May 21, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee

Dear Chairs Collins and Moran, Vice Chair Murray, and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

On behalf of the nation's 1,024 community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) urge you to enact at least level funding in FY 26 for the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program. In addition, we urge the committee to ensure that the program is funded in FY 25 at the FY 24 level.

The ATE program is the cornerstone of NSF's support for the nation's community colleges. This program focuses on the education of highly qualified science and engineering technicians for advanced technology fields that drive our nation's economy. It promotes the improvement of STEM education of science and engineering technicians at the undergraduate and secondary school levels, and in the workforce.

Two-year public community and technical colleges deliver most of the technician education in the U.S., and their faculty play a leading role in designing and implementing ATE-funded projects. These initiatives are typically credit-bearing and faculty-driven, and many also provide learning resources for current technicians. A hallmark of the ATE program is its emphasis on collaboration—grantees work closely with industry, business, government, and educational institutions across all levels to ensure real-world relevance and impact.

Since its inception in 1993, the NSF has invested $1.53 billion in the ATE program, supporting 1,717 projects and 66 centers across all 50 states. These investments have not only strengthened the technical workforce but also built lasting partnerships and educational pathways that serve students, employers, and the nation.

The ATE program addresses current and emerging industry workforce needs. Technology fields supported by the ATE program include, but are not limited to:

- advanced manufacturing technologies
- information and security technologies
- biotechnology and biomanufacturing
- engineering technologies

- micro- and nanotechnologies
- geospatial technologies
- autonomous technologies

ATE also supports major initiatives in fields that the NSF has recently identified as priorities, including artificial intelligence and quantum computing. These initiatives include the National Information Technology Innovation Center at Columbus State Community College in Ohio, a national center focused on AI and quantum computing; and the National Applied Artificial Intelligence Center at Miami Dade College in Florida.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with the committee during the FY 2026 appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Walter G. Bumphus, Ph.D.
AACC President and CEO

Jee Hang Lee
ACCT President and CEO