



Compete Connect

August 2025 Edition

From the CEO's Desk



Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Dear Council on Competitiveness
Community,

For the past four decades, the Council has been distinguished, characterized, and strengthened by its incredible members and leaders. And this tradition continues.

As you know, we celebrated Mr. Brian Moynihan's tenure as Council Chair at the 2024 National Competitiveness Forum (NCF). And as we turn toward Fall and the ramp-up to our 2025 NCF, I am honored to announce the Council's next Chair:

Our Board and Executive Committee have unanimously elected Mr. J. Erik Fyrwald, CEO of International Flavors & Fragrances Inc. (IFF).

Erik's appointment comes at a defining moment for the Council and the United States. As we approach our 40th birthday in 2026, America faces unprecedented challenges and extraordinary opportunities. The convergence of transformative technologies—from AI to quantum to the bioeconomy to advanced nuclear—coupled with intensifying global competition, all underscore the relevancy and urgency of our shared mission. With deep leadership experience and a strong commitment to expanding U.S. innovation capacity, Erik is well-positioned to guide the Council into a new era of strategic growth and impact.

At IFF, Erik has led a bold transformation, expanding global innovation hubs, and forging breakthrough partnerships such as the Alpha Bio joint venture with Kemira. His four decades of running major businesses — including at Syngenta, Univar Solutions, Ecolab, Nalco, and DuPont — reflect a career-long commitment to science-driven solutions that advance innovation, sustainability, and productivity. His perspective aligns perfectly with the Council's mission and its flagship National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers, including our emerging initiative to accelerate the potential of the U.S. bioeconomy.

Looking ahead, Erik will play a central role in two major Council gatherings this Fall:

- **Executive Committee + National Commission Fall Meeting: Future of the Bioeconomy** – September 17–18 in Lafayette, Indiana. We are honored to co-host with Jim Stutelberg, CEO of Primient and a member of our National Commission, our Fall Executive Committee + National Commission meeting, during which we will launch a major, multi-year initiative on the future of the bioeconomy—a sector projected to grow into a \$30 trillion global market by 2050. This is a distinctive opportunity to help shape the United States' strategy for global leadership. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Council EVP and COO [Chad Evans](#).
- **2025 National Competitiveness Forum** – December 15–16 in Washington, D.C. Erik will share with the Council's membership and extended community of stakeholders his vision for the Council as we move toward our 40th anniversary in 2026 – shaping a powerful growth agenda for the United States based on a strong commitment to strategic investments in research and development, and the American workforce. Plan now to be with us. [Register for the 2025 NCF here](#), and consider supporting this premier event through sponsorship ([see brochure here](#)).

In addition to this exciting and pivotal leadership transition, the Council is advancing on multiple fronts.

Late last month, a senior Council delegation engaged industry, academic, government, and non-profit leaders across Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, and Adelaide to launch [Phase Two of the U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance](#). Highlights included meetings with Australian government officials – in office and shadowing – and engaging with distinguished leaders across Monash University, CSIRO (the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, the Australian National University, the core leadership across Australia's learned academies and academic associations, core venture and entrepreneurial leaders at the cutting edge of Australia's blossoming innovation ecosystem, a range of current and "shadow" Ministers, and the Premier of South Australia.

A Sydney-based "U.S.–Australia Innovation Dialogue"—co-hosted with the Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness—punctuated the weeklong immersion across the country, and concluded with the signing of a landmark [Compact for a Strategic U.S.–Australia Innovation Alliance](#), establishing a private-sector-driven partnership to accelerate technology, workforce, and energy innovation across both nations. [Videos from the Dialogue sessions and signing ceremony are available here](#).

In August, I was also honored to keynote the 7th Technology Showcase in Brasília—Brazil's largest innovation and technology conference—where I shared how nations can harness converging technologies to advance productivity, security, and shared prosperity. More than 5,000 leaders from business, government, and academia participated in the conference, expanding the reach of the Council and its National Commission to a wider global audience.

