Dear Friends of the University of Washington,

Our federal funding and policy priorities for the coming year reflect our public mission and our commitment to the public good, which are inextricably linked to the University’s historic partnership with the U.S. government. The government’s long-standing pledge to invest in research is central to the UW’s ability to bridge the gap between curiosity and research-driven discovery, and it is critical to the health and economic competitiveness of our nation. From regenerative medicine to clean energy technologies, and from earthquake early warning to advancements in telemedicine, new knowledge is a driving force behind what we do — and support from the federal establishment is vital to ensuring that this impact continues.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to educating and serving the public and preparing the future leaders of our great nation, who benefit not only from the rigorous and excellent education they receive at the UW, but also from the culture of inclusivity and accessibility. We know that diversity and inclusion are essential components of excellence, and we strive for nothing less.

The University of Washington is a gathering place where leaders, thinkers and doers are addressing the challenges of today and tomorrow, which take shape both here in Washington state and around the world. Our impact is strengthened by recruitment and support of the brightest researchers and educators, providing our students with the means to do the most good for Washington and the world.

The opportunities in the year ahead are many, as are the real and urgent challenges. I hope you will continue to look to the UW as a resource to address both local and global issues. We are proud of our longtime partnership with the federal government and look forward to working with you in 2019 to advance our shared priorities.

Warmest regards,

Ana Mari Cauce
President
Professor of Psychology
For over 150 years, the University of Washington has been at the vanguard of producing knowledge, enabling business creation and growth, improving health care, tackling complex public-policy challenges and preparing students to be responsible and engaged citizens. This work occurs in all our schools and colleges, each making unique contributions to our communities. We strive to be good stewards of federal dollars and truly view these as long-term investments designed to pay significant dividends through a well-educated workforce and innovative solutions for local and global challenges.

Leveraging both state and federal dollars, the UW is fostering and investing in the next generation of leaders, thinkers and doers by developing collaborative, innovative opportunities to address the complexities of the nation's greatest challenges through University initiatives such as Population Health and Race & Equity.

Our nation's current and future economic growth will occur in communities that choose to invest in two essential resources: innovation and a well-prepared workforce. America's leading research universities, including the University of Washington, are fundamental to both innovation and the development of critical human capital.

Research and its resulting innovations have driven the U.S. economy for decades, and our nation has seen that the return on this investment is long-term and sustained. Many of the most dynamic industries and globally engaged companies recognize this causal relationship: Companies continue to move to locations with a thriving innovation ecosystem fueled by a well-educated, prepared workforce.

Our legislative priorities for 2019 reflect our public promise, innovative spirit and commitment to excellence, and they highlight those federal investments that are critical to the overall success of our dual research and education missions. Through our partnership with the federal government, we will continue our drive to be the greatest public university in the world, as measured by our impact on our students, state, nation and society.

In FY 2018, the UW received

$1.035 BILLION in FEDERAL RESEARCH DOLLARS

$1.35 BILLION in TOTAL RESEARCH AWARDS

#10 in the world

AND

#2 among U.S. public institutions

(U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT)

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We urge the 116th Congress to maintain critical federal investments for basic and applied science in a broad spectrum of research fields across all federal research-driven agencies and directorates.

Support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) continues to be the UW’s top federal funding priority; we received more than $514 million from NIH in FY 2018, making it our largest single federal funding source. Overall, the UW received more than $635 million from the Department of Health and Human Services in FY 2018, which included funding from NIH, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Health Resources and Services Administration, among others.

Following closely behind NIH in funding priority is support for the National Science Foundation (NSF), from which the UW received $127 million in FY 2018. Every college and school across the UW has a grant funded by NIH, NSF or both.

Research programs need time, resources and infrastructure to become successful. Maintaining federal investment in research is not simply about initial monetary investments. Unsteady direction of federal agencies and the constant specter of threats — whether from consistently funding the government via continuing resolutions or from proposed cuts — ultimately undermines decades of our nation’s investment in innovation. This situation sets up researchers, research institutions, agencies, innovation and our nation for failure.

Federal investment in student programs, financial aid and scientific research are fundamental to our national security, economic growth and prosperity. We urge Congress to continue to invest in research discovery and developing human capital; both will continue to serve as bedrocks of our future workforce and economy.

