to train mayors nationwide. A separate California trip (he made three during the year) brought faculty members Gary King, Latanya Sweeney, and Alison Simmons together with leaders in Silicon Valley to discuss digital technology, artificial intelligence, and urgent social concerns: privacy, ethical use of algorithms, and the future of work.

That outreach only adds to the president’s expected, and increasingly demanding, role in representing the University and higher education in the political arena. In early summer, Bacow made his seventh trip to Washington, D.C., as Harvard’s leader, during which he has met with about four dozen members of Congress (from both parties) and of the administration. The higher-education agenda encompasses federal support for research and the taxation of endowments, as well as immigration, financial aid, free speech and the diversity of opinions expressed on campuses, and other issues—none of them susceptible of swift resolution.

In conversation, Bacow said he needed to attend to Washington outreach continuously “because so much of the future of higher education rests in the hands of congressional leaders and our government.” From the time of Vannevar Bush’s coordination of research during World War II, spelled out in his 1945 report, Science—The Endless Frontier, Bacow said, the nation has supported a federal partnership with its leading universities. But, he cautioned, “Every so often that partnership is examined, reconsidered, and in some cases, reconstituted.…It feels like this is one such moment.” Airborne members of the community can expect to see their president en route to the capital frequently, because “Harvard needs to be an important part of that conversation.”

Nor will the University go it alone. Bacow has joined the board of the American Council on Education, whose 1,700 members include two- and four-year degree-granting institutions, public and private. It is much broader in scope and reach than, say, the 62-member Association of American Universities. “We can't afford to be seen as standing apart” from community colleges and other entities, he said. “We are all part of the broader community of higher education” at a fraught time, and so he has made that additional commitment.

As he met with and listened to constituents around the world, Bacow said, “I came to understand and appreciate how much at-