The Freeman's Spogli Institute is an institute that touches every school and department at Stanford. And it's designed to help us understand the problems that the world faces.

Our mission at a place like FSI is to truly take knowledge and scholarship into the real world.

We have some of the great thinkers here. We also have some of the great doers.

Truly, what drives me is that. You know the idea that we can make a difference and I think we could make a difference.

Every issue that we work on, security issues affecting global peace and crime, health, economic development and poverty reduction, all those things are affected by how we govern ourselves. By how governance problems are solved.

I think there's a general recognition by economists now that the quality of government is really the central issue determining whether you're going to be rich or poor.

More than 50 percent of all the preventable deaths to children and to women are occurring in places plagued by poor governance, chronic political instability, and outright civil war. We spend a lot of our time in these places trying to develop innovative approaches, trying out new strategies, and working very closely with people from these affected communities. Our work has already changed the fabric of child life in 25 villages in rural Guatemala. We have seen this program reduce severe malnutrition by two-thirds. We've seen the program basically eliminate preventable child death from all the villages.

We also have responsibility to our students to ensure that they don't become complacent. That they see the world that I see.

So I bring a lot of our students to the field with me. I bring them to Guatemala, I've brought them to the favelas in Brazil and I think that just by bringing the students, making them having a connection with the type of dilemmas and challenges that poverty really poses, it's a way of changing their minds.

They realize that the tools they pick up here at Stanford could change the world. And that a key to doing that is to have enough humility to recognize how complicated the world actually is.

The world has changed so profoundly that we've gone from a situation in the mid-1970s where barely a quarter of all the states in the world were electoral democracies to a situation since the mid-1990s where a clear majority of all the governments in the world have been democratic governments.

Democracy is a very fragile institutional arrangement. It can decay even rapidly as a result of bad governance. So if you want to preserve democracy, fight corruption.
People have innate human rights to dignity, to personal freedom, to collective freedom, that no state should be able to take away. Freedom is a basic and essential right of the human spirit.

In the years to come, we'll see FSI more and more engaged on the ground directly with communities and with governments to try and work in very practical ways to empower them and improve their capacity to achieve accountable and effective governance.

We are, here at Stanford, really good at innovation. We're very nimble at creating innovation, trying it out. We're sitting in Silicon Valley. It's part of the DNA of this place.

Our work has relevance in the great challenges and the great problems that the world faces today.

So it's not just academic research that's of interest to other academics, it really is something that hopefully will make a difference out there in the world.

It's naive to think we're going to use the old strategies to address these problems and we're committed to creating new strategies that'll actually work and work on the ground in real situations that'll save the lives of real people.