August 2, 2013

Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Education
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Education
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander:

On behalf of the 97 member institutions of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, the 104 university members and affiliates of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), and the 39 U.S. member institutions and 7 international affiliate members of the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA), we are writing to express our strong unequivocal support for the President’s recent nomination of Dr. France Cordova as the next Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Dr. Cordova is President Emerita of Purdue University with a B.A. from Stanford University and Ph.D. from the California Institute of Technology. Dr. Cordova is currently a Member of the National Science Board. Since January 2013 Dr. Cordova has been serving a three year term as Chair of the Smithsonian Institution’s Governing Board, Board of Regents. Prior to joining Purdue, Dr. Cordova served as Chancellor at the University of California Riverside from 2002 to 2007, where she was also a Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy. An internationally recognized astrophysicist, Dr. Cordova also served as Professor of Physics and Vice-Chancellor for Research at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Before joining UCSB she was Chief Scientist at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

We believe Dr. Cordova is the ideal person to ensure NSF has a strong and well balanced research and education portfolio. Even in this budget environment, science has to move forward. To do so NSF must ensure the health of the core of the Nation’s basic research enterprise and the unique facilities that enable research and research training. Our respective scientific communities strongly support Dr. Cordova’s nomination and the opportunity to work with her as she leads NSF in carrying out its unique responsibility to maintain the health of the Nation’s scientific enterprise.
Thank you for the opportunity to convey these views. We hope the Committee and the Senate will act expeditiously to confirm Dr. Cordova as the next Director of the National Science Foundation.

Sincerely,

William Smith
President
Association of Universities
Research for in Astronomy

Thomas Bogdan
President
University Corporation
Atmospheric Research

Robert B. Gagosian
President
Ocean Leadership