The University of Vermont

Kirk Dombrowski, PhD
Vice President for Research

May 14, 2021

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
House Science, Space, and Technology Committee

Dear Chairwoman Johnson and Ranking Member Lucas,

We are writing to endorse *H.R. 2225, National Science Foundation (NSF) for the Future Act*. This bold legislation is critical to enhance American competitiveness in science, technology, and innovation. By establishing increased authorized funding and laying out an ambitious vision for the future of NSF's support of fundamental research, education, and infrastructure, this legislation will empower the United States to train and develop a scientific workforce that is prepared to address the challenges required over the remainder of the 21st century.

While there are many provisions within the *NSF for the Future Act* that we support, there are a few we would especially like to see maintained as the bill advances.

- ***Increase in NSF Authorized Funding*** - UVM strongly supports the increased authorization of appropriations for the NSF across both existing activities and the new Directorate for Science and Engineering Solutions, starting at $11.5 billion Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) and increasing each year through FY 2026. This enhanced authorization will enable the NSF to support research and partnerships that will lead to transformational discoveries that would otherwise be impossible.
- ***Establishment of the Directorate for Science and Engineering Solutions*** - UVM strongly supports the bill provisions to establish a new directorate for science and engineering solutions to identify focus areas to guide activities that contribute to a list of societal challenges. UVM has built distinctive research strengths that align with the urgent—and interdependent—need to support the health of the environment and of societies. The new directorate will enable NSF to leverage strengths of institutions like UVM in engineering, machine learning, complex systems to create new knowledge, establish best practices and develop and scale solutions strengths to contemporary challenges including but not limited to climate change, environmental sustainability, and social and economic inequality.
- ***Broadening Participation*** – We appreciate that this bill recognizes the critical need to broaden access to research opportunities, particularly in underserved and rural communities. This is especially important to UVM since over 80% of Vermont's population lives in rural areas and can benefit from the proposed opportunities. Further, we also commend the committee for including authorization for up to $40 million per year to support a planning and capacity building grant program for institutions outside of the top 100 in terms of top Federal R&D expenditures. This program would be highly beneficial, as it will enable institutions like ours to develop necessary capacities, partnerships, and resources to develop a strong scientific workforce.

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We appreciate that the committee has employed a comprehensive stakeholder participation process during the bill's development and that there has been consistent bipartisan support to increase NSF funding. The momentum behind this bill is a positive sign that the role of NSF in establishing the United States as a global leader in science and technology over the past 70 years is broadly recognized and embraced. More importantly, it also signifies that there is broad support to invest in maintaining the U.S. competitive edge in science, technology, and innovation. We look forward to continued engagement as this legislation progresses.

Sincerely,

Kirk Dombrowski
Vice President for Research

Wendy Koenig
Director of Federal and State Relations

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