Meeting Summary
University Leadership Forum
Launch Meeting
June 18, 2019, Washington, D.C.
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Overview

On June 18, 2019, the Council’s University Leadership Forum, chaired by Dr. Michael R. Lovell, president of Marquette University; and Mr. Jere W. Morehead, president of University of Georgia, convened for its first meeting in Washington, DC. Founded on the premise that colleges and universities are critical components of the U.S. innovation ecosystem and are being called upon to play ever-evolving roles in research, economic development, skills training, and life-long learning, the Forum brought together college and university leaders from a variety of institutions and backgrounds. Participants initiated a discussion to begin to set the innovation agenda for university leadership now and into the future as it pertains to U.S. competitiveness. A key goal of the day was to better understand, anticipate and promote change in current higher education models, an imperative for competitiveness in the 21st century.

Working together with the broader Council membership (CEOs, labor leaders and national lab directors), the Forum will enable America’s academic leadership to understand how innovation is changing; consider actions institutions might take; mobilize to lower or eliminate shared barriers; and identify policy recommendations. The initial focus of the Forum will be in three main areas – Extreme Innovation, University-Industry-Government Partnerships, and the Fusion of STEM and Liberal Arts Disciplines – all aimed at fostering overall U.S. competitiveness and innovation.
University-Industry-Government Partnerships Task Force

The first session of the day focused on University-Industry-Government partnerships, which are playing an ever-important role in U.S. competitiveness, especially in urban areas where synergies driven by location between higher education and companies are strong. The task force is being chaired by Dr. M. David Rudd, president of the University of Memphis; and Dr. Ruth V. Watkins, president of the University of Utah.

One exciting example highlighted was the University of Memphis, which has formed four partnerships to present hands-on learning opportunities to their students, with FedEx being their most impactful partnership. The university set up a private entity, with opportunities for students to work at FedEx IT command centers, call centers, and data analytics centers, all on campus. This partnership allows talent to develop locally, ensuring that students have a clear pathway post-graduation. Students working in the facilities perform remarkably well, ranking as the top outsourced call center for FedEx. Currently, revenue exceeds $4 million, with expected annual growth. This money is then reinvested into the partnership, as well as to student and faculty research, furthering the university’s dedication to providing hands-on learning experiences. Memphis’s partnership with FedEx expands far beyond the university buildings. In order to improve retention rates in the FedEx hubs, the University of Memphis and FedEx launched Learning Inspired by FedEx (LiFE). Under this program, FedEx will pay for online schooling for its employees through the University of Memphis, as long as they continue to work in the hubs. By providing these workers with education, attrition rates in the hubs were cut in half. In addition to FedEx, Memphis has formed strong bonds with International Paper, AutoZone, and Saint Jude.

Kansas State University employed a similar model spinning off a for profit entity that enabled them to invest in capital projects that the state would not fund. Central to this effort is the recognition that niche expertise can bring investment outside of traditional urban centers.
Rural areas struggle to form the same university-industry partnerships. Unlike in an urban setting, industry leaders are not in close proximity, making it difficult to form relationships. The University of Utah – located roughly 100 miles from the nearest city – continues to struggle to meet workforce needs. Because of the distance, students are unable to get the same hands-on experience during the school year as they would in an urban setting, leaving them behind their peers. To combat this growing challenge, the university relies on forecasting in addition to industry-supported jobs on campus. Through forecasting technologies, the university is able to determine what skills are in high demand in the workforce and use the feedback to alter their classroom experience. Industry supported jobs on campus allow students the opportunity to practice those skills, preparing them for the workforce after graduation. No one-size-fits-all solution was noted, as there are many examples of rural universities that have successfully launched major partnerships, yet there was acknowledgement that these schools face a different set of challenges and identifying success stories at universities that are far from city centers who have excelled at partnerships will be an important step forward.

