Funding and Legislative Priorities

TWO THOUSAND FIFTEEN

FEDERAL

UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER
The University of Rochester is among the nation’s leading research universities thanks to the path-breaking ideas of our faculty, the achievements of our graduates, the quality of our patient care, the creativity of our artists, federal investments in scientific research and education, and our commitment to community service.

We have grown to be the 8th largest private employer in New York State and the largest private employer in Upstate New York with 26,673 total employees, an increase of 905 employees since last year. Overall, it is estimated we provide a total of 50,300 direct and indirect jobs in the region and $2.8 billion in direct and spillover wages. Since 2005, we have led or facilitated more than $1 billion in capital projects to expand our capacity and support new, innovative programs and services for our students and patients as well as to attract and retain our talented faculty.

This year, we look forward to the grand opening of the new, $145 million Golisano Children’s Hospital at Strong, the largest project in our history, which will offer eight floors and 245,000 square feet of space dedicated to the care of children. As the region’s only academic health center, we are the area’s largest, most comprehensive health care provider, the safety-net for the underserved, and the largest producer of new physicians. Several recent proposals recommending cuts to Graduate Medical Education funding would jeopardize the future of our nation’s health care system and limit our ability and that of other medical centers to expand residency programs to meet demand.

The University has received nearly $2 billion in research funding since 2009, the majority of which comes from federally sponsored research agencies, and has fostered pioneering work in optics, cardiac arrhythmias, medical imaging, LASIK surgery, and vaccine development. We were proud to be named by Nature Biotechnology last year as one of the top 10 universities nationwide in terms of impact of our life sciences research. On a per-faculty basis, we rank among the top 16 universities in the country in sponsored research support per faculty member. As a result, we are among the top 15 institutions in licensing revenue over the last 10 years, and since 1996, 57 companies have been created using University-licensed technologies, of which 38 are still active and 25 located in New York State.

Our Laboratory for Laser Energetics recently completed its 25,000th high energy density physics experiment in support of the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Stockpile Stewardship Program, and continues to be a vital contributor to our national and global security, a critical component to the strategic work on an independent energy future, and an invaluable source of scientific leadership for our nation and economic vitality for this region.

As home to one of the top ten most powerful university-based supercomputing sites in North America and the most advanced computer system dedicated to health research in the nation, we continue to move forward with developing a world-class Institute for Data Science. This year we will open a new 60,000 square foot Institute for Data Science building and expect it to be fully operational by early 2017.

After three years of advocacy from our Congressional delegation and following the recent enactment of the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act, President Obama announced the launch of a new Integrated Photonics Institute for Manufacturing Innovation last year. With the partnership of other leading academic institutions and companies in New York, California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, we were selected a finalist for this competition. As home to the oldest and largest hubs for photonics manufacturing in the U.S., world-class research facilities and programs like the Institute of Optics and the Laboratory for Laser Energetics, and the recipient of three of the President’s four signature advanced manufacturing programs, this region is uniquely positioned to lead a winning consortium that will advance technologies important to national security and make manufacturers more globally competitive.

At the University of Rochester, we are proud of our distinctive position among America’s great research universities, and our opportunity in the 21st century is to accelerate progress by building on our greatest strengths. With stable and sustained public-private investment and collaboration with the federal government, I am confident that the dynamic talents of our faculty, students, and staff will continue to help ensure a vibrant and healthy future for this institution, this community, and our nation.

Joel Seligman
JOEL SELIGMAN
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What is Nuclear Fusion?

Nuclear fusion is the most basic form of energy in the universe, found in the thermonuclear reactions of the sun and the stars. Fusion energy can be used for electricity generation and national security-related applications, and does not produce nuclear waste or enhance nuclear proliferation. Since the fuel source for fusion is water, demonstrating controlled nuclear fusion offers real potential to serve as an affordable, inexhaustible, and carbon and radioactive waste-free energy source. Fusion research is vital to maintaining the reliability and safety of the U.S. nuclear deterrent without the need for full-scale testing.

