

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

September 26, 2024

Sethuraman Panchanathan
Director
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Director Panchanathan:

I am pleased to write in support of the University of Rochester's application for funding under the National Science Foundation's Regional Innovation Engines Program. Such funding will enable the University of Rochester to establish a Regional Innovation Engine centered around the Science, Technology, and Engineering of Lasers and Laser Applications Research (STELLAR) in the Rochester-Finger Lakes Region.

The University of Rochester is a key academic and research institution for the nation, known for its expertise in optics, photonics, and laser technologies. Through collaborative efforts with regional partners, UR has advanced the development of critical technologies that are foundational to U.S. national security and economic competitiveness. The Rochester-Finger Lakes region leads the nation in generating Optics, Photonics, and Imaging (OPI) patents per capita and is home to a diverse coalition of industry leaders, academic institutions, and community organizations. Together, they aim to accelerate technological innovation and economic growth, particularly in underserved and rural communities. The University of Rochester's leadership in this effort has been instrumental in creating new opportunities for workforce development and driving regional business growth.

With funding, the University of Rochester will establish the STELLAR Engine to enhance U.S. leadership in laser technologies. The initiative will catalyze research and development in lasers and laser applications, support advanced manufacturing, boost workforce training, and drive entrepreneurship. STELLAR will help create jobs, strengthen the laser science and technology talent pipeline, and grow the region's economy with burgeoning innovation and technological advancement. I applaud the University of Rochester in its foresight and hope its application for funding meets with your approval.

I applaud the University of Rochester for its foresight, and sincerely hope the application meets with your approval. Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my grants coordinator in Washington D.C. office at 202-224-6542.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator