

**Remarks for the McMaster University Arts & Science Program's New World of Work Forum**  
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It is very gratifying to take part in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum organized under the Endowment named after my parents, Tom and Nancy Miyashita. I'm grateful to the continuing support of Jean Wilson and I am, as always, very impressed by the effort, ingenuity and thoughtfulness of the Project team and the many student volunteers. Congratulations on putting together a very impressive line-up of speakers and panelists.

I would like to begin by providing some context for the gift. Here are my thoughts as written back in the Fall of 2016 when I was first discussing the concept with Dr. Wilson:

The idea of finding ways to help make a better connection between the realm of business and the Arts & Science Program began when I attended the 30<sup>th</sup> Artsci Reunion in 2011. On the Saturday afternoon there was a session where Alumni and current students would participate in a series of roundtables. The tables were focused on different areas of interest such as Healthcare, Education, Business etc. The tent card at the table for business Alumni read "Sold Out and Went into Business." Those at that table took note of the wording; we kind of sighed or shrugged and got on with the exercise. What struck me was the idea that if the Arts & Science Program was meant to unite the disparate silos of the humanities and of science and technology, then a similar cross-fertilization was needed with the world of business, which so often exists unconnected from humanities and from science.

Although the use of the Endowment funds will undoubtedly evolve over time, I have some initial thoughts on its intent and purpose: I'll begin with something that I don't think should be the primary focus. I don't believe the purpose should be strictly about vocation. Although a positive side-benefit might be to help Artsci students think about future careers, it is not the main motivation behind the gift. Rather, my intent is twofold:

First, to **bring an Arts & Science skillset and mindset to business**. The relationship between the business world, government, and the individual are experiencing enormous stresses due to forces such as Artificial Intelligence and robotics, societal inequality, social media, and climate change all of which are pointing to a need for new thinking in many areas including business. I have seen first-hand how powerful it is to apply the skills of critical inquiry to thorny business policy issues.

Second, to **bring business tools to non-business areas**. For example, a tool that started in the business world but is now increasingly essential in other areas is Lean Thinking, the popular name given to the management philosophy, tools and methods of Toyota. Increasingly, many non-industrial sectors, such as healthcare, are working to adapt Lean techniques to their operations.

Those were my thoughts back in 2016. Since then my conviction that the world of business needs the kind of cross-disciplinary thinking exemplified by the Arts & Science Program has only increased. I also continue to believe that people working in government, public-funded organizations such as healthcare, non-governmental organizations, education, and so on need to understand how to use tools commonly used in the business world such as project management, lean thinking, organization design,

strategy development and so forth. Although the worlds of commerce and public policy have always been linked, going forward these worlds are increasingly inseparable. Or perhaps business and society were always intertwined but that today there is a greater sensitivity to the direct and indirect impacts of business.

These effects can be positive. For example, decisions made by business leaders can have a profound and positive impact on issues such as climate change. I have found that sustainable practices are good for profits and good for employees and communities. You might think that only the most senior people in a company can influence issues such as climate or social equity. But employees can have a big impact. Any company worth its salt needs to pay attention to the talent on which it depends. However, it takes a certain mindset to design and run a business so that it benefits a wider range of stakeholders than just owners. To start, it requires that managers and owners see themselves as part of the community or communities. In many cases decision makers are physically far removed from the communities impacted. In other cases, the business has no physicality but is virtual. This makes it easier for decision makers to focus on data, software and their own silo of financial interests, and only secondarily on their impact on people and communities.

This is one reason why I have been involved with Shorefast, the foundation that owns the Fogo Island Inn and that funds not-for-profit community efforts with funds from for-profit enterprises such as the Inn and Furniture shop. You may have seen the wonderful video that Luiza, Michelle and Ian put together about the Fogo community-based capitalism model based on our field trip there in October 2018. If you haven't, you should check that out.

A recent example that stuck in my mind was a *New York Times* piece on the founder, Hoan Ton-That, of a tech start-up called Clearview AI. In a nutshell this company, and others like it, are working to create tools to match real-time facial images to the vast sea of data on the internet. There are all kinds of applications including some that I think are profoundly disturbing, such as taking a photo of a person in the street and finding out their name and other personal information. I found the last lines of the article particularly revealing and disturbing: asked about the implications of bringing such a power into the world, Mr. Ton-That seemed taken aback. "I have to think about that," he said. "Our belief is that this is the best use of the technology." Unfortunately, in my experience, the question "how can we do something" often outruns the questions "why should we do this?" and "what would happen if we did?"

I'd like to change gears and speak for a few moments on some advice I might offer you regarding career:

First, is that that thing called "professional networking" should not be confused with socializing or schmoozing. It is not about creating a long list of friends. It is an organic process of understanding what others are working on, how perhaps you might be of help to them or perhaps how you can connect them to someone you know. It is also how you might enlist their help or advice on something related to your work or a project. Asking others for advice is a very effective way to develop a connection.

Second, I believe that self-awareness is the most important aspect of figuring out what kind of work you want to pursue. This means setting aside what you think others expect of you and listening to what your gut has to say, keeping in mind point one, that you might need some experiences to feed your gut instinct.

Third, is that it is ok to not have any idea what it is you are “going to do.” People like us who have interests that cut across traditional silos usually need to engage in some exploration as part of that random walk that is life.

Lastly, as people who have high expectations of yourselves, you need to realize that failures and setbacks are o.k. The capacity to bounce back from failures and struggles is one of the most important life skills you can have. I’ve had some big career failures and periods of self-doubt. Those experiences were probably the best learnings for me.

I’m going to wrap this up now. But you all have an open invitation to contact me any time. To help others is probably the most gratifying thing we can do.

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Introductory Remarks, Arts & Science Program New World of Work Forum

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