

7 July 2013

To whom it concerns:

Provided herewith is a Letter of Support for the proposal titled NAVO WorldMet @ East Research and Education Instrumentation Program (NAVO-WEREP), submitted by The Center of Excellence in Remote Sensing Education and Research (CERSER) on the campus of Elizabeth City State University. This proposal is submitted in response to the DOD Research and Education Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions (HBCU/MI) Equipment / Instrumentation Fiscal Year 2013 Broad Agency Announcement W911NF- 13-R-0008, CFDA#12.630).

I am specifically privileged to provide this letter of support for the above referenced proposal. As background, I am a former Scientific Officer with the Office Of Naval Research, specifically in the Ocean, Atmosphere and Space S and T Department. During my employ, my charge was to provide funding for proposals, which advanced the state –of- the- art knowledge base in areas of specific importance to Naval operations. Specifically, state –of- the-art development of theories and techniques which advanced the Remote Sensing knowledge base was the focus of the programs I funded. These developments /advancements most often occurred when the availability of the latest and most advanced research equipment and laboratories were available.

During my tenure at ONR I played a lead role in establishing the first major program within DOD for involving HBCU's and MI's in the conduct of research supported by DOD agencies. Several years of effort were required to transition these institutions from primarily teaching institutions to a capability to conduct basic research as well.

Major breakthroughs began occurring during the late 1990's, - early 2000's, with the establishment of a very successful Undergraduate Research Experiences program (patterned after the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates program), at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU); and later, the very successful development of the Center of Excellence in Remote Sensing Education and

Research (CERSER) at ECSU in 2001. These two programs “broke –the-ice” and made available research opportunities for students of color in a very successful and productive way.

The enthusiastic response to these program opportunities by minority students soon led to a joint effort between ONR and the C-Space Corporation to establish a Satellite receiving Station on the ECSU campus in 2005. Research projects stemming from this new facility soon spurred local community interest in research, and significantly increased interest in STEM type programs among the Local K thru 12 schools. Remote Sensing related research at ECSU began an unprecedented growth as a result.

Seeing a significant increase in minority students involved in the field of remote sensing, as president of the IEEE Geoscience and remote Sensing Society ( 2002 and 2003) I utilized the Society’s Minority Travel Program (established to avail opportunities for Minority students to attend the Society’s major international conferences and present their research before international audiences. By far, the majority of students supported to present their research had at some time participated in either the URE or CERSER program, and had related training with the Satellite Receiving Station facilities on campus.

Without a doubt the equipment to be provided by the requested funding will significantly augment present research capabilities at ECSU, as well as provide access to critical data and imagery of importance to US Naval activities in the Norfolk vicinity and along the East Coast.

I enthusiastically support this proposal.

Respectfully,

Charles A. Luther  
Former ONR Scientific Officer (retired)  
Past President, IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society