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Brandeis University  
Brown University

California Institute of Technology  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Case Western Reserve University

Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Dartmouth College  
Duke University  
Emory University

Georgia Institute of Technology  
Harvard University  
Indiana University

Iowa State University  
The Johns Hopkins University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
McGill University

Michigan State University  
New York University

Northwestern University  
The Ohio State University

The Pennsylvania State University

Princeton University  
Purdue University  
Rice University

Rutgers University – New Brunswick  
Stanford University

Stony Brook University –  
State University of New York

Texas A&M University  
Tulane University

University at Buffalo –  
State University of New York

The University of Arizona  
University of California, Berkeley

University of California, Davis  
University of California, Irvine

University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, San Diego

University of California, Santa Barbara  
University of California, Santa Cruz

The University of Chicago  
University of Colorado Boulder

University of Florida  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

The University of Iowa  
The University of Kansas

University of Maryland, College Park  
University of Michigan

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
University of Missouri, Columbia

The University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill

University of Oregon  
University of Pennsylvania

University of Pittsburgh  
University of Rochester

University of Southern California  
The University of Texas at Austin

University of Toronto  
The University of Utah

University of Virginia  
University of Washington

The University of Wisconsin – Madison  
Vanderbilt University

Washington University in St. Louis  
Yale University

June 9, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer,

The Association of American Universities (AAU) encourages a swift floor action on the confirmation of Sethuraman Panchanathan as the Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Representing 65 leading research universities, we are encouraged that Dr. Panchanathan's wealth of experience and exemplary credentials make him a strong candidate to lead the NSF into the new decade.

Furthermore, since former NSF Director France Córdova completed her term at the end of March, NSF has been led by Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, who also continues to serve as the Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology (OSTP). While Dr. Droegemeier is a very capable leader, his responsibilities at OSTP include coordinating the federal response to the COVID-19 crisis in addition to many others. NSF needs a permanent Director to provide necessary leadership for the agency, which is also conducting important research on the pandemic.

Dr. Panchanathan has led visionary work at Arizona State University, and he has also served since 2014 on the National Science Board, which guides the direction of NSF. Last week, the Senate HELP Committee favorably reported his nomination on a voice vote after receiving more than 20 letters of support.

Dr. Panchanathan is poised to keep NSF at the forefront of discovery and innovation, continue its work to narrow the global innovation deficit, and collaborate with the higher education community. These are key attributes to the success of NSF, and we encourage you to schedule Senate Floor consideration of his nomination as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Sue Coleman  
President