

Opening Statement of
The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education
Committee on Science and Technology
Broadening Participation in STEM
March 16, 2010

Today's hearing is an opportunity to gain insight into how Congress can support participation of underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering and math. While we have had success with some of the federal programs targeted at attracting and retaining these students in STEM, the overall numbers are still discouraging. Strengthening STEM education is essential to the future of American economic competitiveness, and the lack of underrepresented minority participation in these areas is a great hindrance that must be remedied.

The National Science Foundation has requested almost \$800 million in fiscal year 2011 for programs with a specific focus or an emphasis on broadening the participation of underrepresented groups in STEM education and research. I am curious to learn how program successes can be leveraged, and what changes are needed for us to consider.

It is my hope that the witnesses testifying today will offer this Committee insight into ways to better support STEM education for all students as we continue to explore the appropriate federal role. I look forward to the testimony of our distinguished panel, and I thank them for being here.