



# BROOKINGS 2.0

A PLAN FOR OUR SECOND CENTURY



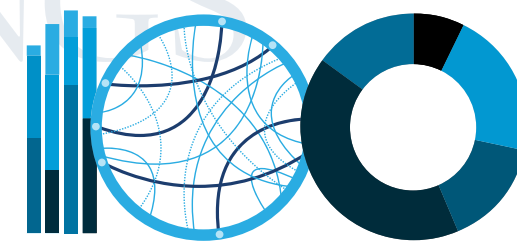
# BROOKINGS 2.0

A PLAN FOR OUR SECOND CENTURY





BROOKINGS



BROOKINGS  
CENTENARY

Brookings's hundredth anniversary is an occasion to celebrate our past and reflect on its lessons for our future. Our legacy is marked by continuity in vision, values, and goals. But our experience has taught us that continuity is a virtue only if it is leavened with self-examination and innovation. Even a respected institution can always do what it does better — and often do it differently, especially if

**Put simply, we are in the business of improving governance**

the environment in which it operates is undergoing transformation.

That is dramatically the case now.

The past few years have seen

multiple crises that are testing the stability of the world order and shaking the confidence of leaders and citizens alike.

The human enterprise may be at an inflection point, in which case, so is Brookings. Many of the challenges fall within the ambit of our original and enduring mission: answering the question of how communities can promote life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness among their inhabitants.



Put simply, we are in the business of improving *governance*. That word, derived from the Latin “to steer,” implies a clear purpose and direction. Over the past hundred years, through the work of its scholars, Brookings has done its part to chart a course toward a world with more opportunity, more justice, more open societies, more security, and more peace.

In that respect, continuity is not just at the core of our legacy but a guiding principle for our future. So is change. Throughout most

## Understanding the complexity of 21st century governance and developing ideas that work

of the twentieth century, Brookings concentrated on improving *government*, a crucial but limited function that resides with

political authorities. In recent years, we have adopted the more capacious term *governance*, which encompasses the expanding and interactive roles of public, private, and civic forces at all levels, from local to national to global.

In the realm of foreign policy, governance includes not only diplomacy and the work of multilateral institutions and non-governmental organizations, but also resorting to hard power on behalf of humanitarian causes, repelling aggression, enforcing treaties, and restoring security and stability.

The digital revolution is empowering individuals and diffusing political and economic power, for good and ill. The tension between globalization and its discontents is unsettling societies, economies, cultures, politics, and international relations.

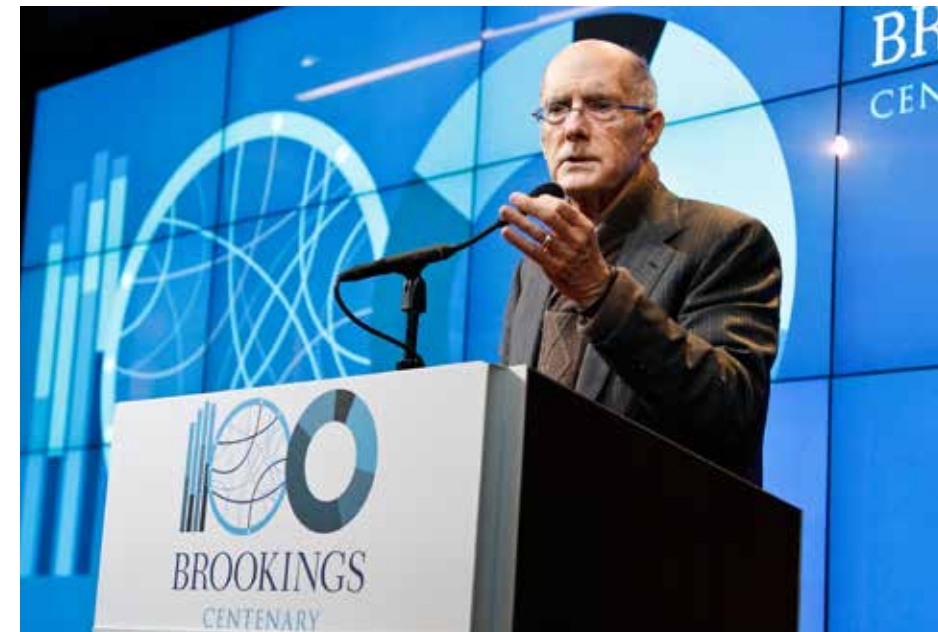
Those and other disruptions make astute, forward-looking navigation more difficult but also more urgent. Many current and looming problems will be more tractable if there is coordination among different sectors and stakeholders, thereby creating synergy where now there is often incoherence, friction, and conflict.