In addition to location, university size plays a major role in the formation of partnerships. Smaller universities are struggling to form the same industry partnerships as the larger schools. Students in smaller universities can be unaware of the workforce opportunities in their area after graduating, and often leave seeking work elsewhere. Recognizing this problem, the city of Milwaukee created “The Commons,” a platform for students to collaborate on semester-long projects while introducing them to workplace opportunities in Wisconsin. The application for the program does not ask for major or GPA, but instead focuses solely on the applicants’ answers to essay questions. Students are placed for internships at companies such as Sargento, Southwest, or Northwestern Mutual, with the goal of staying not only in the Milwaukee area after graduation, but also with the company they were placed with. While this program provides students from smaller universities

Dr. Mark Becker, president, Georgia State University; and Dr. Michael R. Lovell, president Marquette University.
workplace opportunities, challenges remain. A similar solution highlighted during the meeting was the pooling of resources and networks among many small schools in a region (or mega-region) to provide those schools with something approaching equal footing to the major research universities.

a) Smaller schools pooling resources also can level the playing field.

4. Engaging with industry has ancillary benefits such as improving graduation rates, encouraging diversity, and driving local economic development as more students stay in the area.

5. Partnerships are increasingly important to demonstrate linkages to jobs, as the value of higher education is under greater scrutiny.

The Fusion of STEM and Liberal Arts Disciplines

For the next task force chaired by Mr. Jonathan R. Alger, president of James Madison University; and Dr. Adam S. Weinberg, president of Denison University, discussion turned to the fusion of STEM and the liberal arts, which is essential to ensure well-rounded students are entering the workforce. Universities remain at the forefront of the issue but are struggling to gain support and funding from state legislatures that are focused on advancing engineering and computer science programs. Yet, there’s little debate as to the importance of students gaining skills in communication, collaboration, and better problem-solving skills, allowing them to become lifelong learners.
To facilitate this fusion, James Madison University created the X-Labs, bringing students from 35 majors together in a collaborative environment for one semester. These teams are given open-ended problems, and over the semester collaborate, draw upon ideas and strengths of all team members to determine a solution. The program reaches across disciplinary lines, creating collaboration among students from different backgrounds, both educational and demographic.

Meeting participants noted that the future will not be shaped solely by innovation, but also the commercialization of goods and services that people are willing to pay for. Cross disciplinary and multidisciplinary work will be key to these efforts. To allow students to look beyond their majors, Denison University’s data analytics course requires a concentration in a humanity subject, fostering the communications, ethics, and problem-solving skills necessary for the workforce.

In addition to the classroom experience, STEM and the liberal arts are often fused through real world, project-based experiences. In order to provide students with hands-on learning, Worcester Polytechnic Institute students complete projects that sit at the intersection of STEM and the humanities. Through such project-based opportunities, these students are learning to practically apply their knowledge to address real-world social issues. Despite having the know-how to create advanced technologies, it’s important students realize that just because you can do something, does not mean that you should do something. Other schools, such as Marquette University, try to facilitate the STEM/Arts fusion through a restructuring of their general education curriculum.

Universities, in general, often struggle to sell the importance of this fusion of STEM and the liberal arts to their professors. Though the students are willing to cross disciplinary lines, it is often the faculty that inhibits this cross pollination. Faculty have an affinity to their discipline and are often
slow to adapt to the turbulent educational and work environment. Some universities are exploring hiring and tenure practice changes to incentivize greater collaboration and buy-in. In addition to the tenure practices, there’s a need to educate the educators component. If professors are not properly educated on the importance and benefits of crossing disciplines, silos will continue to exist despite the growing evidence in the corporate world of the impact of successfully merging or arts and STEM.

Industries such as video game design and film and media studies rely heavily on the fusion of the two fields. They require engineers that think like artists, and vice versa. Savannah College of Art and Design was highlighted as an example of an institution that analyzes market trends, creating cross-disciplinary majors that best fit market demands.

Key Ideas:

1. It’s critical to break through the shortsighted “we only need computer scientists and engineers” perspective of some policymakers.