As a final note, the Council team and I continue to be amazed by the capacity of the Council community to make a positive impact on U.S. competitiveness. We highlight below some of your remarkable efforts.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President & CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Council News



The Council on Competitiveness is pleased to announce Mr. J. Erik Fyrwald, CEO of International Flavors & Fragrances Inc. (IFF), is its next Chair of the Board. Erik's term comes at a pivotal moment as the Council approaches its 40th anniversary in 2026.

Reflecting on his new role, Mr. Fyrwald notes:

"Throughout my career, I've believed science and collaboration can solve the world's toughest challenges. That's what the Council is all about: it's where CEOs, university presidents, labor leaders, and national lab directors can shape the future of American innovation and economic strength through a non-partisan voice, setting aside politics to achieve results.

What excites me most? The chance to accelerate the bioeconomy. From breakthrough biomanufacturing to sustainable agriculture, this sector is redefining how we feed, fuel, and heal the world. And it's just getting started.

As Chair, I'm committed to helping the Council chart a bold growth agenda—one that invests in research, empowers the workforce, and ushers in the next wave of global innovation. Let's build a future that's competitive, inclusive, and sustainable.

Follow the Council's work and join the conversation. The time to lead is now."

Council President and CEO Deborah Wince-Smith welcomed Erik's appointment, noting:

"Erik shares with his fellow Board members a distinctive vision for the Council, as our country continues to evolve in an era of disruption and discontinuity. Erik, in leveraging his research, scientific, and business expertise, has been a long-standing leader—like IFF—supporting a range of industries and sectors at the cutting-edge of innovation. Erik will help position the Council for a new phase of growth and engagement."

Council Chair Emeritus Mr. Brian Moynihan, Chair and CEO of Bank of America, also comments:

"Erik is well positioned to be Chair of the Council given his deep business and scientific leadership. Erik's expertise is well aligned to the priorities of the Council as it explores the frontiers of future productivity and prosperity. The Bank of America team looks forward to working with him."

The Council congratulates and warmly welcomes Erik Fyrwald as our new Chair.

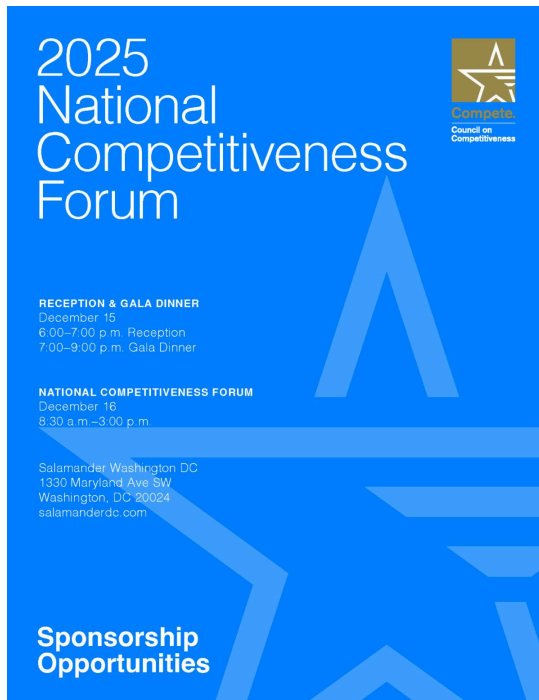
Join the Council for the 2025 National Competitiveness Forum



Join the Council on Competitiveness and leaders from industry, academia, national laboratories, labor unions, and government for the Council's annual Gala Dinner on December 15 and the 2025 National Competitiveness Forum (NCF) on December 16 at the Salamander Hotel in Washington, DC.

