



January 15, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

As president of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I am pleased to express my strong support for President Trump's nomination of Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan to serve as Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF). APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization which includes over 220 public research universities and university systems across the United States. I urge the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and U.S. Senate to advance and confirm Dr. Panchanathan's nomination.

Dr. Panchanathan is an outstanding selection to lead NSF during this critical time of competition for world leadership in science and technology. He has been an innovative, energizing, and creative leader at Arizona State University, where he serves as Executive Vice President and Chief Research and Innovation Officer. Those of us in the public research university community have long admired his exceptional intellect, knowledge across disciplines, vision, dedication to science education, and interest in collaborating across universities, industry, and government. As chair of APLU's Council on Research for two years, Dr. Panchanathan worked closely with fellow senior research officers from our nation's top public research universities to enhance their collective national contributions, earning their intense admiration and respect.

As NSF Director, Dr. Panchanathan would be able to use his outstanding leadership skills and broad technical expertise in computing, man-machine learning, and image processing to contribute personally to advancing the nation's research on the cutting edge of knowledge. He also brings experience adapting computing to enhance life for those with disabilities. He would also draw on his extensive knowledge of NSF strategy and programs from his years of service on the National Science Board.

Dr. Panchanathan will be a terrific successor to current NSF Director France A. Córdova, who has done an excellent job of leading the agency. He is the right person to lead an agency critical to ensuring the United States remains at the forefront of scientific innovation. I urge the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and U.S. Senate to confirm Dr. Panchanathan as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

M. Peter McPherson