2. Tenure and accreditation can be barriers to the fusion of STEM and the Arts.
   a. A reward system for cross-disciplinary work and teaching must be implemented.

3. The humanities must be seen as equal partners in the merger.

4. Looking outside of traditional structures is one way to encourage/force collaboration across disciplines.

5. Helping students to market their multidisciplinary skillsets is important.

Extreme Innovation Task Force

Dr. Laurie A. Leshin, president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Dr. James R. Johnsen, president of the University of Alaska System launched a discussion on extreme innovation, which is an issue colleges and universities are core to addressing. Building an economy that can respond to global challenges and changes requires extreme innovation around such groundbreaking technologies as AI, cyber, big data analytics and bioengineering, as well as a long-term perspective that only higher education research can often provide.
Courage is needed to innovate, and in places such as Alaska, this courage is driven by desperation. The state is seeing failing infrastructure, climate change, and massive budget cuts to their school system. A new economy index recently ranked Alaska as 42nd. In order to combat these problems, innovation must be paired with ethics and morals providing the opportunity for the United States to lead guided by a set of shared values.

Extreme innovation requires teams and multiple organizations collaborating. Universities are ground zero for just this sort of multidisciplinary, multicultural and multi-sectoral type of cooperation.

In recent years, it seems that the United States has lost the ability to tackle grand challenges, or even to define what the "moon shots" will be in the coming years. Institutions such as the National Science Foundation are trying to lead with initiatives such as the "Big Ideas" campaign. This grassroots movement aims to generate excitement and collaboration around using extreme innovation to understand and develop solutions to current challenges.

Many of these projects are centered around basic human needs. For example, in the near future, we will need to triple our global food supply with only half of the water. We have to think about how to get electricity to the 1.1 billion people (according to the International Energy Agency) living without it.

Language matters. Will extreme innovation be driven by aspiration or by fear— "we are losing to China!" "could a pandemic break out?" First, we need to correctly identify the right questions and then we need to unleash the university system to seek answers.

Key Ideas:

1. Only extreme innovation can meet grand challenges.
2. Ethics need to be baked into the process, not added in later.
3. The “fear factor” could play an important role in driving nonpartisan action. China’s aspirations could be a call-to-arms for the U.S.

4. Colleges and universities may be the only places where these types of projects can happen.

5. Industry could play a key role in bringing higher education together towards a mutual goal.

Dr. Laurie A. Leshin, president, Worcester Polytechnic Institute; Mr. Jonathan R. Alger, president, James Madison University; and Dr. M. David Rudd, president, University of Memphis.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology: Innovation and Industrial Competitiveness

The Honorable Walter G. Copan, under secretary for Commerce for Science and Technology and director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) joined the meeting to provide comments on NIST’s efforts to promote innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve the overall quality of life.

The Honorable Walter G. Copan, under secretary for Commerce for Science and Technology and director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

Currently, NIST focuses on areas such as -- documentary standards, technology transfer, engineering biology, and disaster resilience. Other areas of focus include educating and training the workforce for a 21st-century economy, partnering with industry and academia, and transferring technology from the laboratory to the marketplace. NIST plays a unique role in promoting and reporting on the overall strength of federal technology transfer efforts. Through workgroups specific to technology transfer, the institution continues to advocate and uphold the Bayh-Doyle act as well as provide policy coordination and specific tech transfer regulations.

Under Secretary Copan highlighted that emerging technologies continue to transform research across all sectors. Advancing at a great pace, these technologies enable significant transformation in areas such as – smart manufacturing, internet of things, material
genomes, biosciences, advanced computing, and even NIST’s ability to perform measurement dissemination. This transformation has been made possible through computational modeling, deployed sensing and artificial intelligence.

To further advance President Trump’s Management Agenda, the U.S. seeks to increase the overall return on the government’s $150 billion a year investment. This is an effort to unleash the innovation power of America into the economy, as discussed in NIST’s ROI Green Paper. In addition to unleashing innovation, NIST seeks to meet current and future economic and national security needs as well as attract greater private sector investment to create innovative products, processes, services, as well as new businesses and industries.