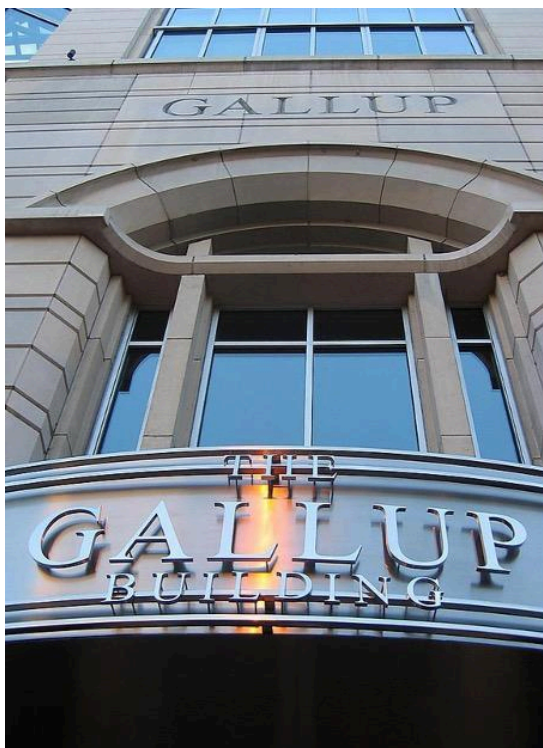
NCF Registration Is Now Open

NCF 2025 Sponsorships Are Available



Please consider the opportunity to sponsor the Council's premier event on the annual competitiveness calendar. Generous benefits are available to sponsors, which you can learn more about in the [sponsorship brochure](#).

**Sponsorship Opportunities
Now Available**



University Leadership Forum Strategy Meeting

Developing a Path Forward for U.S. Higher Education

September 8, 2025

Gallup World Headquarters

The Gallup Building, F Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

The Council on Competitiveness' University Leadership Forum will convene in person on September 8 at the Gallup World Headquarters in Washington, DC. In partnership with Gallup and Deloitte, this session will spotlight the latest research on the state of higher education, the development of a higher-education dashboard, and more. For details, please contact Council on Competitiveness Executive Vice President and COO [Chad Evans](#).



Summer/Fall Executive Committee and National Commissioners Meeting — The Future of the U.S. Bioeconomy

September 17-18, 2025

Primient
3300 US Hwy 52 S
Lafayette, IN 47905



Members of the Council's Executive Committee and "National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers," along with some special guests and experts, will convene in Lafayette, IN, at Primient's state-of-the-art bio facility — one of the world's most innovative facilities for producing food and industrial ingredients from plant-based, renewable sources.

This senior-level meeting will provide an opportunity to review the Council's robust 2025 policy activities and begin planning for 2026, as well as to shape the next major policy priority for the "National Commission": optimizing the policy and action agenda to accelerate America's bioeconomy. If interested to learn more about this invite-only/registration-required event, please contact Council EVP and COO [Chad Evans](#).



YOU'RE INVITED

FORGING THE FUTURE

**THE INTERSECTION
OF HEALTH, AI & TECH**

Join top minds from Pittsburgh and globally that are driving the future of health, AI, and tech.

**OCT. 19-21, 2025 | UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

 **REGISTER FOR THE SUMMIT**
GFCC-COC-25.PITT.EDU/REGISTRATION

More information, including a schedule of events and where to stay, is available online:
GFCC-COC-25.PITT.EDU

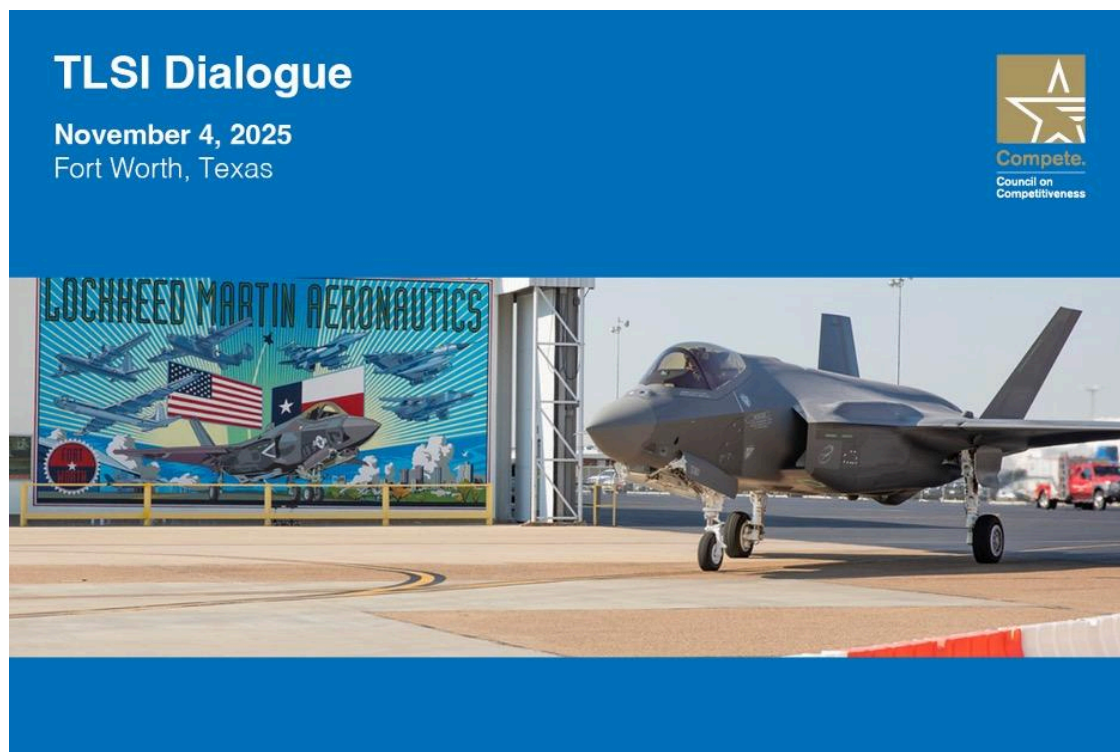
SUMMIT PARTNERS    

Join the Council on Competitiveness, the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils (GFCC), the University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon University, October 19-21 in Pittsburgh, PA, for a first-of-its-kind crossover event, merging an edition of the Council's "[Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#)" with the GFCC's annual "Global Innovation Summit": "[Forging the Future: The Intersection of Health, AI, & Tech](#)."

This seminal event — hosted by University of Pittsburgh Chancellor and Council Academic Vice Chair Joan Gabel, Carnegie Mellon University President Farnam Jahanian, and Council on Competitiveness CEO Deborah L. Wince-Smith — will convene innovators from across Pennsylvania, the United States, and the world to understand the challenges and opportunities that arise when emerging technologies co-mingle and co-create new inventions, innovations, and industries of the future.

Plan to join us and [REGISTER HERE](#). If you have any questions, contact Council EVP and COO [Chad Evans](#).

[Register Now](#)



The Councils' Technology Leadership & Strategy Initiative (TLSI) will convene for its Fall Dialogue on November 4 at Lockheed Martin's F-35 research and production facility in Fort Worth, TX. The in-person gathering of our "CTO network" will bring TLSI members together with senior policy and industry leaders to explore cutting-edge innovation strategies and national competitiveness priorities. If interested to learn more, please contact Council EVP and COO [Chad Evans](#).

The Council on Competitiveness Launches Phase Two of the U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance

From July 21–25, 2025, the Council on Competitiveness led a senior delegation to Australia for Phase Two of the U.S.–Australia Strategic Innovation Alliance, building on work begun in 2016. Led by Council President & CEO Deborah Wince-Smith and Chairman and Cofounder of the Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness Charles Kiefel AM, the delegation met with Australian government officials—both in office and shadowing—and engaged with distinguished leaders across Monash University, CSIRO (the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, the Australian National University, Australia's learned academies and academic associations, core venture and entrepreneurial leaders driving the country's innovation ecosystem, and the Premier of South Australia.

The mission of the trip was to advance bilateral collaboration across strategic, complementary technology streams central to U.S. and Australian productivity, prosperity, and security, including AI, quantum computing, advanced nuclear, biotechnology, precision agriculture, and critical minerals.

A major component of the Delegation's mission was participation in a Council-conceived, Sydney-based, U.S.-Australia Strategic Innovation Dialogue, where panels explored higher education, healthcare innovation, rare earth elements, next-generation energy, the role of national laboratories in an era of converging technologies and geopolitical disruption. To cap off this dialogue, Ms. Wince-Smith and Mr. Kiefel AM signed a [Compact for a Strategic U.S.-Australia Innovation Alliance](#), a statement of shared intent to position innovation as the defining factor of national competitiveness in the 21st century for the two allied nations.