As Brookings embarks on its second century, understanding the complexity of twenty-first century governance and developing ideas that work to its betterment is our task.

## Then and Now

Our aspirations remain consistent with those of the eighteen private citizens — prominent in education, law, finance, and philanthropy — who founded the Institution in 1916. They included Republicans, Democrats, and independents. Several served in the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. They shared a conviction

that the ideal of American democracy was itself an aspiration that was a far cry from the reality of their day. They were optimists in their belief that a better world was possible, realists in their recognition of the defects in



the world as it is, and pragmatists in deciding which remedies might work. In short, our founders were reformers. They embodied the ethos of the Progressive Era.

Progress, they believed, is not to be celebrated but to be achieved; once achieved, it is to be perfected. It needs constant vigilance, careful tending, and course correction. That requires deep reflection and fresh thinking to generate new ideas of a kind that are often beyond the remit and capacity of government

agencies. Their inspiration was to create a permanent, reliable source of objective, independent analysis, constructive criticism, and bold but actionable improvements to public policy.

Objectivity, in their view, was not just an intellectual virtue but a potent antidote to the skewing effect of partisan dogma



on policymaking.

Public servants were often too busy and too invested in the status quo to see where it was underperforming.

The founders saw independence — ironclad protection of scholars from

pressures exerted by special interests — as a precondition for the objectivity of the Institution as a whole.

As often with a big idea, this one started small, with a tight focus and a single target set of consumers. The first cohort of seven scholars, working out of a red-brick building near the White House, wrote monographs on the efficiency of administrative practices for officials in the executive branch within a radius of several blocks.

The Institution quickly became known as a first-mover in the marketplace of ideas, bringing new approaches to problem-solving. The range of its work and influence soon widened, both in Washington and abroad. In the 1920s and thirties, Congress sought the advice of our scholars on economic policy. So did foreign governments.

In the forties, Brookings experts helped formulate policies and design institutions undergirding postwar economic recovery and international stability. During the cold war, they developed diplomatic and military strategies that helped keep the nuclear peace. In the fifties and sixties, they devised procedures to facilitate transitions between administrations and bolster the legislative branch's ability to deal with fiscal issues. In the seventies, they produced influential studies on federal regulations and a blueprint for Middle East peace.

Our first generation of scholars was active in creating the Bureau of the Budget, the United Nations, and the Marshall Plan. Their successors helped craft Great Society legislation, national health

policies, and the upgrading of homeland security measures after 9/11.

As the number of our scholars increased, so did the diversity of their professional backgrounds and expertise, ranging from taxation to