The Council’s Innovation Agenda Moving Forward

The Council will formally launch the National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers later this summer and the Forum will play an important role in ensuring the perspectives across all three task forces are a part of the Commission’s agenda.

Innovation continues to be the single most important factor in determining American economic success. Innovation drives productivity, the standard of living and leadership in global markets. Since the inception of the Council, innovation has been the cornerstone of our policy and action agenda. In 2003, the Council launched the National Innovation Initiative aiming to re-spark productive innovation. Over a decade has passed since the NII. The United States continues to face new unprecedented multipolar challenges in global innovation leadership. The
innovation engine is stalling with US GDP growth slowing. More so, the U.S. faces a new R&D reality with the risk of being passed by China in the coming decade.

Over the next five years, China intends to: provide $20 billion to support the integrated circuit industry, invest $150 billion in AI and commit $3B commitment to advance manufacturing. In the last decade, US S&E publications grew 6.79% versus a 124.21% growth seen in China. With the growing economy in China and lax enforcement of piracy laws, U.S. intellectual property is at increased risk. The annual cost to the US economy continues to exceed $225 billion in counterfeit goods, pirated software, and theft of trade secrets and could be as high as $600 billion. At the current rate, the United States has suffered economic damage exceed $1.3 trillion since 2013.

Furthermore, the nature of innovation is turbulent, transitioning, and transforming. New business models continue to emerge – challenging the traditional; cutting the link between production and cost; increasing the pace of innovation by collapsing boundaries between fields, sectors, and disciplines. The democratization of innovation serves as both an opportunity and a challenge for the Council. We must optimize our nation for the new, unfolding, reality.

To meet this challenge, the Council will launch the National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers. By assembling America’s top minds from industry, academia, labor, and national labs, the Commission aims to sharpen the nation’s understanding of this dramatically changing ecosystem and harness these changes to accelerate productivity and prosperity. Co-chaired by Council Chairman Mehmood Khan, CEO of Life Biosciences, and Council University Vice-chair Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University, the Commission will map out the U.S. innovation policy landscape along three core pillars -- developing and deploying at scale disruptive and exponential technology; exploring the future of sustainable production, consumption, and work; and optimizing the U.S. innovation system.
Closing Comments and Next Steps

Sparking real change must go beyond a small group of college and university presidents to engage not only the broader Council membership, but other key stakeholders. To solve the challenges discussed, the wheel does not need to be reinvented, but we must develop a clear public understanding of how critical universities are in increasing overall innovation and competitiveness in the U.S.

The Forum leadership and members agreed to the following next steps:

- **Populate Task Forces** — Council staff will reach out to Forum members to confirm interest in serving on one or more task forces.

- **Identify PoCs and/or Experts** — Forum members will be asked to identify a point of contact in their offices and/or subject matter experts to support their work on the task force(s).

- **Hold Dates** — The Council’s Chairman’s Dinner will be held on August 6, 2019; the National Competitiveness Forum (NCF) will be held on December 17-18, 2019 [Note: there will be a panel discussion at the NCF on the work of the University Leadership Forum]

- **2019 Virtual Task Force Meetings** — Council staff will work in the coming weeks to identify dates for initial task force virtual meetings to continue to the dialogue started on June 18.