About the LLE

The LLE is a unique national resource not found at any other university in the country. It is a vital component of our nation’s scientific capital and leadership, and key to strategic work on an independent energy future. The LLE is home to the OMEGA laser, which is the second most powerful ultraviolet fusion laser in the world, and the OMEGA EP (Extended Performance) laser, a high-intensity, high-energy short-pulse laser, and serves as the principal laser research facility for two national laboratories (Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore). As one of the preeminent research facilities for inertial confinement fusion and high-energy density physics research, the LLE serves a critical national security function and is a critical partner in the National Ignition Facility’s using the direct-drive approach to demonstrate inertial fusion. The LLE is also a magnet for scientific talent and one of the leading institutions training the next generation of leaders in the fields of physics, optics, and material science.

Economic Impact

Since its inception, the LLE has attracted almost $2 billion to New York State to support cutting edge research, and around 1,000 individuals are currently involved in the program. Through its National Laser Users Facility, the University attracts as many as 300 additional scientists each year from national laboratories, universities, and companies. Besides payroll and local purchases, the LLE also provides a strong stimulus to the local economy through its advanced technology assets, which help attract and develop new companies and investors to the high-technology sector. QED Technologies, Sydor Instruments LLC, and Lucid, Inc., are just a few of the local companies that were created as a result of the LLE’s technology and research. The LLE is also nationally recognized as the only facility that trains graduate students in inertial confinement fusion and thereby serves as a critical pipeline of future talent that is vitally important to our national and economic security.

FACTS

- The OMEGA EP laser has 2,000 times more power than the entire U.S. electrical grid - making it among the most powerful lasers in the world.
- Scientists estimate that a nuclear fusion power plant could generate 1,000 megawatts of electricity, enough to power one million homes.
- QED Technologies, Sydor Instruments, and Lucid, Inc. are just a few of the local companies that were created – and continue to benefit us – as a result of LLE’s technology and research.

2015 Request:

We thank our Congressional delegation for securing $68 million for the LLE in FY15. In FY16, the LLE seeks $71,027,255 to support its research programs and to operate at sufficient capacity to support the Department of Energy’s Stockpile Stewardship Program’s Inertial Confinement Fusion (ICF) and High-Energy Density Physics (HEDP) programs. Continued federal investment in the LLE will advance the nation’s scientific leadership, strengthen our national security, support efforts to find an affordable, plentiful, and efficient source of energy for the future, and lead to the development of new technologies.
Invest in High-Quality Health Care

UR Medicine has grown to include Strong Memorial, Highland, and F.F. Thompson Hospitals, Strong West in Brockport, and active working relationships with St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell, Noyes Memorial Hospital in Dansville, Jones Memorial Hospital in Wellsville, Wyoming County Community Health System in Warsaw, and others. We are the safety-net provider and the largest, most specialized academic health care system in upstate New York. The reimbursement we receive from Medicare and Medicaid, including critical adjustments for Graduate Medical Education (GME), Medicare bad debt payments, Medicaid provider assessments, and Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments, affects our clinical margins and our ability to train the next generation of physicians.

UR Medicine helps anchor the region’s innovative, cooperative approach to health care financing and delivery that has resulted in costs that are 20% below the national average with excellent quality and access. A recent Institute of Medicine report highlighted Rochester’s annual cost-per-Medicare beneficiary as the lowest in the country.

Protect Funding for Medicare and Medicaid

Reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid already falls short of actual patient care costs. In recent years, UR Medicine has undergone several rounds of funding cuts at the federal and state levels and anticipate more than $220 million in reductions from implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), plus additional cuts from sequestration. Further cuts will limit access to care for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and leave us less able to serve patients who cannot afford cost-sharing requirements. As delivery system reform is implemented, we urge Congress to provide relief from DSH reductions in the first two years, and support a new payment methodology for short inpatient stays impacted by the “two midnight” rule.

Protect Graduate Medical Education

In recent months, a number of plans aimed at reducing the deficit and modifying entitlements have proposed reductions to GME, which is essential for training new physicians and ensuring continued access to high-quality patient care. Experts indicate that the nation could face a shortage of at least 130,000 doctors by 2025 due to the expansion of health coverage. Strong Memorial Hospital receives $55.6 million in Indirect Medical Education (IME) and $16.2 million in Direct Graduate Medical Education (DGME) funding, totaling $72 million annually. As the largest source of new physicians in this region, the School of Medicine and Dentistry trains 600 medical residents, 150 fellows, 400 undergraduate medical students, and 450 doctoral students per year, more than 40% of whom remain in the area for their first professional position, enabling Rochester so far to avoid the severe physician shortages experienced elsewhere. Oppose reductions in Medicare funding for GME.

