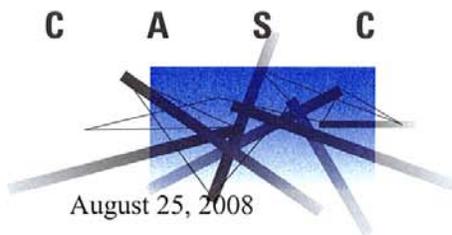


**Coalition for
Academic
Scientific
Computation**



These comments are submitted on behalf of the Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation (CASC), an educational 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with 54 member institutions representing many of the nation's universities and computing centers. Our members have been involved with the NITRD from its creation and they support the goals and objectives of the NITRD.

The NITRD legislation, from its inception in 1991 through the amendments provided in the Next Generation Internet Research Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-305) and more recently the America Competes Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-69), continues to serve as a viable vehicle for research and development needed to maintain and advance U.S. competitiveness.

The current NITRD Program Strategic Goals, as authorized, are as relevant today as when they were promulgated and the interagency committee structure of the NITRD, with the involvement of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the support of the Office of Management and Budget, has recognized that the program requires vigorous and active attention to evolving technological, social and economic advances. This internal examination has been expanded by PCAST through their review and discussed in the report of the Networking and Information Technology subcommittee.

This current activity, the development of a new NITRD strategic plan, is perhaps the most important. Unfortunately the success of any interagency plan involving some 13 Federal agencies depends on steadily increasing funding, with long term commitments, and not the cyclical increases and decreases that we have recently faced. No recommendations that we can offer to the NCO can solve this overriding reality. Long-term steady funding for the NITRD program must be an integral part of the Federal budgeting process. The recommendation for long term funding was stated in the 1999 PITAC report "Information Technology Research: Investing in our Future" and is as valid today as it was then.

Additionally, it is important that the NITRD "do more to exploit existing technology transfer mechanisms," exploring opportunities to expand interactions with the private sector as well as with the academic community. The increasing pace of technological change mandates that the tripartite approach – government, industry and academia - collaborate to ensure that the investment in the NITRD is an investment in U.S. innovation and competitiveness.

We acknowledge the importance of the role and function of the National Coordination Office for NITRD. We support the wide-ranging agenda of the NITRD and also the need to enhance the resources of the NCO to guide the coordination and collaboration efforts of the participating agencies.

Recommendations in the PCAST report “Leadership Under Challenge: Information Technology R&D in a Competitive World,” are of particular interest to the higher education community and are directly relevant to this request for comment.

These are the PCAST recommendations which we call to your attention:

Recommendation #4 – The OSTP Director should call on senior officials from Federal agencies with large academic networking and information technology R&D budgets to meet with senior officials from the Nation’s major research universities to address how to better conduct large-scale , long-term , multidisciplinary academic research in the development and application of networking and information technology important to the Nation. (The NITRD NCO should be directed to support this effort.)

Recommendation #1 – To provide a solid basis for subsequent action, the NITRD Subcommittee should charge the NITRD NCO to commission one or more fast-track studies on the current state of and future requirements for networking and information technology undergraduate and graduate education.

Recommendation # 7 – The NITRD subcommittee should facilitate efforts by leaders from academia, industry and government to identify the critical issues in software design and development and help guide the NITRD planning on software R&D.

Recommendation #10 – The NITRD subcommittee should develop, implement and maintain strategic plan for Federal investments in HEC R&D, infrastructure, applications and education and training. Based on the strategic plan, the NITRD Subcommittee should involve experts from academia and industry to develop and maintain a HEC R&D roadmap.

Recommendation #16 – The NITRD Subcommittee, with support from the NITRD NCO should develop a set of metrics and other indicators of progress for the NITRD program and use them to assess the NITRD program progress.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment and stand ready to participate, providing advice and comment, in continuing discussions regarding the evolving five-year NITRD strategic plan.