

# WEATHERHEAD CENTER

## Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit

The Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit exists to create a world where business can prosper, human beings can flourish and nature can thrive.

The Fowler Center helps propel business success and flourishing enterprise through the belief that business is one of the most powerful and positive forces for advancing a better world. It's a center that challenges, at every turn, what might be called "the great trade-off illusion"—the myth that doing good is at odds with doing well. We believe that increasingly, it's exactly the opposite. Peter Drucker, one of our first advisors, said that he loved the phrase "business as an agent of world benefit" because of its opportunity focus. He was clear that every business exists to create value and advance a better society, just as every organ in the body is there to enable life and health. He declared something that completely transcended the great trade-off illusion:

*"Every social and global issue of our day is a business opportunity in disguise... just waiting for the pragmatism of good business, its capacity for radical innovation and entrepreneurship and its management for results."*

We know from the best research available that today's industry-leading stars are moving toward the strategy concept of sustainable or shared value—it's an inseparable win-win mindset that says "doing good and doing well" is the most promising pathway to organizational success and significance, especially when coupled with the increasingly high expectations of stakeholders including millennials and Generation Z, the inherent interdependence of economy and nature, and the rapid rise of what's being called the Purpose Economy.

The research, teaching and service mission of the Fowler Center is to be one of the world's most powerful, science-based and inspiring organization development centers for the advancement of business success and what we call "full spectrum flourishing." Our purpose is clear:

**A world where business can excel, human beings can flourish and nature can thrive.**

The Fowler Center's primary focus is on for-profit organizations that use their core activities to create value for society and the environment in ways that create even more value for their customers and shareholders; its primary vehicle for effecting change is Positive Organizational Science and Appreciative Inquiry. We are drawing on expertise and tools such as design, sustainable value and Appreciative Inquiry to build and maintain prosperity and flourishing.

Companies embracing the notion of "full-spectrum flourishing" as part of their business strategy have seen huge benefits to their bottom line. These findings are reported in recent publications such as *Flourishing Enterprise* (Laszlo, Brown, et al., 2014), *Dreammakers: Innovating for the Greater Good* (Hunt, 2017), and *The Quest for a Flourishing Earth is the Most Significant OD Opportunity of the 21st Century* (Cooperrider, 2017), and *Quantum Leadership: New Consciousness in Business* (Laszlo, Tsao, 2019).

The Fowler Center advances extraordinary business innovation and social entrepreneurship by turning the social and global issues of our day into business opportunities, much as Peter F. Drucker envisioned. The Fowler Center practices, researches and supports initiatives based on whole-system design for advancing the 'how-to' of flourishing enterprise, and works with businesses, organizations, industries and economic regions to

discover the power and promise of flourishing as an innovation engine for doing good and doing well.

## Portfolio of activities

The Fowler Center conducts research, teaching, service and applied work to accelerate a better world, one where business can excel, all people can flourish and nature can thrive. Our strategic portfolio includes:

1. AIM2Flourish: The search for the greatest business and society innovations in the world. This search fuels everything the Fowler Center does.
2. Powerful Learning Environments for Students: Pathways for student leadership advancement
3. Custom Design Corporate Development: Applied Business as an Agent of World Benefit
4. Strategic Convening and Knowledge Alliances, like the Global Forum Series
5. Pioneering Scholarship

The research activities of the Fowler Center include teaching cases and PhD research as well as books, book chapters and journal articles on Appreciative Inquiry, sustainable value, design and flourishing enterprise. To carry out its agenda, the Fowler Center relies in part on its Fowler Center Doctor of Management Fellows, MBA Business as an Agent of World Benefit Fellows and other students of Case Western Reserve University.

The leadership of the Fowler Center is built on the vision and work of David Cooperrider, Ron Fry, Chris Laszlo and other faculty at the Weatherhead School of Management, working in close collaboration with the Fowler Center's Advisory Board members and other leaders in the Case Western Reserve University community.

To learn more or to find out how you or your organization can get involved with the Fowler Center, visit our website (<http://weatherhead.case.edu/centers/fowler/>) or contact the Fowler Center at 216.368.2160.