Specifically, we ask Congress to:

• Maintain robust funding for NIH and NSF, as well as other federal scientific research agencies and directorates.

• Continue support for undergraduate and graduate research and support programs that engage all students — especially those from traditionally underrepresented populations — in meaningful basic and applied research.

• Support increased access and talent development through robust funding for TRiO and GEAR UP programs, as well as programs funded by NSF and NIH designed to increase pathways for students underrepresented in STEM degree programs.

• Oppose efforts to arbitrarily cap cost reimbursement associated with federally funded research at institutions of higher education.

• Oppose efforts to reduce or eliminate federal funding for individual scientific directorates or specific fields of study due to political pressures or ideology. It is only through a broad spectrum of discovery that we can develop the solutions for today’s and tomorrow’s problems.

• Invest in students directly by funding programs like Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and Federal Work-Study, which make higher education a more viable possibility for financially disadvantaged students.

• Simplify federal student loan repayment options while maintaining the most optimal repayment options for students.

• Reinvest in and strengthen Title VI and Fulbright-Hays, as they are the federal government’s most comprehensive international education programs. Graduates of these programs are essential to our diplomatic, defense, commercial and educational interests, among many other areas of society.

• Maintain a welcoming environment for all students, scholars and visitors through immigration policies such as enacting DACA, supporting a robust H-1B visa program and sustaining a meaningful Optional Practical Training visa program.
Reducing Regulatory Burden

Closely linked to funding in terms of importance is the complex and time-consuming regulatory burden imposed on research grants. Investors, whether the federal government or shareholders, should have oversight and know what is happening with the enterprise. The University supports full transparency of and access to federally reported information, but we believe there is a disconnect between how much information is currently required and publicly available from a federal grant and the information essential to the appropriate administration of those funds. A host of disparate agency regulations on the research ecosystem hinder and divert limited resources from the intended work of a given program to the task of responding to duplicative or unrelated requirements.

Population Health

While today’s global challenges are significant, and those of the future are unpredictable, the UW remains engaged and committed to defying the odds and conventional thinking to solve the problems of today and tomorrow. One of our signature efforts on this front is our 25-year Population Health Initiative, which works toward the elimination of diseases and afflictions and addresses the intersecting factors that influence health and well-being. The UW’s Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation is a global leader in this field. Its U.S. county performance research produces research data on life expectancy, causes of death and nonfatal health loss for the U.S. overall, for each of our 50 states and for each county per state to help federal, state and local decision-makers best allocate precious resources. Our efforts will continue to advance the health of people and communities locally and around the world by leveraging capabilities and opportunities at the UW, in the Puget Sound region and beyond.

Race and Equity

At the University of Washington, we are unwavering in our resolve to create an inclusive, equitable and welcoming community for all. Diversity in all its forms is critical to advancing our understanding of the world and arriving at solutions that serve society more effectively. We constantly strive to create a safe and respectful place to discover, to challenge the status quo and to grow intellectually.

We urge Congress to help us maintain a healthy and welcoming environment for all students and scholars. It is through fostering the best and brightest with the global exchange of ideas that true scholarship and innovation are born. Access to and sharing of knowledge is fundamental to the fabric of our nation, and maintaining the free flow of ideas depends on robust Title VI International Education funding, strong H-1B visa and Optional Practical Training programs, and healthy funding for proven access programs like GEAR Up and TRiO. We can and will work together to find the best in each other, to bridge our differences and to treat each other with the respect and kindness that all people deserve.

41% of UW students are STEM majors

AND

42% of UW STEM students are women

11,000+ UW undergrads are eligible for Pell Grants — more than all the Ivy League schools combined
The UW School of Medicine is #2 in the nation in total federal research awards, with $749.9M.

21 UW graduate programs are among the TOP 5 in the nation (U.S. News & World Report).

60% of UW undergrads graduate with no known student loan debt.

UW Family Medicine trains more than 200 residents per year in 29 family residency programs.

59,263 UW students were enrolled in fall 2018.

73% Washington state residents in the 2018 entering class.

1.6M+ patients cared for annually by UW Medicine.

$417M in uncompensated care provided by UW Medicine in FY 2017.

7 Nobel Prize winners.

17 MacArthur Fellows in the history of the UW.

32% of 2018 freshmen were first in their families to go to college.

50% at UW Bothell.

59% at UW Tacoma.