

# Bocconi

OPENING OF THE 2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

**MIND THE FUTURE**

Leading the change by making an impact

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Università  
Bocconi  
MILANO

**Bocconi.** Knowledge that matters.

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Let me introduce myself: My name is Silvia Candiani, and I am Vice President Telco, Media & Gaming at Microsoft and the proud President of the Bocconi Alumni Community. And I am very happy to be here. Being invited to speak at the Opening Ceremony of the Academic Year – Bocconi's most important event – in the name and on behalf of the Community I lead was, in my opinion, a gesture of enormous symbolic and tangible value. It underlines the importance of our Community in our University's ecosystem and its value generation system.

Our Community's adventure began more than a century ago. The first 18 Bocconi students graduated on 5 July 1906. The very next day, on 6 July 1906, these 18 Bocconi graduates founded ALUB, the Bocconi University Graduate Association. The association's purpose was to help young Bocconi graduates find and pursue a career that would live up to their ambitions, as well as to foster intergenerational solidarity, committing to finding funds to provide scholarships for deserving students. Of course, we have come a long way since then, suffice it to mention the foundation of the SDA Alumni associations AMSDA and ASDA in 2003, and the transformation from an association into a community in 2018. It is a Community where everyone can try to make a difference, as our payoff "everyone matters" reminds us. And today the Community is perfectly incorporated and integrated into the organizational structure of the University. It represents more than 144,000 Alumni around the world, organized into 75 Chapters – 25 in Italy and 50 in the rest of the world – along with 13 Topic Groups. More than 1,600 people are actively involved in managing the Community. It is a Community that lives, transforms and generates value.

Speaking of generated value, our proposal over the years has been greatly enriched since that far-off year of 1906, and today it is based on four pillars:

- **Virtuous networking**, connections and reconnections among Alumni.
- **Career advice**, professional counseling and support for the employability of our Alumni.
- **Lifelong learning**, the right and duty to never stop learning thanks to a continuing training system.
- And **giving back** in terms of time, treasure and talent supporting Bocconi's philanthropic initiatives.

These pillars aim to answer three questions, three key concepts that guide our work through a series of initiatives.

The first is: What can Bocconi do for Alumni? Essentially contribute to the personal and professional growth of Alumni even after they leave the University – wherever they are – thanks to the many Chapters located all over the world. Through all the lifelong learning and knowledge dissemination initiatives we organize and expand upon each year, Alumni can continue to stay informed, think about key research topics and learn from other experienced Alumni.

For example, Dinner Speech events are an opportunity to engage with outstanding Alumni who talk about their careers and reflect on trending topics in economics and business. For the first time, we have also started holding them abroad, beginning with London and Paris. As a whole, we have organized hundreds of events and gatherings energized by Chapter and

Topic Leaders around the world. These events are valuable opportunities to coalesce the community and reconnect with Alumni who have been away from Bocconi for too long.

Not to mention all the many initiatives for students organized by Bocconi, from the In Company training program to Bocconi Meets events, extraordinary job placement opportunities, as well as the extensive mentoring program and the many career advice events.

The second question is: What can Alumni do for Bocconi? First of all, become seeds of change, and a sounding board and amplification for our University's initiatives, strategic plan and vision. Alumni are mentors for B4i and participate in various teaching activities with different professors as well as the Research Impact Award.

And finally: What can Bocconi and Alumni do – together – for society? The answer in a word is: impact. That is, a whole series of philanthropic activities aimed at supporting students, research and the campus. In this regard I like to remember the importance of fundraising events organized by Chapters, Topic Groups and Class Groups, and the fact that three out of four Donors at Bocconi are... Alumni. Moreover, this year we organized the first charity gala in New York at the initiative of and in collaboration with our charity organization in the US, Friends of Bocconi. It was a great success. But impact also means something more: it means awareness, participation, taking responsibility towards the societies in which we live. In this regard, I would like to mention Changed by Women, the wonderful University project that the Community has taken around Italy and the world in its "on the road" version, while contributing substantially to the support of the related Women Fund, the philanthropic part of the initiative.

Of course, the Community is a symbolic continuation – a kind of reverberation – of University activity after time at the University. Like the University itself, it changes and evolves like a living organism, adapting to a world that is changing rapidly to increasingly pursue its mission of changing the world. But to do so, we need to find the way to understand how to accept and take on the challenges posed by this ever-changing world. We believe the answer is outside these walls, both outside Milan and around the world. The common thread in all this – required to make us effective change agents – is internationalization.

Thus the Community, like our University, is becoming increasingly international every year in its composition, in its distribution around the world and also in its mentality. Though the world can be changed from Milan, it can be changed all the more and more effectively by putting down roots worldwide, perhaps thanks to the many national and international Chapters. They are a bit like our embassies, each with its own ambassadors, the Alumni. Truly: the world at Bocconi but also Bocconi in the world.

However, the Community's internationalization cannot be ascribed only to the evolution of the university audience but also to important strategies of change, participation and engagement – including international scaleups, the creation of event management standard setting, the many spinoffs of the mentoring program and the aforementioned Dinner Speeches organized in Italy and around the world. This whole system is designed to invite our Alumni to be not only Donors, not only mentors, not only ambassadors but real engines

of change not only for society but also – and above all – for the Community itself and the University. This international approach gives us a special vibrancy. It is an important motivation, it is our strength and it is a reason to be grateful to our Alumni.

Our Community feels a strong responsibility to play an important role in the Third Mission: We are ready to accept the challenge and we cannot wait to do our part.