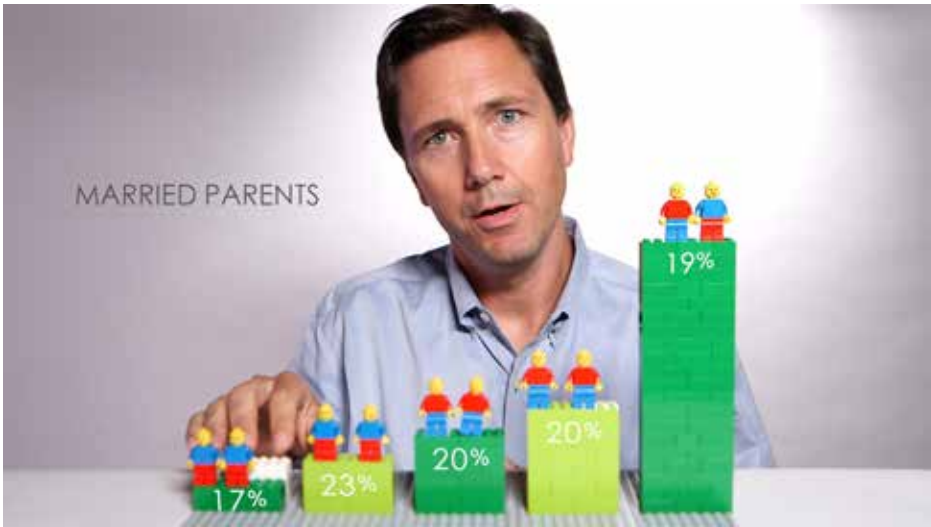


global economic development and U.S. foreign policy. That breadth gave us a distinctive advantage in an increasingly competitive universe of think tanks.

By the 1990s, Brookings had expanded its work and influence into the American heartland. As our scholars spent more time outside the Capital Beltway, they saw ways to improve governance at the metropolitan level and compensate for the



shortcomings of federal policy. Brookings played a vital role in promoting public-private partnerships that have brought mayors and county commissioners together with corporate and labor leaders, community activists, philanthropists, and



educators to fix what is broken and get things done.

In the early years of the new century, we broadened partnerships with peer organizations as well as collaborations with policymakers

and policy-shapers around the globe. The Institution now has overseas centers in the capitals of two of the most consequential rising powers, China and India, while the Brookings Doha Center provides valuable insight into the Islamic world. Together, they enable us to engage with influential actors in parts of the globe that encompass two-thirds of humanity.

Extending our reach has also entailed staying abreast of the latest communication technology — from Instagram to Twitter to podcasts — and reaching new audiences through Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese translations of our work.

So while our mission has remained essentially the same over the course of a hundred years, we have consciously and consistently strived to keep pace with — and, whenever possible, ahead of — changes in the world. Many of those are beneficial, some of them dramatic: the lifting of more

than a billion people out of extreme poverty, striking improvements in life expectancy, breakthroughs in medical research, improvements in education, and in many places, advancement of women’s and LGBT rights. In the United States, a demographic revolution has enriched American culture and spurred the economy while new technologies, many of them homegrown, have transformed numerous aspects of individual and national life.

These examples and drivers of progress have engaged our scholars, just as setbacks and dangers — some that roil the present, others that loom on the horizon — spur us to marshal the realism and pragmatism that is also part of our legacy.

Problems and Solutions

Our centenary comes several years into a period when progress seems to be giving way to regression. Almost all forms of national governance are undergoing systemic stress and dissatisfaction among their citizens. That is true of virtually all democracies, including the most powerful one.

The United States is suffering from polarization in the body politic and gridlock in its governing institutions. Chronic disease

Brookings is well positioned to be part of the solution to America’s problems

is rising and life expectancy falling in some sections of the population. Cities and universities are shaken by turbulence around issues of

race. The American brand is tarnished by disparities in income and opportunity — a concern similar to the one that stirred the reformist energies of our original Trustees and scholars.

At home and abroad, the global leadership that the United States assumed when it entered World War I, a year after

## Brookings stands for objectivity, fact-based research, nonpartisanship and civil discourse

Brookings's founding, is now widely questioned even as it is sought and welcomed. A contagion of crises, conflicts, and perils has swept the globe in the last half decade, inhibiting if not negating the widespread advances that began in the 1980s and continued into the first decade of this century. Globalization as

a unifying factor is losing ground to a resurgence of nationalism within states and competition among them. Russia and China have reverted to geopolitics of a kind that led to war in previous

centuries. The chimera of ethnicity as the basis of statehood is making a comeback in Europe, jeopardizing the 70-year experiment in transnational integration on that continent.