Provide a Long-Term Fix for the Sustainable Growth Rate

The uncertainty of the Medicare physician reimbursement formula, or SGR, has a great effect on the ability of providers at UR Medicine to render quality care to some of our most vulnerable citizens. As physician integration efforts become more prevalent, adequate payment for professional services furnished by physicians and nurse practitioners is increasingly important to hospitals. On April 1, 2015, physicians will once again face a significant decline in Medicare payments due to the flawed SGR formula. We urge Congress to find a permanent solution to the Medicare physician payment formula, and strongly oppose additional hospital payment reductions as an offset to pay for the SGR fix.

Increase Medicare Residency Slots

As health care reform is implemented, 32 million more Americans are expected to have health insurance and will be eligible for medical care, adding pressure to an already overburdened physician workforce. Many medical schools are increasing class sizes to accommodate these changes in our nation’s healthcare needs, but limits on the number of Medicare-funded residency training slots constrains our ability to train new physicians. In academic year, Strong Memorial and Highland Hospitals trained a total of 600 resident physicians; however under the residency slots cap instituted in 1996, Medicare will provide reimbursement only for training 505 of those residents. Please support the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act to increase the number of Medicare-supported residency slots.

FACTS

- Medicare pays only $.90 on the dollar toward patient costs and reimburses only 70% of bad debt payments, while Medicaid pays only $.89 on the dollar toward patient costs.

- Nearly 10,000 residents, or 15% of the total resident physicians in the country, are being trained in New York State.
Protect the 340B Drug Discount Program

The 340B Program requires drug manufacturers to provide covered outpatient drugs to designated safety-net providers, including Strong Memorial and Highland Hospitals, at a reduced price. This program, which is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) but does not come at a cost to the federal government, enables Strong and Highland to stretch resources, reach more patients, and provide more comprehensive services. At Strong, the savings that result from 340B helps fund a robust charity care program, several specialized patient pharmacies, and provide financial support to the organ transplant program. We urge Congress to support the Secretary of Health and Human Services’ continued work to ensure the viability of this critical program for low-income and other vulnerable patient populations.

Funding for Ebola Preparedness

An increasing number of U.S. hospitals are now equipped to treat patients with Ebola, boosting Ebola treatment readiness across the country. The University of Rochester’s Strong Memorial Hospital was designated by New York State as one of ten facilities ready to take patients with the Ebola virus, and has undergone tremendous efforts to prepare the staff and facility. It would cost SMH nearly $4 million to fully implement and provide care to patients. We are grateful for the Ebola funding secured for New York, and urge our delegation to ensure future funding to support the added expenses and responsibilities that designated Ebola treatment facilities have been asked to assume, and ensure we have the resources, information, and support needed to respond to this crisis.

Support the Student Worker Exemption Act

The ACA mandates that employers with more than 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, including colleges and universities, offer health insurance to nearly all employees – including student employees – working 30 or more hours per week, beginning in 2016. Such a requirement would inflict significant budgetary and administrative burdens and require the nearly impossible task of separating graduate student work done for a degree from “employment” work done for the University. Our students already have access to affordable health care coverage through a variety of means, including the University-sponsored student plan, which costs one-third of an employee plan, with comparable coverage. Please cosponsor the Student Worker Exemption Act (H.R. 210) to exempt full-time students from the ACA’s employer mandate.

Support Health Professions and Nursing Education

As our nation transforms its health care system, substantial investment is needed to build a strong workforce to ensure access to health care services. HRSA’s health professions and nursing programs, authorized under Title VII and Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, provide educational and training opportunities to a wide variety of health professionals and students, preparing them for career opportunities in the health professions and bringing health care services to rural and underserved communities. With a focus on primary care and training in interdisciplinary, community-based settings, Title VII and VIII are the only federal programs focused on filling gaps in the supply of health professionals not met by traditional market forces. Please provide at least $280 million for Title VII and $244 million for Title VIII in FY16.

FACTS

- UR Medicine provided $70 million in uncompensated care last year.
- Strong Memorial Hospital saves 35% on outpatient pharmaceutical costs thanks to 340B, and Highland Hospital saves 15%.
- In FY13, the University received more than $1.9 million through Title VII and $252,000 in Title VIII funding for nursing workforce geriatric education as part of a three-year, $800,000 grant.
Support University-Based Scientific Research

After World War II and the launch of Sputnik, our nation demonstrated that science can provide solutions to societal challenges related to health, security, technology, the economy, and the environment. Products ranging from MRI machines and GPS, to the Internet, smartphones and tablets, to vaccines and cures, all grew out of federally funded research.

