



March 13, 2026

To whom it may concern –

We write as faculty members in the Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering Department at the University of Michigan (UM) in response to NSF's Dear Colleague Letter ("NSF Intent to Restructure Critical Weather Infrastructure") posted on Jan. 23, 2026. Our research and educational endeavors, focused on atmospheric and space weather processes, have benefitted greatly for many decades from the world-class infrastructure, expertise, and support provided by NSF NCAR, and it is our opinion that these NCAR-led activities will continue to be of maximal benefit to us and the American people if NSF NCAR remains intact as a public-serving, not-for-profit, Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC).

Examples of benefits that University of Michigan students and faculty have gained through NSF NCAR include:

- Access to supercomputing and data server facilities (e.g., Derecho and Casper at the NSF NCAR-Wyoming Supercomputing Center) that are custom-tailored to run world-class, open-source weather and earth system models like the Weather Research and Forecasting Model (WRF), the Community Earth System Model (CESM), and the Model for Prediction Across Scales (MPAS)
- Science development and software support for the models listed above
- Development of open-source data analysis, data visualization, data assimilation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for the earth system science community
- Access to research aircraft, airborne instrumentation, and ground-based observational suites that are uniquely suited for transforming our process-level understanding of a wide range of atmospheric processes
- Access to observations of the near-Earth space environment and the sun, including Mauna Loa Solar Observatory, a state-of-the-art facility taking imagery of the solar corona
- Provision of computing and software tools for university classes so that students can develop skills to analyze global Earth system datasets on high-performance computing clusters
- Student participation in NCAR-hosted tutorials, training, and hackathon sessions that teach crucial model development, application, data analysis, software, and high-performance computing skills
- Student and faculty visits to NSF NCAR, e.g., through the Advanced Study Program, where Michigan students are mentored by NCAR scientists during extended visits and faculty interact with visiting scientists from around the world
- Student internship and professional development programs, including the Undergraduate Leadership Workshop

- Participation in, and leadership of, scientific working groups and workshops focused on techniques to improve the modeling of different Earth system components
- Participation in NSF NCAR seminar presentations that are openly distributed via live teleconferences and video recordings
- Use of educational materials and teaching guides on atmospheric and space science provided freely and developed by NCAR scientists and staff
- Use of the NSF NCAR facilities and expertise of the staff in support of UM-led summer schools conducted at NSF NCAR
- NSF NCAR scientists serve as mentors and co-advisors of UM's doctoral students
- Participation in NSF NCAR-hosted early-career workshops that support the scientific success of UM's early-career earth system and space scientists

We strongly encourage NSF not to dismantle these programs or convert them to private entities. NCAR has the experience, leadership, and expertise needed to keep these programs running smoothly, whereas transfership to entities with less experience and potentially with profit incentives will lead to disruptions in key services and scientific advances. Furthermore, the breadth of capabilities at NSF NCAR, spanning models, observations, computation, and education, are synergistic and the sum is greater than any individual part. Maintaining these capabilities together under one institution with dedicated leadership is critical to maximize the value of all of the individual capabilities.

The opinions expressed in this letter are those of the signatories and do not necessarily reflect official university positions.

Thank you for your consideration.