

Press Release

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For Immediate Release
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SURA President Applauds Congressman Wolf's Leadership

Washington, DC – The President and CEO of the Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) today praised the leadership of Representative Frank R. Wolf, House Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman for science funding, for his “efforts to ensure that the United States builds its future economic prosperity through sustained investments in science and innovation.”

In a letter to Congressman Wolf, Dr. Jerry P. Draayer wrote that the Chairman’s “support for a significant increase in federal research and development investment and your efforts to work with the Administration to reverse the trends that will lessen America’s intellectual and innovative strength are greatly appreciated.” Representative Wolf this week called on the President to support tripling the nation’s research and development budget over the next decade.

Draayer’s letter also pointed out the trends that support the Congressman’s “dramatic call-to-arms.” He noted SURA’s participation in the Task Force on the Future of American Innovation – a consortium of 23 academic, industrial, and research organization and business – which issued a report February 16 entitled, “The Knowledge Economy: Is the United States Losing Its Competitive Edge?” Among the trends Draayer noted were:

- The proportion of U.S. graduates in science and engineering (S&E) has declined by 10 percent from 1994 to 2001, while the number of foreign born students has increased by 25 percent.
- The U.S. share of S&E papers published worldwide has decreased from 38 percent in 1988 to 31 percent in 2001.
- The U.S. patent application growth rate was only 116 percent from 1989 to 2001, compared to the five fastest growing Asian nation’s rate of 759 percent.
- And the U.S. total R&D investment grew at a rate of only 34 percent from 1995 to 2001, compared to China, South Korea and Taiwan, which increased R&D by 140 percent.

In his May 3 letter to President Bush, Representative Wolf wrote, “I urge you to seize this opportunity to rally our nation to the cause of innovation and stand ready to assist you in this 21st century challenge.” He concluded by stating, “the competitive and economic future of America is at stake.”

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The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit www.sura.org.