



April 4, 2006

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein,

On behalf of our respective universities, we are writing to urge you to support the President's proposal to expand support for federal research in the physical sciences and engineering. We are pleased that the President and Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have embraced several innovation initiatives that will enhance California's global leadership.

In both his State of the Union message and his FY 2007 budget, the President proposed an American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI), which includes a substantial funding increase for both the research programs of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science. These two agencies are major supporters of basic research conducted at universities across the nation and are crucial to keeping America on the forefront of technology and economic growth.

The challenge this Nation faces from our competitors abroad is significant and growing. A major development since the mid-1990s has been the rapid emergence of Asian economies outside of Japan as increasingly strong players in the world's research enterprise. South Korea and Taiwan were already well established in particular areas, and Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and others boosted their strength and showed potential for further increases in competitiveness. China is growing at the most rapid pace, and its government has declared education and research to be the strategic engines of sustainable economic development. China has already become an important player in high-technology markets, has attracted the world's major corporations, and in 2004 was the world's largest recipient of foreign direct investment.

As part of our national effort to meet these increasing competitive challenges, we must strengthen our support of our research and education enterprise. As a result we applaud and actively support the ACI and other similar proposals. We hope that increased investment in basic research in the physical sciences and engineering will not only lead to more discoveries but also expand research opportunities for students in these fields, thus helping to produce the next generation of scientists and engineers. Increased appropriations for the NSF and DOE's Office of Science will help maintain America's global leadership in the face of increasingly competitive emerging economies in Asia and elsewhere.

These increases naturally should go hand-in-hand with efforts to increase funding for other basic scientific research as well, including basic research at the National Institutes of Health and the

Department of Defense and the science activities at NASA. These are equally critical components for sustaining and enhancing American competitiveness as is support for federal student aid. Investments in need-based student aid programs should be expanded so that all American students can have the opportunity to attend college. In a competitive world, we need as many science and engineering graduates as possible to ensure America remains an innovation leader.

America's economic future rests on a strong base of research and education. Please support the funding levels for NSF and the DOE Office of Science contained in the American Competitiveness Initiative. We ask that you lend both your voice and your vote to increase financial support for the important research and education programs outlined above.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



David Baltimore  
President  
California Institute of Technology



Steven B. Sample  
President  
University of Southern California



Robert C. Dynes  
President  
University of California



John L. Hennessy  
President  
Stanford University