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February 24, 2011

The Honorable Harry M. Reid  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders and Appropriations Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

As Congress works towards final Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations legislation, we again urge you to consider the important federal role in supporting graduate education, a key component of our scientific research enterprise and a critical investment in our future. Support for graduate education is essential to producing the highly skilled workforce necessary to enhance U.S. competitiveness in the global economy and to the creation of new knowledge, industries and associated jobs.

H.R. 1 which passed in the House last week would cut funding for the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Energy, as well as the TRIO program at the Department of Education and Educational and Cultural Exchanges at the Department of State. These cuts could mean steep reductions in assistance for graduate students administered by these agencies and we urge you to consider the effect this might have on American competitiveness and innovation.

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The highly-skilled talent that is developed in U.S. graduate schools is increasingly necessary to enhance our economic, social, and creative capacity. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that between 2008-2018 about 2.5 million new jobs will require an advanced degree; those requiring a master's degree are predicted to increase by 18% during this time period and those requiring a doctoral degree by about 17%.

Federal support for graduate education and research has yielded important benefits for our country—particularly in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines. Graduate education in the U.S. also has served as a critical component for fostering international understanding. From the Fulbright Program alone, 20 graduate scholars have gone on to become heads of state in their native countries.

We urge you to maintain support for graduate education programs at the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Energy, and other science agencies. We also would ask you to support graduate education in the humanities and social sciences; we require experts in fields such as history and foreign languages to enhance our understanding of other cultures.

Continued investments in graduate education are critical to our future success in the 21st century global economy. Thank you for your attention to our views.

Regards,



Debra W. Stewart  
President

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