

AS SEEN IN *Forbes & Fortune*

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS
IN BOSTON

A BOOST FOR HIGHER ED

Viv Higher Education helps colleges and universities evolve to meet the changing needs of students and labor markets.

Dr. Suzan Brinker, Co-Founder and CEO (right), and Audra Delaney-Hall, Vice President of People Operations (left), lead a team of talented higher education strategists and marketers.



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A literature course wasn't the class that Suzan Brinker, Ph.D., expected to change her life.

Raised in Germany with a Turkish father, she internalized a feeling of otherness from a young age and saw herself as inferior to her classmates. Everything changed when she took a course on contemporary ethnic fiction while studying at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest.

"That class changed me as a person," says Dr. Brinker, now a higher education strategist, author, thought leader, and podcast host. "It allowed me to claim my Turkish heritage as something to be proud of. I learned how to rewrite my circumstances and lead change with inspired teams. **I started working in higher education to help colleges and universities achieve and tell similar transformation stories.**"

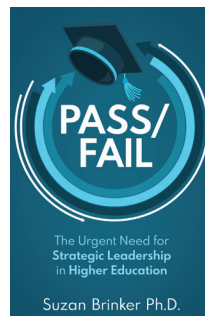
INNOVATION IN COLLABORATION

As co-founder and CEO of the Boston-based, women-owned, full-service marketing agency Viv Higher Education, Dr. Brinker and her collaborative team help colleges and universities step into a more successful future.

Having worked with over 95 institutions in 15 countries, the team overperforms because of its passion for higher education and its commitment to building a workplace for the future. It eschews hierarchical thinking and cookie-cutter answers in favor of an entrepreneurial mindset, custom solutions, and a relationship-centered approach.

CONTENT CREATORS

Dr. Brinker's upcoming book is hitting bookshelves this fall. "Pass/Fail: The Urgent Need for Strategic Leadership in Higher Education" is an insightful look into navigating the challenges facing higher education and how higher education leaders can shape the future of education. She also hosts the podcast "Higher Ed Leaders," featuring interviews with college and university presidents and vice presidents.



"Pass/Fail: The Urgent Need for Strategic Leadership in Higher Education" is a new book by Dr. Suzan Brinker.

POWER IN THE HUMANITIES

While some institutions are moving away from humanities courses in favor of trade-oriented certificates, Brinker argues that **integrating lessons from philosophy, literature, psychology, and sociology into market-aligned majors and programs** is more important than ever.

Critical thinking, she argues, will only become more important in the age of AI.

"The humanities shape us as adults by forcing us to face questions about life and purpose," says Dr. Brinker. "Students learn they aren't alone in their questions and can collaborate with classmates and faculty to find their

own answers to enduring questions, fueled by a hunger to seek truth."

THE PATH FORWARD

Dr. Brinker believes universities are still the key to socioeconomic mobility. She says, "Education allows someone to come in with limited resources and come out with the knowledge, experience, network, and degree needed to break free from the circumstances and limitations of their childhood.

"True innovation in higher education is collaboration across institutions and with expert partners," Dr. Brinker continues. "If a college or university wants to be around in the future, they have to pay attention to what their market wants, what their institution is good at, what their competitors are doing, how they advance their organizational culture, and how they're going to tell their story to the right audience.

"There's work to be done," she concludes, "and we're here to do it because universities should be protected, not replaced."



The Viv Higher Ed team enjoys a 2023 company retreat in Colorado.