

SPRING 2017

InBusiness

Laura Jo Gunter

An interview with the
new President and CEO

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Chiu School of Business

Laura Jo Gunter: succeed on your own terms

Leadership

Q: What or who has been your greatest influence in business?

One thing I have tried to honour in both my entrepreneurial and professional lives is to surround myself with a diverse community. When I was running private businesses, I worked with artists, engineers, and programmers from a variety of backgrounds. I am none of these things, but I found that when I worked with people of different perspectives, we were able to create new and interesting products or solutions to problems we were facing.

Q: Did you ever experience a shift in perception as you rose in leadership positions?

Being open to shifts in perception is a critical part of leadership. It is difficult to succeed by applying the same tools and methods to changing contexts. I am deliberate about connecting with people and communities that are distinctly different from my day-to-day career.

Women in Business

Q: What have you observed about women in business over the years?

Women in business tend to be really strong, energetic, and driven. Many of us still need to set bolder, more ambitious goals. We need more women in leadership roles and increased visibility of women in leadership positions and spheres of influence.

Q: What advice would you give to young women who want to succeed in the workplace?

Succeed on your own terms. I lived through the 80s when we all had to be female versions of men: wear shoulder pads and be more assertive. I reached a point when I decided I wasn't going to do this anymore and declared, "I'm wearing what I want and being what I want." And what I wanted was to lead like a woman.

The most pressing challenge facing women right now is maintaining and enhancing the advances for which we've worked so hard. The advancement toward women's equality is still being fought and many milestone achievements we celebrate today were only recently won.

Entrepreneurship

Q: Based on your experience as a business owner, what advice do you have for budding entrepreneurs?

The best advice I can give any entrepreneur is to have good mentors, structure your company properly, and be clear on your objectives. Envision what you want, and then drive toward it. Be open to changing your vision as you go. Establish a diverse pool of advisors and mentors. Finally, have a good narrative about your company. Learn to tell your story succinctly but in a way that invites people to ask questions and learn more.

// You must be prepared to advance your vision and deal with setbacks. Not everything will work out, and that's okay. Give yourself permission to fail — but also keep summoning your determination to stick with it. //



As the fifth President and CEO of Bow Valley College, Laura Jo is an inclusive, agile, and engaging leader. She places emphasis on strong community connections and enriching educational experiences and outcomes. Laura Jo has held progressively senior roles in both academic institutions and the private sector. We are excited to share this exclusive interview with you. (To learn more about Laura Jo Gunter visit bowvalleycollege.ca)

Connie Caraiman: education is the pulse



Connie Caraiman moved to Calgary after completing high school in her native Nicaragua. “My father believed we could accomplish anything, and he truly valued education,” Connie recalls. “He was my biggest cheerleader, but he passed away before seeing me graduate from the Hospital Unit Clerk program in February.”

Connie began her journey at Bow Valley College with English as a Second Language courses, and then completed the General Education Development (GED) tests. Her journey at Bow Valley College continued years later when she found herself unemployed during the recent economic downturn. Connie was ready for a career change, and the Hospital Unit Clerk certificate appealed to her. The online delivery allowed her the flexibility needed for her personal life.

She admits that at times she felt overwhelmed and isolated as an online learner. “You have to get engaged right away,” suggests Connie. “I structured a schedule to follow and worked it around my family commitments.” She also recommends communicating regularly with the instructors and to take advantage of resources including workshops, the online delivery team, and the library.

Connie completed her work experience practicum at the Peter Lougheed Hospital. “I never felt I lacked any skills or knowledge while working in the day surgery unit,” said Connie. “I was able to apply all the training I received from the Chiu School of Business at the practicum. Everything I have needed in the workplace, I have gotten at Bow Valley College.”

Connie Caraiman: Hospital Unit Clerk Graduate 2017, Online Program

Navigating online success

Online programs offer flexibility and convenience to learners, but to be successful, learners need to plan ahead, monitor their schedule, and communicate regularly. Team work, chat discussions and peer feedback increase student achievement. Working together, even in an online program, develops personal skills that can be a benefit in any workplace.

The Chiu School of Business saw a 42 per cent increase in enrollment for online courses last year. Over the next year, online learning options at the School will increase to keep pace with the growing demand. Eventually, all programs will be available online for the benefit of students who need more flexibility as they prepare for a new career.

Vivacity: repurposing vacant office space

How do we engage Calgary's young people while creatively repurposing vacant office buildings in the downtown core? The Vivacity 24 Hour Challenge, an inter-institutional collaboration between six post-secondary institutions, focused on implementing creative solutions for an empty office in the downtown core.

Calgary's downtown currently has a tremendous amount of vacant office space. Through this challenge, students discovered opportunities and creative ideas to capitalize on this available space in our changing urban landscape.



Image courtesy of Svetlana Miftahov Rapoport.

Coming from different disciplines and institutions, the students were placed in mixed teams before visiting the site on 9th Avenue. Once the 24-hour countdown began, teams focused on developing a proposal and design concept for the 20,000 square foot space. Their proposals were judged by a panel of experts, community partners and stakeholders.

Some of the proposed solutions included a collaborative workplace for professionals and students to connect; a hydroponic farm producing food for the community and local restaurants; an art venue for both learning and displays; and meeting and boardroom areas with coffee bars.

Bow Valley College's eight participants included Kalab Kahsay, Timothy Ndongndeh, Svetlana Miftahov Rapoport, Bradley Fitzgerald, Mimi Tang, Charles Kumar, Caroline Gryba, and Christian Hansel Salgado.

What did our students learn? Participants expressed that one of the toughest components of the challenge was team building in the compressed timeframe. "The team dynamics can be more of a challenge than the challenge itself," stated Kalab Kahsay. Students recognized the impact this challenge had on their listening skills, and their ability to express themselves within strong group dynamics.

Even though the 24 hours are up, the challenge will continue; some participants are registered in a course where they will further develop and implement their ideas. The final showcase on April 12 includes a tour of the completed, repurposed space and a final community dialogue.



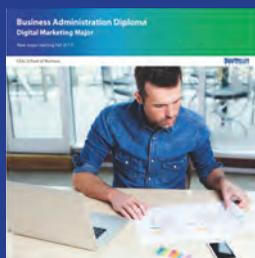
Message from the Dean

2017 is the year we welcomed our new President, Laura Jo Gunter. The Chiu School of Business is very excited about Laura Jo's vision for the College. Students will certainly benefit from increased flexibility as they chart their own path to completing a business credential.

With its timely, relevant, industry focused education and training, the Chiu School of Business has grown dramatically over the past few years.

Because of this growing demand, we are expanding the School's facilities to accommodate more staff and support our future growth. Six new synchronous delivery studios will allow us to deliver real-time, online courses to distance learners and students in our regional campuses.

Over the next year, we will also work to increase our programming options. Learners will have access to additional specializations and program intakes year-round in the fall, winter and spring. In addition, we are aiming to make all our programs available online for students who benefit from this flexible mode of delivery.



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