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The University of Michigan has received a multiple-year grant from the Atlantic Philanthropies to explore the manner in which information technology is reshaping the boundaries in education: among institutions, disciplines, levels of education, and between educational institutions and society. Atlantic has also funded a parallel study to be conducted by the National Academies that will be focused on stimulating a national dialog on these issues.

The impact of digital technology on education is expected to be profound, rapid, and likely disruptive because of the manner in which it transforms the way we create, manage, and transfer knowledge; because of its exponential rate of evolution; and because of the way it erodes or eliminates conventional constraints such as geographical location, time, and monopoly. The Michigan project addresses the impact of information technology on education by: 1) establishing and guiding several leadership groups aimed at identifying issues and developing action agendas (e.g., national associations, state or regional alliances, cross-disciplinary groups, foundations, and community groups); 2) building knowledge resources to support these groups (e.g., web-based knowledge resources, workshop experiences, intellectual frameworks) and 3) using these leadership groups to develop a series of strategic technology and policy roadmaps for various constituencies of education (e.g., colleges and universities, school systems, cultural institutions, national organizations, and stakeholders such as government, business, and foundations).

A key constituency on both the national and regional studies is the nonprofit foundation sector. To learn more about how foundations see the challenges and opportunities of technology in their grant-making programs, we will be hosting a national conference of presidents of major foundations at the National Academic of Sciences this fall. However we also believe it might be both useful and informative to host a very similar conference at the regional level for Michigan foundations at the University of Michigan as a component of our Atlantic-sponsored project.

We would propose a half-day workshop next spring, hosted at the Media Union at the University of Michigan, drawing together leaders from Michigan foundations along with leading technologists and educators. A rough schedule would be to start the meeting in mid-morning with a brief survey of issues related to technology and education (and other social institutions) and then move rapidly to a conversation with participants to learn more about their perspectives of concerns and possible opportunities. We anticipate the meeting would last through lunch and conclude by early afternoon.

Although our primary objective is to learn more how foundation leaders view the potential impact of technology on education and other social institutions, we would like to explore the possible interest in the development of more sustained resources for

Michigan foundations in these areas, e.g., ongoing workshops with more varied participants (e.g., various levels of education, professional disciplines, or economic sectors), developing strategic roadmaps for guiding policy and programs, or simply providing a forum where such issues can be explored. It is also our hope that the workshop for Michigan foundations would also provide some guidance for our national workshop for foundations to be hosted by the National Academy of Sciences later in the year.