The Future is Now: Educating the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs and Leaders for a Post-Pandemic World

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Bio: Robert E. Johnson, Ph.D., was appointed the sixth president of Western New England University in August 2020. His 30-year career spans leadership roles at nonprofit colleges and universities in the Northeast and Midwest, including public, private, urban, rural, small and large institutions, with enrollments from 2,000 to more than 25,000 students. Before joining WNE, he served as chancellor of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (2017-2020) and as president of Becker College (2010-2017). A proponent of innovation and entrepreneurship, hallmarks of his leadership include elevated institutional stature and competitive market position; national recognition; enrollment growth and resource development success; and fast-tracked facilities and infrastructure upgrades. He is a future-focused thought leader and commentator on issues including the future of work, agile mind education and the agile university, and the sense of humanity imperative.

Dr. Johnson holds a doctorate in higher education administration from Touro University International, formerly a division of Touro College, New York; a master’s degree in education administration from the University of Cincinnati; a bachelor’s degree in economics from Morehouse College; and a certificate in applied neuroscience from MIT Sloan School of Management. Dr. Johnson is a member of the Council on Competitiveness serving on its National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers. He serves on the executive committee and as vice chair of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, the boards of MGH institute of Health Professions and the New England Council, the Intentional Endowments Network steering committee, and as member of the Leadership in the Age of Personalization Consortium. Past service includes the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, vice chair of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and chair of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. He co-founded the Massachusetts Digital Games Institute. Western New England University (WNE) is a private, National university that provides powerful preparation for the future of work for more than 3,600 students. It is located in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Abstract

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) “fast growth entrepreneurial ventures are essential for prosperity and social progress.” Small businesses are inherently agile and nimble in responding to a crisis or trends. How should the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders seize the moment to form new markets, entrepreneurial endeavors and address multiple global crisis in a post pandemic world? How should universities and students create an ethos of innovation and entrepreneurship for the next generation of leaders? This seminar will address some of the critical issues aspiring entrepreneurs and current educators should consider as they create the new normal.