

March 23, 2015

President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

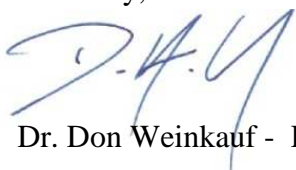
Dear Mr. President,

Our commitment to the Grand Challenges falls along several fronts. First, and foremost, is our dedication to the education of a new class of engineering students who have the perspective to understand the human condition and the capacity to communicate. As global citizens, engineers at St. Thomas are required demonstrate proficiency in a second language, they are required to take classes in World Religions, Ethics, Philosophy, and History. They are asked to take thoughtful steps toward deeply understanding the people and cultures for which they are being tasked to solve problems. In essence, at St. Thomas, we ask our engineering students to understand people first, and then the machines, algorithms, and theory which could improve their lives.

The University of St. Thomas has made an institutional commitment to a practice we call, Peace Engineering. Our Peace Engineering work revolves around two major efforts: the post-harvest processing of food in the developing world and the advancement renewable energy resources. In Haiti, our faculty have demonstrated a complete enterprise system for the collection of locally grown breadfruit, its conversion to flour, and ultimately baked goods delivered to the market in Port-au-Prince. Along similar lines, in 2014, the State of Minnesota Renewable Development Fund announced a 2.1 M\$ award to St. Thomas to develop a Renewable Energy Microgrid Testing Facility. The facility will allow research and testing of control platforms on small but realistic scale distributed energy resources common to the developing world and other isolated regions on the grid. The center will provide students and researchers a platform to investigate new solar power systems, new control hardware, new wind turbines, and many other facets of distributed energy.

The University of St. Thomas School of Engineering prides itself on taking advanced technologies out from under the bushel and presenting it for all of humanity to benefit. We understand the Grand Challenges, and we also understand that their resolution are the most critical for “the least among us.”

Sincerely,



Dr. Don Weinkauff - Dean of Engineering