

FESAC Public Comment
David Maurer
President, University Fusion Association
February 2, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to FESAC today. I am addressing you in my capacity as the President of the University Fusion Association (UFA). There is widespread concern within the academic community that opportunities for magnetic fusion energy research conducted by universities and colleges are in decline. In particular, I would like to bring to your attention, by submitting to FESAC, a white paper that has been developed over the past year by the UFA to document current difficulties that the university magnetic confinement fusion community is experiencing. These difficulties include alarming faculty demographic and hiring prospect issues along with reported recent funding trends for university magnetic confinement fusion research. We believe that these trends pose significant challenges to the long-term health and sustainment of fusion research programs at our universities. The white paper makes several recommendations that the UFA looks forward to being addressed by all parties involved in fusion research, including DOE-SC and the broader fusion community. University research has been critical to the development of fusion science, not only through the training of scientists in the field, but more importantly through our fundamental and innovative contributions to fusion science and technology. These are challenging times for the members of UFA going forward, and I am happy to report that our initial discussions on these topics with FES have been encouraging and fruitful. The UFA looks forward to continued productive engagement with FES and the rest of the fusion community on issues raised in the white paper. Thank you for your time and consideration.