

Response from CASC to the PCAST Report

The Coalition for Academic Scientific Computation (CASC) is pleased to have the opportunity to submit the following in response to your request for comments on the “Designing a Digital Future” PCAST report.

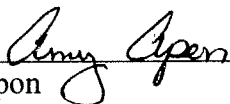
Founded in 1989, CASC is an educational nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with 66 member institutions representing many of the nation’s most forward thinking universities and computing centers. CASC is dedicated to advocating the use of the most advanced computing technology to accelerate scientific discovery for national competitiveness, global security, and economic success, as well as to develop a diverse and well-prepared 21st century workforce. The mission of CASC is to disseminate information about the value of high performance computing and advanced communications technologies, to provide an ‘expert resource’ for the Executive Office of the President, the Congress, and government agencies, and to facilitate information exchange within the academic scientific computation and communication community.

The report, a review of the NITRD program with specific recommendations for future enhancement and expansion, is a welcome confirmation of the importance of the program and the need for increased coordination and funding. There are five points of specific interest to our community:

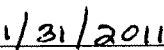
1. CASC members recognize that in order to have better understanding and organization of the NITRD program, specific funding information on all aspects of the Agencies’ participation in NITRD must be spelled out. Too often, in trying to understand the focus and scope of NITRD programming activities, the lack of specific funding data is an impediment. We strongly endorse the recommendation for improved NITRD reporting and coordination processes at the top of page 101.
2. CASC continues to strongly endorse the recommendation initially articulated in the 1999 PITAC report, “Information Technology Research: Investing in Our Future”, now restated on page 104, that the federal government should continue to boost funding levels for fundamental NIT research.

3. CASC strongly agrees with the statement on p. 66 that HPC helps maintain our historical leadership for future generations of Americans. This concept was clearly put forth in the 2008 National Academy of Sciences report, "The Potential Impact of High-End Capability Computing on Four Illustrative Fields of Science and Engineering" findings which unequivocally stated that continued and increased investments in HPC are central to the nation's safety (national security) and competitiveness. We also need to be mindful of the statement on page xiii, "new investments must not supplant continued investment in important core areas such as high-performance computing..." CASC endorses the recommendation on p. 81 for investment in a coordinated program of basic research in high performance computing.
4. CASC strongly agrees with the statements that the health of the Nation's research enterprise depends on sustained and reliable infrastructure, including both high-end computing and shared infrastructure that supports data. We recognize that continued investment in HPC academic centers and national Laboratories is critical to the sustainability of the NITRD research enterprise. We strongly endorse the recommendations on p. 91 that NITRD agencies should develop an improved framework for the development and support of shared large-scale NIT research infrastructure.
5. CASC does not agree that the establishment of a new NITRD oversight committee would be valuable at this time. As currently noted in Section 10, pages 93-95 and 99-101, there are already several related committees tasked with the overall coordination or specific programmatic oversight for the NITRD. With the composition of the PCAST and the PITAC task force, we believe that another layer of management oversight would not be helpful. We suggest that the NSTC should assume a greater overall direction and monitoring function.

This document was approved by 59 of the 66 CASC member institutions, with no dissenting votes.



Amy Apon
CASC Chair, 2011



Date