

Opening Statement
The Honorable Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education
Committee on Science and Technology
The National Science Foundation's FY 2011 Budget Request

March 10, 2010

In the fiscal year 2011 budget request, the Administration has requested substantial increases in funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF). I am pleased the funding request continues the Foundation on a path to doubling its budget, although that path has had a rather bumpy start over the last several years.

The budget request proposes some targeted investments at the NSF in the areas of innovation, cyberlearning, and graduate education. It also proposes some restructuring of the programs targeted at broadening participation at the undergraduate levels in science and engineering. I look forward to learning more about these proposals from our witnesses today.

Finally, I am disappointed with the funding provided in the request for K-12 educational activities within the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate. Although the NSF has defended the successes of the Math and Science Partnerships program, no increase is requested for this program, or for the Noyce Program, which also focuses on training teachers for K-12 positions. Several other programs focused on our innovative workforce, such as the Advanced Technological Education program, are also flat-funded. As we consider reauthorization of the COMPETES Act, these NSF programs have the potential to make great impacts on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education in this country. The current budget, despite providing for the doubling of the overall NSF budget, does not emphasize the importance of STEM education to our country's economic competitiveness.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about the new initiatives proposed in the FY11 budget and how we can work together to strengthen the COMPETES Act.