to his own, college age children, he says that the next generation can flourish in this flat world but it will “take the right imagination and the right motivation.” His hope – *my* hope – our hope – is that this will be “the generation that wakes up each morning and not only imagines that things can be better but also acts on that imagination every day.” We intend to shape that generation now and in the years to come.