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Evaluation Committee
21st Century Fund
C/O Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
712 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

Subject: Support for WNYPRI Videoconferencing Center

This letter is in support for the development of a Videoconferencing Center for WNYPRI with the headquarters at University at Buffalo (UB). The author of this letter is a faculty of the Department of Civil Structural and Environmental Engineering (CSEE) at UB and member of the Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER).

The department of CSEE is the host of Structural Engineering and Earthquake Simulation Laboratory (SEESL), a world-renowned laboratory and one of the sites of the future US Network of Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEES), a national grid of interconnected research facilities. The author of this letter is a senior Co-PI for the development of the local node of NEES with funding from the National Science Foundation and the State of New York (see <http://civil.eng.buffalo.edu/seesl/>). One of the developments of this network includes real time tele-observation and tele-operations, and educational activities. These activities are directed to collaboration and education of professionals throughout the country, with priorities to NY institutions. The proposed center will enable the NY educational community from Universities and High Schools to participate in real time testing and instructions when coupled with the extensive NEESgrid operating through Internet2.

The Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research (MCEER) headquartered at University at Buffalo with its leading members located in the State of New York has also other members distributed throughout the country (<http://mceer.buffalo.edu/>). The Center, supported by NSF, State of New York and other agencies, organizes research programs and provides the leadership in developing advanced technologies for earthquake risk mitigation. Moreover, the Center organizes post disasters investigations and helps develop plans for response and recovery. In response to the latest disaster in New York, in lower Manhattan, MCEER organized several teams for post disaster evaluations with special sponsorship of NSF. The Center has a network of computational and testing facilities, which are coordinated via tele-conferencing, video-conferencing and data sharing. Some of the leading partner institutions are RPI, CUNY and Cornell University all located in NYS. MCEER can use the proposed videoconferencing center to engage the local and the state community in its activities and provide assistance and advise in

case of major natural disasters. The connection of the MCEER Users Network (<http://mceer.buffalo.edu/research/>) with the WNY community requires a large videoconferencing center as proposed. This will enable simultaneous two ways connection of video, audio and data as required for the Center's interaction. The author of this letter is the Networking Program Coordinator for MCEER and member of the Executive Committee.

The proposal suggests using the latest technology and will benefit reciprocally WNY community and the UB – NEES node and the MCEER networks.

Sincerely yours



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Cc: George C. Lee, Director MCEER
Michel Bruneau, Deputy Director MCEER, Director UB-NEES Project