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To: Joichi Ito <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: One Science - second pass

Date: Mon, 29 May 2017 14:20:30 +0000

Describe the one cScience program a collaboration . As the recipient of funds

On Mon, May 29, 2017 at 10:17 AM Joichi Ito <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Almost all of the important problems that science faces are complex and interdisciplinary, yet the majority of traditional research labs still focus on a single discipline or problem. To tackle difficult challenges, such as curing or augmenting the human body; developing, deploying and regulating artificial intelligence; or understanding, designing and managing the future of genomics and our species we need interdisciplinary—and perhaps more importantly, antidisciplinary—groups of the best researchers in any number of disparate fields. Working together, bound tightly in an operating group, these scientists are unencumbered by the “walls” of disciplines and federal funding silos. These teams develop tools and pull expertise from any field, exploiting “low-hanging fruit” discoveries in neglected areas. Unlike sciences like physics, which have an established paradigm, these are “pre-paradigmatic sciences”—the principles are not yet clear, the textbook is incomplete, there are no hard and fast rules, so the disciplinary source of a given revolution is highly unpredictable.

While academia can attract the brightest researchers whose thinking is not yet encumbered by traditional disciplinary biases, it does not necessarily provide the best model for attracting funding for “unproven” research initiatives, or for scaling. The Media Lab’s “secret sauce” is its ability to bring together a constantly evolving community of hundreds of faculty members, researcher staff, and graduate students, and draw on the broader research community at MIT and beyond. We can assemble teams of theoretical scientists as well as engineers and designers to build the tools and deploy. The problems we are trying to tackle today are not as focused as the Manhattan project, but rather involve a range of explorations in complex self-adaptive systems, such as biological systems. We are building a new kind approach to advancing the understanding, invention, and deployment of a non-discipline-segregated “one science.”

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JEE

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