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May 27, 2011

The Honorable Richard Burr  
United States Senate  
217 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

As Congress turns its attention to the Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations process, I write on behalf of Duke University to urge your consideration of specific federal funding priorities for the upcoming budget cycle. The country's fiscal situation is at a crossroads, and one cannot begin any discussion about the budget without first acknowledging the debt crisis. Putting the nation on a sustainable path forward will require sacrifice and well-informed choices about how to allocate federal resources. This situation puts a premium on programs that spur economic growth and build the human and technological capital upon which we can build a better and more fiscally solvent America.

Universities are a key producer of a well-trained workforce and innovative technologies, a role we relish but can only successfully execute through our long-standing partnership with the federal government. Through well-conceived federal programs and policies, universities train scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs who conduct cutting-edge research that has translated into technologies that have revolutionized society. I have enclosed several one-page illustrations prepared by the Association of American Universities that highlight the role basic research has played in the development of some of our more ubiquitous technologies. Unheard-of a decade or so ago, these breakthroughs have saved lives, improved our daily routines, and resulted in the creation of new jobs and economies – all through federal investments in university-based scientific research.

As we look forward to the Fiscal Year 2012 budget and beyond, we must continue to make education and scientific research a national priority. Our ability to overcome the global challenges of the future is directly tied to the quality and competitiveness of our human capital and our capacity to out-innovate our rivals. Building and maintaining our innovation pipeline is a long-term endeavor that requires steady and sustained growth.

**To that end, I urge your support for the competitively awarded research grant programs at the federal agencies.** Specifically, we recommend funding the following research agencies at these levels:

- National Institutes of Health: \$31.7 billion
- National Science Foundation: \$7.7 billion
- Department of Energy Office of Science: at least \$5.4 billion
- Department of Defense 6.1 Basic Research Account: \$2.08 billion
- National Endowment for the Humanities: \$167 million

Together, these merit-based, peer-reviewed grant programs are the foundations of the nation's research enterprise, providing nearly 59 percent of funding for basic research across the country. Duke University is fortunate to be a leading recipient of federal research dollars, further boosting North Carolina's innovation economy and contributing to our state's leadership in this area.

The programs also represent a cross-section of research disciplines. We must recognize that the major societal issues of today and tomorrow require a coordinated approach, utilizing multiple perspectives. Infectious diseases require the attention of microbiologists working in conjunction with sociologists; energy issues need engineers working with economists. Investments in individuals are also critical in ensuring our economic competitiveness. All of these agencies support graduate students, who are at the core of university labs and will be the future scientific and engineering leaders of our workforce.

**In addition, I urge your support for Department of Education programs important to higher education.**

- Maintain the Pell Grant maximum award level of \$5,550
- Level-fund campus-based aid programs that complement the Pell and federal loan programs
- Retain the graduate interest loan subsidy, proposed to be eliminated by the President.

I do not envy the difficult budget decisions facing you and your colleagues. As you embark on this task, I respectfully request you take these recommendations into consideration as you communicate your FY 12 funding priorities to the Appropriations Committee. My colleagues and I at Duke University stand ready to be a resource and urge you contact us if there is any way in which we may be helpful.

With best wishes,



Richard H. Brodhead

cc: Michael Schoenfeld  
Chris Simmons

Enclosures (3)