

## **Acsenda School of Management**

Tea the Chancellor

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### **Challenges for Changing Times: Work**

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Chancellor

#### **Introduction**

##### TEA WITH CHANCELLOR

Good afternoon. It is my privilege to be the Chancellor of the Acsenda School of Management. This is an honorary position. I am not a member of the Acsenda staff. My role is to preside at Acsenda's degree ceremonies, called convocations, and I am also a member of the Academic Council and the Strategic Planning Committee.

The chancellors of most universities focus on fund-raising and relations with the local community, but President Mort and I agree that the role of Acsenda's chancellor would focus more on relations with students – you!

One of the ways that I intend to do this is to hold regular meetings like this where we can discuss issues about higher education. This is not the best place to ask questions about details of your studies at Acsenda, but I hope we can have some interesting discussions about wider issues.

##### SERIES TITLE

I shall start each session with a short talk of 5-10 minutes and then turn it over to you. My title for the first series of sessions *Challenges for Changing Times*.

Canada, your own home countries and the wider world face many challenges. Each of you could produce your own list. In this first series, I shall focus on just four challenges. Each is a product of our changing times.

##### LIST CHALLENGES

With that caveat, here are my four challenges.

- Work
- Inequality
- Truth
- Trust.

##### WORK

Today I shall take the first of these: work.

#### **Work**

##### CHALLENGES TIMES WORK

I start with work.

## WORK INTERESTING – WELL PAID

I expect that when you have finished your studies you all hope to find work that is either interesting or well-paid, or

BOTH

– preferably both.

The world of work is constantly changing and has been doing so particularly rapidly since the industrial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as successive waves of technology have changed the ways that we make things or provide services.

## HORSES TO CARS

Motor cars put a lot of horses out of business.

## FACTORY ROBOTS

Robots are removing plenty of workers from the factory floor.

The current concern is the impact of artificial intelligence on jobs. Economists used to argue that when technology eliminated one type of job, new types of jobs emerged to fill the gap. This has been largely true, although, when we come to ‘inequality’, we shall see that well-paid factory workers who take lower-paid jobs as cleaners when they are made redundant are resentful of the change.

Remember that work is not simply about earning money. It is through their work that most people gain the satisfaction of contributing to society and feeling useful. The proposals floating around in some countries for a universal basic income, paid by the state, do not address this basic need.

Until recently technology mostly eliminated jobs that required strength or manual dexterity.

## OFFICES 1980S -2010S

Today’s technologies threaten to usurp jobs done by ‘brain workers’, such as accountancy, drafting legal documents or translation. Some claim that artificial intelligence will wipe out many jobs requiring even more intellectual input. It is not yet clear whether new jobs will emerge for the people made redundant. Certainly, employment is now high in most western countries, but many of the new jobs that people take are less secure and less well paid than those on offer previously.

What are the implications for you? My advice is to follow the most interesting opportunities that open up for you. Start with what really excites you. Picking a currently fashionable subject for employment could be short-sighted. It may no longer be in demand by the time you graduate. One insurance policy is to acquire, in addition to your degree, a skill that is likely to remain in demand. After they complete degrees some graduates enrol in community colleges to obtain such skills.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

You should expect to return to part-time study – much of it online - throughout your lives. I recommend it.

My own part-time education, after I'd got my doctorate and was working as an academic, was a Master's in Educational Technology. It had a greater impact on my subsequent career and vocation than any of my previous studies.

Let me now turn it over to you for your comments. I believe you are fortunate to be studying at Acsenda, which is proud of its links with the world of work. Your professors here are practitioners in the fields that they are teaching you, which means that you are being trained for work in today's world with today's technologies and methods.

I wish you well in your studies and look forward to our discussion today and to future sessions like this.

BEST WISHES Q&A