- **2020 Task Force and Forum Meetings** — Looking to next year, task force co-chairs will be asked to host in-person meetings and fact-finding tours to bring additional perspectives to the discussion and to share the work of the Forum outside of Washington, DC. Council staff will work to identify a date as early as possible for the 2020 meeting of the full Forum.
Appendix 1: Meeting Agenda

MORNING

9:00   Coffee and Networking

9:30   Welcome Remarks

The Honorable Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness

9:50   Opening Remarks

Dr. Michael R. Lovell
President, Marquette University

Mr. Jere W. Morehead
President, University of Georgia

10:00  Overview of the Agenda and Goals for the Day

Mr. William C. Bates
Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness

10:15  Review, Discussion and Approval of the University-Industry-Government Partnerships Task Force Charter

Dr. M. David Rudd
President, University of Memphis

Dr. Ruth V. Watkins
President, University of Utah

11:00  Coffee and Networking

11:15  Review, Discussion and Approval of the Fusion of STEM & Liberal Arts Task Force Charter

Mr. Jonathan R. Alger
President, James Madison University

Dr. Adam S. Weinberg
President, Denison University

Noon  Luncheon

AFTERNOON

12:30  Guest Speaker

The Honorable Walter G. Copan, Ph.D.
Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology
Director, National Institute of Standards and Technology

1:15   Review, Discussion and Approval of the Extreme Innovation Task Force Charter

Dr. James R. Johnsen
System President, University of Alaska

Dr. Laurie A. Leshin
President, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
2:00 University Leadership Forum  
Issues: Looking beyond the Task Forces

The Honorable Deborah L. Wince-Smith  
President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness

2:30 Council's Policy Agenda for 2019 and Beyond

Mr. Chad Evans  
Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness

2:45 Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Dr. Michael R. Lovell  
President, Marquette University

Dr. Jere W. Morehead  
President, University of Georgia

The Honorable Deborah L. Wince-Smith  
President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness

3:00 Adjourn
Appendix 2: Participants List

Mr. Jonathan R. Alger  
President  
James Madison University

Dr. Roberto Alvarez  
Executive Director  
Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils

Mr. Bill Bates  
Executive Vice President  
Council on Competitiveness

Dr. Mark P. Becker  
President  
Georgia State University

Mr. Michael Bernstein  
Senior Policy Director  
Council on Competitiveness

Dr. C. Michael Cassidy  
Director, Emory Biomedical Catalyst  
Emory University

The Honorable Walter G. Copan, Ph.D.  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology Director  
National Institute of Standards and Technology

Mr. Chad Evans  
Executive Vice President Council on Competitiveness

Ms. Yasmin Hilpert  
Senior Director of Policy and Engagement  
Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils

Dr. Edwin Hirleman, Jr.  
Chief Corporate and Global Partnerships Officer  
Purdue University

Dr. James R. Johnsen  
System President  
University of Alaska

Dr. Laurie A. Leshin  
President  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Michael R. Lovell  
President  
Marquette University

Ms. Carly McCallie  
Director of Federal Relations University of Georgia

Mr. Jere W. Morehead  
President  
University of Georgia

Gen. Richard B. Myers  
President  
Kansas State University

Dr. M. David Rudd  
President  
University of Memphis
Dr. Elizabeth Stroble  
President  
Webster University

Dr. Steven Taylor  
Vice President  
Council on Competitiveness

Mr. Gourang Wakade  
Vice President  
Council on Competitiveness

Dr. Ruth V. Watkins  
President  
University of Utah

Dr. Adam S. Weinberg  
President  
Denison University

The Honorable  
Deborah L. Wince-Smith  
President & CEO  
Council on Competitiveness
About the University Leadership Forum

The University Leadership Forum enables leaders from America's top academic institutions to join forces with each other and with Council members from industry, labor and the national laboratories to understand the changing innovation landscape and to develop solutions to current and future challenges to U.S. competitiveness.

While academia will lead this initiative, industry and other stakeholders, such as national laboratories, will play important roles to highlight and inform best practices on collaborative models and to explore new mutually beneficial relationships to drive inclusive innovation.

The Forum is intended both as an internal think tank to the Council on the critical role of higher education in shaping U.S. competitiveness, and as an impact player in state and federal policymaking building the work force of the future.

The University Leadership Forum is focused on understanding how colleges and universities contribute to the competitiveness of the United States, maximize the value these institutions add to the U.S. economy and enhance prosperity for all Americans.

