Message to the Bentley University Community from President Gloria Larson

November 12, 2016

Dear Members of the Bentley Community,

Over the past week, I hope you have taken some time to digest, comprehend and discuss the results of the Presidential election. On Tuesday night, I was in Burlington, Vermont for an event with members of our Student Affairs team and we shared stories about watching the results come in last week and conversations we’ve had with friends, colleagues and family members in the days since. And while reactions varied, one common question arose from the group: what happens next?

As a college president working with scores of young adults, I’m often asked my thoughts on the future of the United States—is the next generation prepared for the task that lies ahead? In response, I always come back to one of my favorite aspects of Bentley: the power of our rich and diverse community. I share how proud I am that our cohesive university community reflects the gender, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of the 21st Century world we live in. And I am equally proud of the fact that this diversity of backgrounds and cultures means a diversity of opinions and ideas, which includes preferences towards the candidates who competed in this Presidential election. Ultimately, this means that since last Wednesday morning, some members of our community have been celebrating this turning point in our country while others have felt deep despair.

No matter which end of the spectrum you fall on, what’s most important today is that you are a member of this a close-knit community of students, faculty and staff—the Bentley family. And as a family, we will see good days and bad days, agree and disagree, but we will always respect, admire and support one another.

There is no singular way to react to the results of last week’s election, but as I have often done in times of uncertainty, I encourage all of you to lean on the Bentley Beliefs, and then commit to engage in our community. Take advantage of this opportunity to listen to the hopes and concerns of others by meeting one-on-one with your friends or colleagues; putting together a group conversation on the issues you see as important to the future of America; attending one of Bentley’s many academic symposiums and Bentley Brave events; participating in Tuesday’s “Civility Day” in Massachusetts with a random act of kindness; pledging to develop sustainable solutions to our future; and committing to being creative, ethical, and socially responsible organizational leaders, here on campus and long into the future. There have been moments to share your thoughts and feelings already and more will be announced before the end of the semester and into the winter ahead.

We control the future of our community here at Bentley. If we engage with each other, learn about each other, and stand together in the face of uncertainty, we will stand stronger than ever before.

I’ve included below a message that Dean Andrew Shepardson shared with the student body at the end of last week. I felt his thoughts were appropriate to share with the community at large.

All my best,

Gloria