Federal investment in scientific research has eroded in the past decade. Combined with further unrecovered losses from sequestration, these cuts are devastating the U.S. research enterprise, resulting in eliminated jobs, closed labs and facilities, and postponed development of new technologies, treatments, and cures. We applaud Congress’ efforts to pause sequestration in 2014 and 2015, but without further action, we will once again face these cuts next year. Stable and sustained growth in scientific research funding is essential to addressing the fundamental issues our society faces, such as energy, lagging economic growth, national security, and disease.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Biomedical research funded by the NIH and performed at research universities saves lives. It also assures U.S. leadership in the life sciences revolution of the 21st century. Today’s investment in biomedical research funded by the NIH will enable research universities to pursue scientific opportunity, advance public health, and create jobs and economic growth. NIH funding helps support 300,000 scientists at research institutions in all 50 states, and each of its research grants sustains six to eight jobs. A report by United for Medical Research showed that in 2012 alone, NIH funding generated nearly $60 billion in economic output. Support at least $32 billion for the NIH in FY16.

DID YOU KNOW: In 2013, the NIH awarded $23 million to a multi-site study led by URMC to determine whether a drug currently used to treat high blood pressure can slow the progression of Parkinson’s disease.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

The NSF is the cornerstone of America’s basic research enterprise. It is the only federal research agency charged with the promotion of scientific progress across all the science and engineering disciplines, and is the leader among federal agencies in its support and commitment to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Through fundamental interdisciplinary, high-risk, and transformative research and education, NSF-funded research has led to fiber optics, life-saving vaccines, the Internet, nanotechnology, and many other advances. Robust and sustained support for NSF will help address the backlog of highly-rated research proposals that have not been supported due to insufficient funding. Please provide $7.7 billion for the NSF in FY16.

DID YOU KNOW: In 2013, a UR professor was awarded a five year, $950,000 NSF CAREER Award to help fund research into protein folding, which may provide fundamental insights into Mad Cow and other neurodegenerative diseases.

Department of Energy (DOE)

The DOE’s Office of Science is the leading source of federal funds and facilities for research in the physical sciences, including fields such as high energy physics and fusion, which provide support to the University’s LLE. The DOE’s Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) plays a significant role in supporting high-risk, high-reward energy research that is unlikely to be supported by industry or other parts of DOE, but which have the potential to dramatically change how we acquire energy in the future. The DOE provides crucial support for university research and students, sponsoring 50% of all university physics research and support staff at more than 300 institutions. Provide at least $5.34 billion for the Department of Energy Office of Science, $325 million for the ARPA-E program, and additional support for the the Office of Fusion Energy Science, which funds the Fusion Science Center for Extreme States of Matter at the University’s LLE.

DID YOU KNOW: UR is host to the DOE’s National Laser Users’ Facility, a peer-reviewed program for scientists from academia and industry to conduct fundamental science experiments, located at the LLE’s Omega Laser Facility.

Department of Defense (DoD)

Defense 6.1 basic research programs support cutting-edge scientific and engineering research as well as undergraduate scholarships, graduate research assistantships, and fellowships that maintain our military superiority and strengthen our nation’s scientific and technical workforce. Emphasis must be placed on the Pentagon’s multi-year peer-reviewed basic research initiative, as it is in-line with recommendations made by the National Academies’ report, Rising Above the Gathering Storm, which calls for an increase of $1 billion in Defense 6.1 basic research funding over five years. Support at least $2.43 billion in funding for Defense 6.1 basic research in FY16 and $12.8 billion for Defense Science and Technology (S&T).

DID YOU KNOW: UR’s Department of Biomedical Engineering received a 2-year DoD IDEA Expansion Grant for $575,000 to investigate what activates tumor cells to help develop new therapies to treat metastatic breast cancer.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

For the last 56 years, NASA has captivated the public with accomplishments that have revolutionized our understanding of earth and space science, the life sciences, and aeronautics, and have led to much new technological advancement. In addition to the space program and mission directorates, NASA’s university-based programs help educate America’s future technological and scientific workforce. Support robust funding for NASA and appropriate at least $5.5 billion for Science, $594 million for Aeronautics, and $724.88 million for Space Technology.