Meanwhile, in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, an atavistic-sounding term, "ungoverned spaces," has entered the vocabulary of the twenty-first century. Far worse, a malignant non-state actor has proclaimed itself a state, destabilized its neighbors, declared war on most of the world, and demonstrated an ability to recruit alienated youth from around the globe.

Then there is climate change. Unless the Paris accord of December 2015 marks a turning point in long-term remedial action, the disturbances of the ecosphere, with sea levels rising and verdant land turning to desert, may reverse the progress of civilization.

Coping with these adversities and hazards necessitates harnessing human agency in its most ambitious, effective, and coordinated form. Hence our determination to define, study, and improve governance in its expansive sense.

Still, government in its traditional definition will always be an indispensable component of governance. Democracy, which is alive (if not always well) in more than half the nations in the

world, requires lawmakers who are chosen by elections that are fair, efficient, and representative. National security, rule of law, protection of property rights, control of the money supply, foreign policy, intelligence, trade, and other vital functions of statehood are impossible without a competent government.

Americans, to their credit, have never been fully satisfied with their own government or the course it has set. Early in the last century, their faith in an ideal, their impatience with the shortcomings of their leaders, and their conviction that America could do better animated the Progressive Movement, which in turn spawned our institution.

But a hundred years later, an alarming number of Americans are losing that faith, and their impatience is infected with fear and anger. These emotions cloud judgment and stoke incendiary politics, which breed divisiveness and constituencies for imprudent if not disastrous policies. The result makes reform

harder at precisely the time when the United States needs it, for its own sake and for the world's.

These corrosive trends are antithetical to what Brookings stands for: objectivity, fact-based research,

nonpartisanship, and civil discourse. We can set a corrective example in the way we conduct our internal deliberations and the way we use our convening power to contribute to the elevation of the national and international debates.



## The institution's deep and broad substantive expertise positions our scholars to inject sound ideas into the policy discourse

Moreover, the Institution's deep and broad expertise positions our scholars to inject sound ideas into the policy discourse, while providing solid information to myriad audiences in the United States and around the globe as an antidote to the distortions, invective, and dogma that so often fill the air, especially in Washington, D.C.

Our hometown has, in recent years, become an object of ridicule, mistrust, and fury on the part of many whose lives are, ultimately, governed from it. Many more millions around the world who still look to the United States as a model society and the source of international leadership are baffled by the acrimony and near-paralysis that

seem to characterize the current workings of our democratic institutions, notably including our electoral system.

In this respect, too, Brookings is well positioned to be part of the solution to America's problems precisely because we know our city well. Since America's difficulties are troublesome for the world and American leadership abroad is essential, our identity as a Washington-based think tank is an asset as we ply our trade globally by virtue of our overseas centers and via cyberspace, airwaves, and satellites.

Our centennial strategic plan identifies ways to strengthen our ability to accomplish our task. By implementing the plan we will keep faith with our predecessors, bequeath a vibrant Institution to our successors, and ensure its relevance and impact in the decades ahead.

As we make good on these commitments, we will continue to uphold the basic values that constitute our motto — Quality,

## New Goals for a New Century

As we confront the manifold challenges of this new century, we have resolved to change the way we do business, attempting to do everything better and some things quite differently. The necessary adaptations fall under five goals:

1. **Tighten our focus** on the complex of governance issues as an organizing theme of our priorities, activities, products, and partnerships and thereby seek to be a leader in addressing the primary challenges of our time.
2. **Enhance our influence and relevance** by engaging new audiences and building new partnerships around the world. This means exploiting more vigorously the tools of the digital age. It also means using new and more effective branding and messaging to clarify who we are, what we do, why it matters, and how citizens can be part of the solution to the major problems of our time.
3. **Promote a culture of collaboration** across the Institution and with our overseas centers, since the governance problems we deal with are interdisciplinary, multifaceted, and often shared by other major powers.
4. **Advance inclusion and diversity** in all its aspects — in our community as a whole, and, in particular, within our scholarly ranks and management.
5. **Reinforce efficiency and sustainability** through disciplined decision-making on how to allocate our resources, whom to hire and for how long, and whether to start or sunset projects.