About the Council on Competitiveness

For more than three decades, the Council on Competitiveness (Council) has championed a competitiveness agenda for the United States to attract investment and talent, and spur the commercialization of new ideas.

While the players may have changed since its founding in 1986, the mission remains as vital as ever— to enhance U.S. productivity and raise the standard of living for all Americans.

The members of the Council — CEOs, university presidents, labor leaders and national lab directors — represent a powerful, nonpartisan voice that sets aside politics and seeks results. By providing real-world perspective to Washington policymakers, the Council's private sector network makes an impact on decision-making across a broad spectrum of issues from the cutting-edge of science and technology, to the democratization of innovation, to the shift from energy weakness to strength that supports the growing renaissance in U.S. manufacturing.

The Council's leadership group firmly believes that with the right policies, the strengths and potential the U.S. economy far outweigh the current challenges the nation faces on the path to higher growth and greater opportunity for all Americans.
University Leadership Forum Members

**Forum Co-chairs**
Dr. Michael R. Lovell
President
Marquette University

Mr. Jere W. Morehead
President
University of Georgia

**Extreme Innovation Task Force Co-chairs**
Dr. James R. Johnsen
System President
University of Alaska

Dr. Laurie A. Leshin
President
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

**University-Industry-Government Partnerships Co-chairs**
Dr. M. David Rudd
President
University of Memphis

Dr. Ruth V. Watkins
President
University of Utah

**The Fusion of STEM & Liberal Arts Disciplines Task Force Co-chairs**
Mr. Jonathan R. Alger
President
James Madison University

**Members**

Dr. Adam S. Weinberg
President
Denison University

The Honorable
Mitchell, E. Daniels, Jr.
President
Purdue University

Dr. John DeGioia
President
Georgetown University

Dr. Wayne A. I. Frederick
President
Howard University

Dr. Julio Frenk
President
University of Miami

Dr. E. Gordon Gee
President
West Virginia University

The Honorable
Rebecca M. Blank
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dr. Amy Gutmann
President
University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Farnam Jahanian
President
Carnegie Mellon University

Rev. John I. Jenkins
President
University of Notre Dame

Dr. Dr. Eric J. Barron
President
The Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Mark P. Becker
President
Georgia State University

Dr. Richard C. Benson
President
University of Texas at Dallas

The Honorable
Sylvia Matthews Burwell
President
American University

Dr. Michael M. Crow
President
Arizona State University

Dr. Robert A. Brown
President
Boston University

The Honorable
Rebecca M. Blank
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dr. Farnam Jahanian
President
Carnegie Mellon University

Rev. John I. Jenkins
President
University of Notre Dame
Dr. Paul C. Johnson
President
Colorado School of Mines

Dr. Robert E. Johnson
Chancellor
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

Dr. Pradeep K. Khosla
Chancellor
University of California, San Diego

Dr. Timothy L. Killeen
President
University of Illinois System

Dr. Steven Leath
President
Auburn University

Dr. Gary S. May
Chancellor
University of California, Davis

Gen. Richard B. Myers
President
Kansas State University

Mr. Eloy Ortiz Oakley
Chancellor
California Community Colleges

Dr. Christina H. Paxson
President
Brown University

Dr. Rodney K. Rogers
President
Bowling Green State University

Dr. Clayton Rose
President
Bowdoin College

Dr. Mark S. Schlissel
President
University of Michigan

Dr. Joseph E. Steinmetz
Chancellor
University of Arkansas

Dr. Elisa Stephens
President
Academy of Arts University

Dr. Claire Sterk
President
Emory University

Dr. Elizabeth Stroble
President
Webster University

Dr. Kumble Subbaswamy
Chancellor
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Dr. Satish K. Tripathi
President
The University at Buffalo

Dr. Kim A. Wilcox
Chancellor
University of California, Riverside

The Honorable Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President & CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Dr. W. Randolph Woodson
Chancellor
North Carolina State University