DID YOU KNOW: NASA-funded research is behind the development of protective eyewear, including cell phone cameras, solar panels, the MRI and CAT scans, the computer mouse, baby formula, UV sunglasses, and artificial limbs.
In order for our nation to remain a global leader in technological and scientific innovation, we must ensure all students have the opportunity to pursue high-quality higher education through access to student aid. Last year, with the assistance of Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work-Study, and other forms of state and federal aid, more than one million American students earned degrees and are contributing to our economy.

**Support for Student Aid**

Supporting Pell Grants
The Federal Pell Grant Program provides critical need-based grants to low-income undergraduate students who might otherwise not have access to high-quality postsecondary education. At the University of Rochester, 1,065 students are receiving assistance through the Pell Grant program in the 2014-2015 school year, with an average award of $4,225. Maintain the discretionary base of $4,860 and mandatory funding streams to allow the scheduled increase in the maximum Pell Grant to $5,915 and ensure any surplus remains in the program.

Supporting Federal Work-Study (FWS)
Federal Work-Study helps students finance the cost of college through part-time employment. In the current academic year, the University of Rochester received $765,000 through FWS, which supports 900 work-study positions with wages paid to students totaling $1.4 million. More than 30% of UR's FWS funds help support the Career Services Job Location and Development Program, and UReading, a tutoring and mentoring program that pairs undergraduates with preschool and kindergarten students from the Rochester City School District. Provide at least $990 million for FWS in FY16.

Supporting Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and GEARUP
SEOG and GEAR UP provide grants to low- and middle-income students and fund programs that help at-risk students get into and stay in college, ultimately helping to increase the share of our nation's workforce holding college or advanced degrees. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the University of Rochester received $551,000 in federal funding for SEOG, providing 985 students with an average award of $560. Support $735 million for SEOG and $323 million for GEAR UP in FY16.

Supporting funding for TRIO
Federal Funding for Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math Science, McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement, and other TRIO programs provide vital outreach and student support services for low-income, minority, and potential first-generation college students. The University of Rochester's highly successful Upward Bound programs provide academic support to more than 100 students in the Rochester City School District through college-preparation and academic activities. Support $860 million for TRIO in FY16.

**UR Facts**
- 20% of UR students are eligible for and receive assistance through the Pell Grant program.
- 85% of UR students receive institutional grants or scholarships toward the cost of college.
- 96% of UR’s Upward Bound students enroll in college.
- Last year, the University of Rochester provided $96 million in institutional aid to students.
Support a Higher Education Act (HEA) Reauthorization that Improves Access and Streamlines Regulation

Since 1965, the HEA has been a critical vehicle for expanding access to postsecondary education for low- and middle-income Americans. As policymakers prepare to renew the HEA, we urge Congress to seek legislation that complements our efforts to make high-quality postsecondary education accessible, provide students with a world-class academic experience, and educate future leaders. Reform should enhance college access; promote college completion; support effective assessment of student achievement; promote innovation; elevate graduate education; ensure appropriate accountability; and back consumer disclosure tools, such as a streamlined FAFSA form to better help students and their families understand their educational options and the value of a college degree. We also encourage Congress to support legislation that eliminates the excessive regulatory burden and streamlines duplicative reporting requirements for colleges and universities.

Support the Department of Education International Education Programs

The Department of Education’s International Education and Foreign Language programs play a critical role in supporting our nation’s long-term national security, global leadership, and economic competitiveness. Successful U.S. engagement in these areas at home or abroad relies on Americans with global competence. Returning these programs to pre-sequester funding levels would allow their activities to continue uninterrupted, helping to address the nation’s need for a steady supply of graduates with expertise in less commonly taught languages, world areas, and transnational trends. Support at least $76 million for the Department of Education’s International Education and Foreign Language programs in FY16.

Support the National Endowment for the Arts

NEA grants have a powerful multiplying effect, with each grant dollar typically matched by nine dollars of additional investments in this country’s nonprofit arts organizations. NEA programs encourage creativity through support for performances, exhibitions, festivals, artist residencies, and other art projects throughout the country in a variety of disciplines that have a great impact on art education and local economies. Support at least $155 million in FY16 for the NEA to ensure sufficient support for the NEA’s grant-making programs.

