



2007 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Enhancing American Innovation and Competitiveness

The University of Southern California (USC) is one of the world's leading research institutions and a center of learning and social mobility for the Los Angeles area. In FY 2006, USC received **\$319.3 million** in awards from federal research agencies. USC prides itself on an innovative and collaborative culture wherein interdisciplinary and interdepartmental teams come together to tackle difficult research questions.

These research activities provide a huge contribution to the high-tech economy of Southern California and the nation. In fact, USC is responsible for \$4 billion annually in economic activity in Los Angeles County alone. For every dollar spent by USC in Los Angeles County, an additional 39 cents of economic output was created in the regional economy.

To maintain America's competitive edge in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine, USC urges Congress to consider the following priorities:

- **Support the President's FY 2008 budget request of \$6.4 billion for the National Science Foundation and \$4.4 billion for the Department of Energy's Office of Science**—USC applauds and supports the Congress' decision to increase funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science in FY 2007, and urges continuation on the path towards doubling of basic research in the physical sciences at these key agencies. USC also hopes that NSF's education and human resources activities will grow commensurate with its research accounts.
- **Increase funding for life-saving and economically important biomedical research by providing \$30.7 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**—USC appreciates that Congress provided increased funding for NIH in FY 2007, but is discouraged to learn that the President has proposed to cut the NIH budget by \$310 million (1%) in FY 2008. NIH research both saves lives and contributes significantly to the nation's economic competitiveness. Increasing support for basic research in the physical sciences is important to the economy, but the effects will be muted if it is accompanied by stagnant or declining biomedical research budgets. USC supports a 6.7 % increase in funding for NIH in each of the next three years (FY 2008-2010).

- **Ensure the future of the Department of Defense's basic and applied research portfolio with a 10 % increase in defense research**—Some of the greatest innovations in American history, including the Internet, have resulted from military research within the Department of Defense (DOD). DOD-funded research at USC is leading to medical breakthroughs and improvements in troop readiness. USC is disappointed that the President's FY 2008 request would sharply decrease cutting-edge basic (6.1) research by 8.7% and applied research (6.2) research by 18% across DOD. USC urges Congress to reject these cuts and provide a sustained investment in these research programs, which will lead to technologies that will strengthen and protect our military and stimulate our economy.
- **Sustain investments in the environmental sciences**—Understanding oceans, coastal regions, plate tectonics, climate, and weather are important to U.S. competitiveness. Therefore, USC urges Congress not to neglect the research budgets within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in FY 2008. USC opposes the President's proposed cuts of \$369 million (3%) from the NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and \$6.8 million (0.7%) from USGS.
- **Enact legislation that establishes a strategy for American competitiveness, innovation and STEM workforce**—USC is supportive of the numerous legislative efforts underway that deal with competitiveness, innovation, and STEM workforce. USC hopes that Congress and the White House can come together to answer the call of the National Academies' *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* and other prominent reports to strengthen the nation's research, education and training enterprise.



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Affordability, Accessibility and Accountability in Higher Education

The University of Southern California (USC) is one of the world's leading research institutions and a center of learning and social mobility for the Los Angeles area. USC is firmly committed to providing access to world-class higher education for underrepresented populations and provides financial aid to more than 60% of enrolled students.

USC asks Congress to consider the following priorities:

- **Invest in student aid**—USC applauds Congress' decision to raise the maximum Pell Grant to in FY 2007 and the President's proposal to increase it in FY 2008. We urge support for this important need-based student aid program by raising the maximum award to \$5100 USC urges Congress to reject the President's proposal to eliminate the Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant and Perkins Loan programs. These programs, like the Pell Grant, are essential for low and middle-income students hoping to afford a higher education.
- **Support college access through the TRIO programs**—The TRIO education and outreach programs (including Upward Bound, Talent Search) have a decades-long track record of helping low-income, first-generation students understand, prepare for, and succeed in higher education. USC's TRIO programs serve more than 2,500 students in Los Angeles each year. The university remains concerned about proposals advanced by the Department of Education to require over-recruitment in TRIO Upward Bound programs for the purposes of evaluation.
- **Enact reforms that improve higher education without infringing on institutional autonomy**—USC recognizes and appreciates the fact that higher education must adapt to fit the needs of the nation in the 21st Century. USC hopes that the ongoing process of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act will bring about reforms that help this happen (such as a year-round Pell Grant) without compromising the institutional autonomy that made American higher education great in the first place. USC opposes proposals that would compromise student privacy or establish one-size-fits all standards for transfer-of-credit or accreditation. USC looks forward to working with Congress to find sensible policy solutions on these issues.