Independence, Impact. In fact, achieving these goals will validate and buttress those values.

Adopting governance as the overarching theme of our otherwise eclectic projects and products will help us maximize their impact. Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration will enrich the quality of our work. Ensuring greater diversity and equity among our scholars and interacting with a much larger universe of partners and audiences will augment the quality



and impact of our output. Efficiency and sustainability are critical to ensuring that we achieve our goals.

Equally important is our need to ensure the explicit protection of our independence.

The intellectual

autonomy of our scholars was a founding precept of the Institution. It is not just our scholars' right and an incentive for working at Brookings — it also bolsters the quality and impact of their work, not least because they are constantly honing and often amending their ideas through vigorous debate.

It is also our scholars' prerogative and responsibility to come up with bold, pragmatic solutions to the challenges of our age — that is, to help it become a better world. They have made Brookings what it is, and they will take it to new heights in the future. They, like our Trustees, have participated in the strategic planning process, and they will be key to the implementation of the plan itself.

As we begin our second century, we will ask our scholars to put a premium on research that harnesses a deep understanding

## **We will double down on our founders' bet that their big idea would prove itself well into Brookings's second century**

of the past and applies it to the future. There will always be black swan events. But rather than waiting for them to arrive, we will focus on the predictable context. Our scholars are already turning to the task of prioritizing and

focusing their research to answer the big questions of our age. They include:

- How can decisionmakers promote inclusive growth, shared prosperity, and greater opportunity at the local, national, and international levels?
- How can the international community strengthen the prevailing American-led order in an age of increasing geopolitical tensions, rising populism, and collapsing institutions?
- How can communities harness digital technologies and promote innovation while protecting their economies, social compacts, and individual rights?
- How can countries avoid damages from climatic disruption while also pursuing economic growth and greater energy access?
- How can cities across the globe manage the economic, social, and security implications of increasing urbanization?
- How can Brookings help decision makers anticipate over-the-horizon threats and challenges?

Other questions will inevitably come to the fore as we adapt our research priorities to deal with additional challenges and

find new ways to help governing processes and institutions better perform.

Our communications team is already developing path-breaking instruments to inform and engage ever-larger audiences.

Our management team is developing internal mechanisms to promote diversity and inclusiveness, ensure our sustainability, and protect our independence. As part of the implementation of this strategic plan we are developing evaluation mechanisms to ensure that we are achieving the goals we have set for ourselves.

Now that the vision and goals outlined here have been reviewed, revised, and approved by the Board, the management of the Institution will move energetically to implement them over the next three-to-five years. In this way, we will double down on our founders' bet that their big idea would prove itself well into Brookings's second century.

## BROOKINGS 2.0 GOALS





## GOAL

## Focus Our Mission on Improving Governance

The Brookings centennial strategic plan aims to sharpen the Institution's focus on improving governance at all levels and dimensions — local, national, global, public, and private. Emphasizing this overall objective will enhance our impact as problem-solvers in the areas where we have the most experience and expertise.

### STRATEGY:

Identify, analyze and promote solutions to the most important governance challenges. In the foreseeable future, those are:

- » Growth and opportunity
- » International order
- » Digital technology
- » Climate and energy
- » Urbanization

### OBJECTIVES:

- Create tools to increase inter- and intra-program collaboration.
- Update the research evaluation and development processes.
- Define and implement incentives that give scholars the financial support to collaborate internally and with our overseas centers.





