



VALPARAISO®
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
February 26, 2010

The Honorable Richard Lugar
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lugar,

As President of Valparaiso University (VU), I am writing to ask for your support with three vital funding needs for Valparaiso University and Northern Indiana. These key projects will serve to strengthen the scientific advances in Engineering and Nursing and will support the economic health of the region.

As you may know, VU is a private comprehensive university, and has been named one of the two top regional universities in the Midwest in for the past 16 consecutive years. VU offers 70 fields of study to approximately 4,000 students. Founded in 1859, VU has established an exceptionally strong cohesion of academic programs with a targeted integration of professional and liberal arts programs. A focus on teaching has long been one of VU's hallmarks. It is this commitment to teaching that has produced exceptional hands-on learning opportunities for VU undergraduates, particularly in the fields of Engineering and Nursing.

The need to jumpstart the expansion of Valpo's Solar Energy Research is a top priority. Valpo has created a unique interdisciplinary program for undergraduate and faculty research on solar energy. This program will explore and develop processes capable of producing fuels or valuable commodities from concentrated sunlight. This cutting edge facility would serve as the stimulus for real world, hands-on research involving engineering, physics, and astronomy.

The benefits of a solar furnace for research are vast. This unique program will have significant benefits for university students and faculty, as well as for the State and National economies. Practical benefits include the development of fuels for the transportation sector and for electricity. Solar research at Valpo will significantly expand biomass and energy efficiency research currently taking place in Indiana.

The solar furnace and solar energy research will provide a powerful interactive learning tool to encourage Indiana middle and high school students to study engineering and the physical sciences. This program will also provide resources and data to Masters and Doctoral students from the University of Notre Dame, Purdue University, and else where. A partnership has also been formed with Sandia National Laboratories for the purpose of sharing information and resources.

KRETZMANN HALL

VALPARAISO, INDIANA

46383-6493

TELEPHONE: 219 464 5115

FACSIMILE: 219 464 6776

INTERNET:

[HTTP://WWW.VALPO.EDU](http://www.valpo.edu)

For the expansion of Solar Energy Research, VU seeks a federal investment of \$600,000 from the Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Account of the FY 10 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

I would appreciate your assistance in making this request a priority on your appropriations funding request list. I have asked Elizabeth Pittman (reachable at 202.912.8623) to follow up. Thank you for your consideration of these important projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Heckler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Heckler
President