



Thomas L. Friedman's discovery that the world is flat has undoubtedly been a surprising revelation to quite a few people, although I suspect that most readers of *Journal of Phase Equilibria and Diffusion* were well aware of the phenomenon. From its inception, the Journal has had a distinctly global character, as evidenced by the cover matter of any of its issues. Even the casual reader will most likely notice that the list of contributors to the Journal, as either associate editors or members of the editorial board, is made up of scientists and engineers from 20 different countries. This is healthy, and a sign of a robust and valued publication.

Of course, science knows no territorial borders, and phase equilibria and diffusion are no exception. On the other hand, scientists and engineers can be deeply affected by borders and the ups and downs of diplomatic relations between countries. So, we seem to be living in a world of conflicting tendencies. Over the last few years, an explosion in information technologies has revolutionized the way we do business, teach, conduct research and, in fact, every imaginable human transaction—and nothing seems to indicate that this trend will reverse itself. At the same time, the uncertainties in a world under the threat of mostly unseen or unrecognizable enemies has created an environment where the key component of international relations, namely the exchange of people, has been strained to unprecedented levels. The point of this brief comment is not to even entertain the idea of providing a solution to such a thorny issue. Others can speak with more authority on the subject. Instead, I want to stress the importance of remaining proactive and engaged in sustaining our global network of scientists and engineers. Despite obstacles, our goal remains working toward the creation of new knowledge and understanding for the benefit of society at large.

Technology and geopolitical conflict are two of the forces likely to shape the global research and educational landscape in the foreseeable future. In particular, most would agree that research universities in the United States have played a distinct and prominent role in educating a large number of scholars from around the world. However, the transaction cost to come to the United States has increased sharply in recent years, and, if left alone, the trend clearly points toward a diminishing role of U.S. universities in global education. Unfortunately, these developments are taking place at a time when the need and demand to educate the citizens of the world is growing at an unprecedented rate. The challenge to those engaged in the educational enterprise is to ensure that the landscape of higher education is properly shaped so we can fulfill our goal of delivering education globally.

Technology has provided us with the tools to remain connected and linked, and our privileged position in society has provided us with the voice to make a difference. We must use them both.

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