

POSITION STATEMENT

ACHIEVING GREATER VALUE FROM THE FEDERAL LABORATORY ENTERPRISE

*Adopted by the IEEE-USA
Board of Directors 29 October 2015*

Fundamental, discovery-driven scientific research is critical to our long-term economic growth and societal well-being. The Federal Laboratory Enterprise (FLE)--consisting of federal agency laboratories, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) and University Affiliated Research Centers (UARCs)--are vital in the conduct of the nation's science and technology (S&T) research and development (R&D) portfolio. The FLE is congressionally mandated to perform, support and excel in research and technology for national mission areas. Universities and the FLE are the nation's primary bastions for implementing fundamental research. The S&T R&D conducted at the FLE addresses the challenges facing the nation, including technology innovation. IEEE-USA commends the FLE's S&T R&D efforts to successfully fulfill its missions in fostering government-university-industry cooperation, in creating innovation resulting in jobs, and in maintaining fundamental research. To achieve greater value from the FLE, we recommend increasing long-term, robust FLE support, so it may continue successfully implementing its goals and missions.

To that end, IEEE-USA recommends that:

1. Federal agencies should maintain R&D programs nurturing scientific exploration, engineering development, and educational outreach that complement the core missions of their laboratories.
2. Federal agencies should fund their in-house laboratories, FFRDCs, and UARCs to maintain world class facilities and skilled workforces. Participation in professional conferences, approved in a timely manner, also is essential to attracting and retaining skilled workforces.
3. Unnecessary or inappropriately applied administrative requirements should be eliminated or amended. Administrative requirements should be reviewed and streamlined to increase FLE productivity.
4. Federal agencies should maintain an appropriate balance among in-house, contracted, FFRDC and UARC R&D to maximize the nation's best talent, meet mission needs,

maintain responsive capabilities, and to boost productivity.

5. The FLE should continue to proactively collaborate with the nation's private sector--to transfer technology of potential commercial value, and make their facilities and personnel available for expertise on technical policy and developments.
6. The FLE should increase collaboration with state and local governments, universities and industry, particularly small businesses.

This statement was developed by IEEE-USA's Research and Development Policy Committee, and represents the considered judgment of a group of U.S. IEEE members with expertise in the subject field. IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of the more than 200,000 engineering, computing and allied professionals who are U.S. members of the IEEE. The positions taken by IEEE-USA do not necessarily reflect the views of IEEE, or its other organizational units.