

**President Mary Sue Coleman
Presidential Testimony
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education
May 15, 2009**

Opening remarks:

Good morning and welcome to the campus of the University of Michigan.

On behalf of my colleagues – President Lou Anna Simon of Michigan State and President Jay Noren of Wayne State – we appreciate today’s opportunity to tell you about the University Research Corridor.

We also have with us several of our students, as well as representatives of economic development groups that partner with our universities to help move the state forward.

The URC is two years old, and represents a commitment by our research universities to strengthen Michigan’s economy with innovations and inventions; talented graduates; and an entrepreneurial culture for attracting and growing new business.

We came together as the URC because we believe in the unlimited potential of our state to expand upon a rich heritage of invention and to establish itself as a world leader in innovation and creativity.

We see this unfolding in Detroit, where Wayne State’s Tech Town is a robust incubator of ideas and jobs.

It is a place where Wayne State faculty such as Engineering Professor Greg Auner have launched a startup company – one using materials and methods he developed in his Smart Sensors and Integrated Microsystems lab.

The result is Visca LLC, which is developing and commercializing micro sensors that already have attracted the attention – and the funding – of the Department of Defense.

On all of our campuses, we are accelerating our technology transfer efforts to encourage and reward professors who move inventions and innovations from the lab to the marketplace.

We see the power of the URC in East Lansing, where IBM is connecting with Michigan State to create an application development center on MSU’s campus.

This center will be the first of its kind in the United States for IBM, and it will be housed here, in our state. It says to the world: the state of Michigan knows technology. And it also says “jobs” – up to 1,500 new direct and indirect jobs over the next five years.

We see the muscle of the URC here in Ann Arbor, where the University of Michigan is just weeks away from closing on the purchase of the former R&D headquarters of Pfizer.

Acquiring this parcel of 174 acres and 30 buildings will allow us as a university to take a revolutionary new approach to research. We are examining the best possible uses for this site, but we know it will build upon our research strengths in drug discovery, neuroscience, and health outcomes.

In addition to university research, this new campus will provide incubator space for the private sector. And we expect that over the next 10 years, upward of 3,000 jobs will be created here in southeast Michigan.

As with many of our respective projects, not only will we broaden our contributions as a research university, we also will stimulate new business in region. We believe the two objectives go hand-in-hand.

It's important to note that MSU also is reviving former Pfizer property, in this case a laboratory in Holland where research will focus on biomaterials, specialty chemicals, and biofuels.

Our entire state was shocked by the loss of Pfizer. But we are confident that U-M's transformation of the Ann Arbor site into a research dynamo will be equally stunning.

The URC has statewide impact because of the contributions of our staff, faculty and students. President Noren will now tell you about our commitment to attract and support the best students.

Closing remarks:

All of us appreciate the opportunity to share our stories with you today.

Just last month, we heard a loud and clear message from the organization known as Michigan Future. It told us that jobs requiring only a high school diploma are evaporating, and the real growth in employment is in fields that demand a college degree.

The prosperity that any of us wants – for our personal growth and the wellbeing of our communities and our state – that prosperity comes with a higher education.

The University Research Corridor is proud to contribute to Michigan's wellbeing. We look forward to working with you on our shared future as a state that values and celebrates knowledge as an economic engine.