Support the National Endowment for the Humanities

The humanities programs funded by the NEH are vital to ensuring that America can compete successfully in a global economy and advance sound public policy to address the challenges of the 21st century. These programs stimulate the creativity and innovation that have brought world leaderships and underlie the cultural intelligence that buttresses successful diplomacy. Support at least $155 million for the NEH in FY16.

Support Graduate Education Programs

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) provides fellowships to help exceptional graduate students pursue the highest degree available in a field designated as an area of national need and ensures a pipeline of talented experts and educators to fuel our 21st century workforce. At the University of Rochester, the departments of chemistry, nursing, optics, and physics have been identified as high-needs disciplines. Support at least $31 million in funding for the GAANN Program in FY16.

Support Programs to Assist Students with Developmental and Other Disabilities

UR’s Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), a Department of Health and Human Services University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), provides collaborative, interdisciplinary education and training to people with disabilities. SCDD’s Institute for Innovative Transition, with funding from the Department of Education’s Transition and Post-Secondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) program, supports 75 students with intellectual disabilities as they transition to adulthood through access to higher education, vocational training, and job placement. UR is also a longtime participant in the HHS Leadership in Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities and Related Disorders (LEND) program, providing graduate level training for the care of children and youth with brain and nervous system disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders. Please provide at least $38 million for UCEDD, $28 million for LEND, and $12 million for TPSID in FY16.

FACTS

- Since 2006, UR’s School of Nursing has received more than $1 million through the GAANN program to fund scholarships and increase the number of nursing faculty with doctoral degrees.
- In 2014, UR’s Open Letter program received $60,000 through the NEA – one of the largest grants of its kind – to support the translation, publication, and promotion of several books of international and local importance.
- The Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities provides services to more than 3,000 individuals and families each year.
Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

A well-functioning immigration system is critical to our nation’s ability to grow its economy, strengthen families and communities, and uphold American values. It is also key to the continued success and prominence of the U.S. higher education system. Institutions such as the University of Rochester play a significant role in the education and training of international students and the recruitment of top scientists and researchers who help fuel discovery and advance scientific research.

Case for Action
International students build bridges between the United States and other countries. They bring global perspectives to U.S. classrooms and research labs, and support American innovation through technology development that impacts our economy with the creation of new businesses and jobs. According to a survey by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, foreign students and their dependents contributed $26.8 billion to the U.S. economy during 2013-2014 academic year for living expenses, books and supplies, transportation, health insurance, and support for accompanying family members.

Support for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
Comprehensive immigration reform is essential to realizing the full economic, scientific, and cultural contributions international students, scholars, and researchers bring to this country. While the executive actions announced by President Obama are an important first step, comprehensive immigration reform legislation is needed to establish a clear path to green card status for advanced STEM degree graduates of U.S. colleges and universities, streamline the H-1B temporary worker program, and remove barriers to higher education and provide a clear path to citizenship for undocumented students through the DREAM Act, along with fair and just border security practices. We urge Congress to pass comprehensive reform legislation so that our nation can attract and retain top talent from around the world.

Extend Dual Intent to Foreign Students
Before even beginning their studies, current law requires foreign students to declare they have no intention of staying or working here after graduation. As a result, an increasing number of foreign students are choosing to study in other countries with less restrictive immigration policies, such as Canada, and the U.S. loses out on the opportunity to benefit from their talent. Dual intent should be expanded to include all foreign students studying for a bachelor’s degree or higher. Expand dual intent to allow international students on F-1 visas to remain in the U.S. to utilize their skills after completing their degrees, rather than return home to compete against the U.S.

Streamline Path to Green Card Status for U.S.-Educated Advanced STEM Graduates
There are not enough green cards available to meet our country’s needs. For example, only 140,000 employment-based green cards are available annually. We can no longer afford to turn away talented individuals or make them wait decades to obtain a green card. Expand the green card program and establish a clear path to green card status for advanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree graduates of U.S. colleges and universities to allow the “best and brightest” to remain here to utilize their skills and contribute to our economy.

Minimize Administrative Burden on Campuses
Foreign students are among the most scrutinized non-immigrant visa holders. Colleges and universities have long been required to maintain certain information on foreign students, but policies such as the recent rule changes to the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program and F-1 Student Visa Recertification process will place undue burden on institutions such as the University of Rochester. We urge the Administration to exempt accredited institutions in good standing from these additional administrative requirements, and ensure adequate support staff at the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to assist universities with existing requirements.

