

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 10, 2024

Gina Raimondo
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

I am pleased to write in support of the Rochester Institute of Technology's application for funding under the NSTC Workforce Partner Alliance (WFPA) program. Such funding will enable RIT to expand its semiconductor and microelectronics education and workforce development initiatives, directly addressing the critical shortage of skilled professionals in this rapidly growing field.

RIT has a long history of pioneering in the semiconductor and microelectronics industry. For over 40 years, RIT has operated the nation's first Microelectronic Engineering degree program, responding to industry demands for skilled process engineers. With one of the largest and longest-running co-operative education programs in the U.S., RIT prepares over 1,500 semiconductor engineers who have become key contributors in sectors like AI, quantum computing, biomedical sensors, and integrated photonics. Their state-of-the-art Semiconductor Nanofabrication Lab (SNL) and strong multidisciplinary research programs continue to lead in providing hands-on training to future engineers.

With funding, RIT will launch its BRIDGE for Microelectronics program, a comprehensive training initiative that will significantly expand the domestic pipeline for skilled workers in the semiconductor industry. This program will focus on equipping students with interdisciplinary skills in Microelectronics Engineering, with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that the next generation of semiconductor engineers reflects the diversity of the U.S. workforce. The program's innovative approach to combining technical training with DEI components is critical in addressing the projected shortfall of over 67,000 semiconductor workers by 2030. Through this program, RIT will continue to drive national progress in semiconductor technology leadership, while contributing to workforce development in academia, government, and industry.

I applaud RIT in its foresight and hope its application for funding meets with your approval. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my grants coordinator at (202) 224-6542. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

CC: Deirdre Hanford, Chief Executive Officer & Trustee, Natcast