

Florida Technology, Research, and Scholarship Board
Florida Education Center, Suite 1614, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399
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April 16, 2008

Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor
Board of Governors
State University System of Florida
Florida Education Center, Suite 1614
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Chancellor Rosenberg:

On April 9, 2008, the Florida Technology, Research, and Scholarship Board (FTRSB) met to consider awards for Centers of Excellence per its authority provided in Section 1004.226, Florida Statutes. As you are aware, the FTRSB spent a great deal of care at the outset of this year's award cycle in order to improve its methodology for making recommendations to the Board of Governors. Those improvements included reconsideration of award criteria, inclusion of changes to the Request for Proposal documentation, utilization of nationally recognized external consultants to review proposals as to their scientific validity and prospects for contribution to economic development, and implementation of an extended timeline to accommodate both the external review and the building of more thoughtful proposals.

The April 9 meeting, hosted by the University of South Florida, was very well attended and highly successful. The FTRSB was especially gratified by the many commendations made as to the improved process.

The FTRSB received a total of 41 proposals, several of which were viable contenders for awards. Subsequent to the report generation and on-site presentation of our external reviewers, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, the on-site participation by institutional representatives, and the Board's public deliberations, the FTRSB submits the following recommendations for Board of Governors' consideration:

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The Florida International University **Center of Excellence for Hurricane Damage Mitigation and Product Development** is recommended for full funding at \$10,006,955. This was the highest ranked proposal reviewed by the Board.

The Florida State University **Center for Advanced Aero-Propulsion** is recommended for full funding at \$14,570,225.

The University of Florida **Consortium for Integrated Nano-manufacturing Development** is recommended for full funding at \$20,000,000.

The University of Central Florida **Center of Excellence for Green Biotechnology** is recommended for full funding at \$10,000,000.

The H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute **Center of Excellence in Personalized Diagnostics for Cancer** is recommended for partial funding at \$11,000,000.

The University of South Florida and University of Central Florida **Florida Imaging and Recognition Systems and Technology Center of Excellence** is recommended for partial funding at \$10,888,184.

The University of South Florida **Center for Research and Education in Applied Multifunctional Materials for Manufacture** is recommended for partial funding at \$10,888,183.

These seven centers represent a diverse mix of cutting edge areas of critical importance to Florida: disaster preparedness, aerospace, materials science and engineering, bio-energy, cancer research, and computer science. Further, these research foci respond to the Board of Governors' urging that its institutions develop niche areas in which they can compete on a global scale. The FTRSB was unanimous in making the above recommendations and confident that these Centers of Excellence will make an important contribution to transforming Florida's economy at a time when it is most needed.

The FTRSB understands that the Florida Legislature is considering the redirection of much of the funding initially appropriated to implement the Centers of Excellence program. We urge that the Legislature reconsider any redirection. The FTRSB

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considered proposals by means of a transparent process involving a nationally prominent consortium of peer reviewers. A strong message will be sent to Florida's (and the Nation's) research community if a statutorily created competitive process, into which so much work has gone, is disregarded. Furthermore, there are dozens of public-private business and research partnerships contingent on the funding of the recommended centers. By not making these awards, the State will lose millions of dollars in economic development associated with emerging technologies at a time when it can ill-afford to do so.

It is the FTRSB's unanimous recommendation that if all seven recommended Centers of Excellence cannot be funded due to legislative redirection of resources, the Board of Governors consider geographic and institutional distribution, in the event that it is able to make awards with any non-redirectioned funds. In so doing, it is recommended that the Board of Governors consider any institutions receiving legislatively redirectioned funds only after considering any institutions that did not.

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to participate in this important program. We are hopeful that the Florida Legislature will demonstrate its understanding of this program's success by providing another round of funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lacher", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joseph Lacher, Chair
Florida Technology, Research, and
Scholarship Board

c: Carolyn Roberts, Chair
Board of Governors

Ann Duncan, Chair
Board of Governors Research and Economic Development Committee

Members, FTRSB