Support Smart Enforcement Policies
Border security and interior enforcement are essential to a functioning immigration system and our national security, but must be done both smartly and effectively so as to ensure public safety in a fair and just manner. In recent years, checks and detentions of our foreign students, researchers and faculty who are in the United States legally have caused undue hardships and create an unfriendly environment that disrupts research and education activities at the University. We commend the Administration for moving the focus of security efforts away from interior areas such as Rochester that pose less of a risk and urge continued cooperation and communication between the University’s International Services Office and the U.S. Border Patrol to mitigate improper detentions of our students, faculty, and staff.

FACTS

- UR currently sponsors 2,373 international students, 480 international scholars and employees, and their dependent spouses and children.
- Our international student population has increased 61% since 2008.
- International students contributed $3.3 billion to the New York State’s economy in 2013.
- The U.S. has lost nearly 10% of its market share of international students due to increased competition from other countries with friendlier immigration policies.
Support a New York State-Led Integrated Photonics Institute for Manufacturing Innovation

After three years of advocacy and support from our Congressional delegation and thanks to the recent enactment of the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act, President Obama announced the launch of a new Integrated Photonics Institute for Manufacturing Innovation and the commitment of $110 million in federal funding for the institute on October 3, 2014. In January, a concept paper submitted by a collection of leading academic institutions and companies from New York, including the University of Rochester, California, Massachusetts, and Arizona, was selected as one of three finalists by the Department of Defense. Full proposals are due on March 31, 2015 and a winning application is expected to be announced in June 2015.

University of Rochester and Advanced Manufacturing in the Finger Lakes Region

The University is committed to helping rebuild the upstate New York economy and the optics, photonics, and imaging manufacturing sector of the Rochester economy, as well as preserve and revitalize Eastman Business Park – one of the largest industrial parks in the nation. From our Institute of Optics to our Laboratory for Laser Energetics, the University of Rochester is a world leader in advancing the optics and photonics industry, stimulating innovation, and educating a highly skilled workforce in these fields.

The Rochester-Finger Lakes region is an internationally recognized center for optics, photonics, and imaging innovation, and has the ability to lend its strengths to lead our nation in areas such as national defense, healthcare, high speed data communication, precision metrology, and energy. Today, there are more than 60 companies in the region, including Kodak, Xerox, B&L, ITT Exelis, and Carestream, employing 24,000 people covering everything from basic optics and photonics to imaging and display applications. In 2010, the cluster manufactured more than $5 billion in goods, making up more than 50% of the region’s total manufacturing output and nearly 10% of all of New York State’s output. Industry support and growth is fueled, in part, by strong academic support by significant grants awarded by the Departments of Commerce and Defense, among others. Also in May, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) awarded $500,000 to the UR to lead the development of a national roadmap for photonics to strengthen the competitiveness of photonics manufacturing in New York State and across the nation.

As home to the oldest and largest hubs for photonics manufacturing in NYS and the recipient of three grants awarded under the EDA’s Advanced Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge. This three-year $2.6 million program, entitled the Rochester Regional Photonics Accelerator, leverages regional strengths in education, workforce training, technology development, and incubation to accelerate the growth of the optics, photonics, and imagining companies and stop the net loss of jobs stemming from the downsizing of some larger companies in the area. In May 2014, the Rochester/Finger Lakes region was one of only 12 communities in the nation to be designated a “manufacturing community” by President Obama through his Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership Program (IMCP), which provides the region preferential status for economic development grants awarded by the Departments of Commerce and Defense, among others. Also in May, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) awarded $500,000 to the UR to lead the development of a national roadmap for photonics to strengthen the competitiveness of photonics manufacturing in New York State and across the nation.

We urge our Congressional delegation to contact the Administration in support of our IP-IMI application. As home to the oldest and largest hubs for photonics manufacturing in the U.S. and the recipient of three out of the President’s four signature advanced manufacturing programs, this region is uniquely positioned to lead a winning consortium that will advance technologies important to national security and make manufacturers more globally competitive.

FACTS

- NIST awarded $500,000 to the UR to lead the development of a national roadmap for photonics to strengthen the competitiveness of photonics manufacturing in NYS and across the nation.
- In 2012, a University-led consortium was selected for one of 10 grants awarded under the EDA’s Advanced Manufacturing Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge.
- In 2014, the region was named a “manufacturing community” as part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) Program.