First, let me welcome you to the Department of State, especially those of you who have travelled from around the country to be here today. We are grateful for your participation in this Scoping Meeting for a potential global knowledge platform we call PEGASCIS – the Platform for Enhancing Global Academic Strategic Collaboration in Science. Today we hope to get some good work out of you and to tap your individual and collective wisdom!

I am also delighted to see such a diversity of participants –

- from different universities, industry, government agencies, NGOs, academies and professional societies,
- from across many disciplines and skillsets, and
• from a range of career stages - it looks like we have the leaders of both today and tomorrow here!

Simply put, what brings us together today is the need for the United States to “Go Global in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)”. U.S. global leadership and excellence in science is essential for our national security, our economy, our health, our environment, our diplomacy, and our contributions to sustainable development and the world’s grand challenges.

As we all know, many countries are investing heavily in STI – we can no longer out-fund everyone in everything! The pace of STI progress and its interconnectivity in dynamic global knowledge networks mean that the American STI enterprise must change, become more connected with strong partners around the world, and more networked and nimble. If the United States can no longer be assured of leadership in STI through sheer dominance of size and resources, it will need to maintain leadership through synergistic partnerships.

Given the distributed nature of our public STI enterprise, there is unlikely to be a top-down strategy. This means that as a nation we must enable our institutions to develop a diverse portfolio of strategic partnerships. This will require rich information sources and tools to know where to partner, with whom, and in what fields. We recognize the importance of policy, funding, and legal and regulatory issues, but we have chosen to focus our attention on the knowledge needs.
What are those rich information resources that are needed? They are a diverse set, including for example, data on the full range of academic endeavors across all fields, but also models and effective practices for international engagement, international funding opportunities, reports on science strengths, priorities and needs of other countries, STI foresight reports, and guides to higher education and research in other countries. To find a strategic international partner also requires knowledge of an institution’s own international activities.

Our universities are a critical part of our national STI enterprise. With all of the changes ongoing in global science and in global higher education – we have seen that our universities are looking for their “value proposition in a global context”. At the same time, we have met many foreign STI and academic leaders, I hope you met some at the reception last night, who are looking to build substantial partnerships with American institutions, but they struggle with the number and diversity of our universities. Industry, too, is looking to find research partners and a globally engaged workforce around the world.

Sitting at the interface of domestic and international science, and being scientists, we envision this challenge as a matrix – with the set of American universities arrayed on one side, with their unique sets of strengths in research, but also, very importantly, in teaching, service, in business alliances, research facilities, international populations of students, faculty and alumni, and in current and historical engagement around the
world. Along the other axis of this grid we see the great universities of the world with their diverse strengths.

The value proposition for students and scholars, for their institutions, and for America and its partners, will be achieved when that matrix is far more filled than it is today with sustainable, multi-faceted institution-to-institution partnerships that fortify the individual collaborations in research and education that we know are so plentiful.

We have come to the conclusion that the best way to help fill out that matrix is to catalyze stakeholders to develop an easily accessible global knowledge platform that can meet their knowledge needs in global STI engagement. Let me pull out and expand upon five important parts of that sentence.

First it clarifies the role of the Department of State, which is a foreign policy and diplomacy agency, not an implementing or funding agency. As science diplomats we can often see important patterns from our “global, 60,000 foot perspective”; we can convene stakeholders such as you to address these patterns, and we can catalyze further action.

Second, it makes clear that we look to enable the stakeholders to address their institution’s knowledge needs related to international STI engagement. This makes the key users of the platform tools the leaders of those institutions. They will need to shape any resultant platform, guide the
development of its data and tools, govern it, find support for it, and link it to similar international efforts – as they see fit.

Third, it suggests that the platform be accessible and affordable. In our explorations we have embraced **open-source** and **open-access** approaches so that PEGASCIS serves the widest base of American institutions. This meshes with the White House Open Data Policy, and may also enable the platform to narrow, not widen, any digital divide with developing countries. We hope the platform can find a balance between open access and business models of publishers and academic data companies.

Fourth, it suggests that the platform’s function is to address knowledge needs. Therefore we use the term “platform” to encompass the diverse community of stakeholders, and any entity, resources, data, and tools engaged in the process. This helps clarify that the platform has social and technical dimensions and is not simply an IT matchmaking tool using big data. In fact, participants in the PEGASCIS Technical Meeting in May concluded that social challenges might be thornier than the technical ones.

Fifth, it focuses on STI global engagement as the outcome, which would both enable U.S. universities to visualize opportunities to forge strong global knowledge networks and also internationally showcase American universities in an outward-facing direction for potential partners.

So today, after some presentations in the morning, we will ask you to explore scenarios that clarify platform scope, priorities, activities,
organization, and timeframes to meet stakeholder needs. The scoping can also include identifying organization(s) which could lead/host the platform and approaches to linking with related efforts in other countries. The range of experience and expertise in this room is tremendous and we look forward to focusing it on this concept of a global knowledge platform.

After the meeting, we hope to work with you to summarize your scoping input and then hand this platform off in the ways that you suggest. Thank you again and I look forward to the meeting.
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