## GOAL

## Enhance our Impact

Brookings will seek to enhance its influence and relevance by engaging new audiences and building new partnerships around the world. This means exploiting more vigorously the tools of the digital age. It also means using new and more effective branding and messaging to explain who we are, what we do, why it matters, and how we are committed to ensuring that civil society and the private sector can be part of the solutions to the major governance challenges of our time.

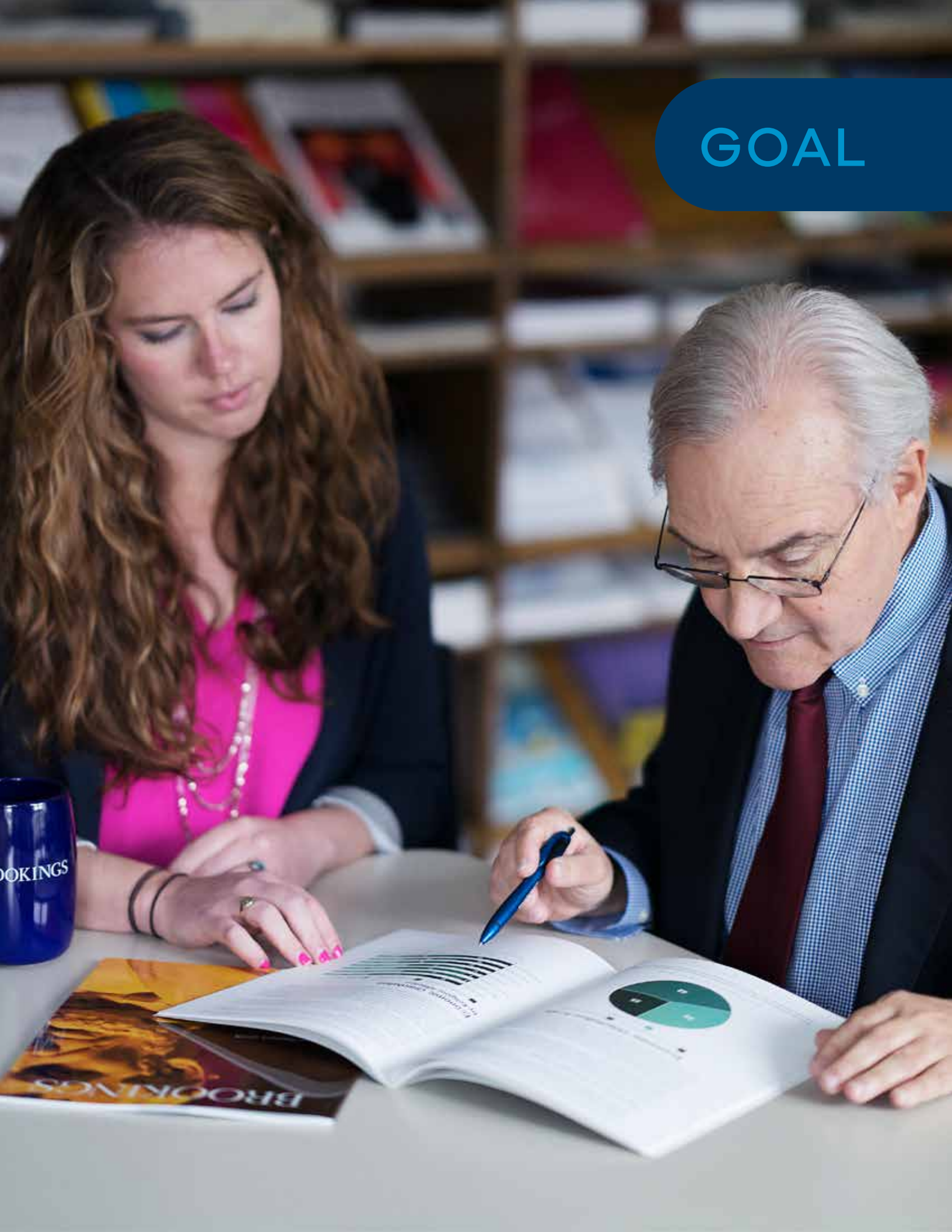
### STRATEGIES:

1. Articulate a clear definition of impact in the twenty-first century for the Institution as a whole and a methodology for promoting impact for scholars, projects, initiatives, research programs, and centers, including those overseas.
2. Identify and procure the tools needed to successfully implement the impact objectives.
3. Develop new and improved capacities to engage wider, more diverse audiences around the world, consistent with the Institution's collective and program-level impact priorities.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Encourage all scholars to identify the policy changes that their research will seek to achieve.
- Identify key target audiences for each program, center, and project and the vehicles to reach them.
- Build an impact plan for those scholars and projects that do not currently have them, including cross-program collaborations.
- Sharpen our branding and messaging.
- Develop and maintain the most effective digital products and other means available for outreach, engaging diverse global audiences.
- Increase visibility among influential audiences through more media partnerships, high-profile events, and targeted outreach to government officials.





## GOAL

## Promote a Culture of Collaboration

Many critical governance problems call for specific expertise, but some of the most complex and pressing governance problems of the twenty-first century call for the utilization of the breadth of expertise across Brookings, concentrating the intellectual firepower within our research programs, and tapping the expertise and experience of external partners.

### STRATEGIES:

1. Focus on the governance challenges that would benefit most from collaborative approaches among scholars, across and within programs and overseas centers, and with external partners.
2. Develop effective and innovative management models that incentivize cross-program work.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a robust “rising stars” fellowships program.
- Promote policy entrepreneurialism and collaboration by supporting and growing the Centennial Scholars Initiative and other cross-program activities.





## GOAL

## Advance Diversity and Inclusion at Brookings

Dealing with the complex, multi-faceted problems of governance in the twenty-first century and engaging new audiences will require a more diverse Brookings community, especially within our scholarly ranks. Women, people of color, and up-and-comers are all underrepresented among our experts. To achieve greater diversity and equity, we will need to raise the visibility of the issue, infuse it into Brookings culture, and find effective ways to intensify recruitment and retention of diverse scholars and staff.

### STRATEGIES:

1. Recruit and retain scholars whose diversity of background and life experience will advance the Institution's knowledge and perspectives on the critical issues of the day.
2. Cultivate a culture of inclusion that will make the Brookings workplace a welcoming environment for all.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Improve the demographic profile of each research program.
- Expand recruiting options and opportunities.
- Enhance the intellectual diversity among scholars.





## GOAL

### Achieve Efficiency and Sustainability While Upholding Our Independence

The success of a strategic plan depends on the achievement of its goals. We must also make certain that the methods and standards we use to govern the Institution are subject to constant self-monitoring, improvement, innovation, and adaptation to a changing environment. That will require modifications in allocation of resources, support services, and hiring practices.

#### STRATEGIES:

1. Maintain the highest commitment to institutional and scholarly independence.
2. Evaluate and improve cost efficiencies across the Institution to support scholars in sustainable ways.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- Establish the best possible policies and practices for the think tank sector's management and independence.
- Strengthen Institutional transparency and accountability.
- Introduce new financial sustainability metrics into research and non-research program budgeting.
- Continuously improve guidelines and policies related to partnerships and gift acceptance.
- Review and update conflict of interest and disclosure requirements for nonresident and resident scholars.
- Refine, develop, and implement development plans to ensure the Institution's liquidity, adaptability, and sustainability.





# BROOKINGS

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## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

The Brookings Institution is led by a management team comprising the president and executive vice president of the Institution, along with the vice presidents of the research programs and non-research programs and the managing director. This group works together to ensure that Brookings is operating efficiently and maintaining the highest standards of quality, independence, and impact in all of its activities.

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