The *Compact* issues a clear call to action: to unleash the full innovation capacity of both nations, accelerate technology development and deployment, expand energy security and sustainability, strengthen skilled workforces, and foster collaborative innovation networks. By committing to deeper bilateral cooperation—including a proposed exclusive trade framework in critical resources—the *Compact* affirms the United States and Australia will stand together as strategic allies, harnessing innovation for economic growth, long-term security, resilience, and global leadership.

On the final day of the trip, Council President & CEO Deborah Wince-Smith, MITRE CEO Dr. Mark Peters, and Mr. Charles Kiefel AM met in Adelaide with the Hon. Peter Malinauskas, Premier of South Australia, whose administration is advancing the state's competitiveness through investment in advanced manufacturing, AI and quantum, advanced aerospace and aviation, and workforce development. The delegation also held discussions with Mr. John Piteo, CEO of FUNDS SA, South Australia's \$50 billion government-owned investment corporation. Adelaide—home to the Australian Space Agency, Lot Fourteen innovation precinct, and leading universities—serves as a backdrop for exploring how regional hubs of innovation are driving national and global economic leadership.

To learn more about the Delegation and the trip, please [visit the trip webpage here](#).



The U.S.-Australia Innovation Dialogue

Photo Credit: Dynamic Visuals

[Photo Caption](#)



Signing of the Compact for a Strategic U.S.-Australia Innovation Alliance

Photo Credit: Dynamic Visuals

Left to right: Mr. Charles Kiefel AM, Chairman, Australian Advisory Board on Competitiveness, and The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness.



Delegation Meeting at Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

Photo Credit: CSIRO

[Photo Caption](#)



Delegation Meeting at Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering (ATSE)

Photo Credit: ATSE

[Photo Caption](#)



Delegation Meeting with the Premier of South Australia

Photo Credit: Premier of South Australia Representative

[Photo Caption](#)

The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith Keynotes Brasília, Brazil's Largest Innovation Conference



Left to Right: Mr. Carlos Jacobino, President, Information Industry Union of Distrito Federal (SINFOR-DF); The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness; The Hon. Izalci Lucas, Senator, Republic for the Federal District; and Ms. Gianna Sagazio, CEO of SOSA Brasil.

Photo Credit: Brasília Mais TI Technology Showcase

In August, Council President and CEO Deborah L. Wince-Smith keynoted the 7th [Brasília Mais TI](#) Technology Showcase — Brazil's leading forum on innovation and technology. With more than 5,000 business, government, and academic leaders in attendance, Deborah highlighted how converging technologies can be leveraged to boost productivity, enhance security, and foster shared prosperity. The conference broadened the international reach of the Council and its National Commission.

[Learn more about the event and explore her full insights.](#)

Council Community News

**Academy of Legal Studies in Business Honors University of Georgia
President Jere Morehead with 2025 Distinguished Career Achievement Award**



Photo Credit: Academy of Legal Studies in Business

The Academy of Legal Studies in Business (ALSB) awarded its 2025 Distinguished Career Achievement Award to University of Georgia President Jere Morehead. President Morehead also serves as Co-Chair of the Council on Competitiveness' University Leadership Forum. The ALSB's 2025 Distinguished Career Achievement Award recognizes a career of excellence across research, teaching, service, and administration. At the ceremony on July 31, Academic Vice-chair of the Council on Competitiveness and University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Joan Gabel, the ALSB's 2024 Distinguished Career Achievement Awardee, presented the 2025 award to her friend and former law professor.

LLNL Director Kim Budil Named to Forbes "50 Over 50" List



Photo Credit: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Forbes has named Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Director Kim Budil to its 2025 "50 Over 50" list, honoring leaders whose innovation, influence, and impact are shaping the future. Featured in the *Innovation* category, Dr. Budil is celebrated as the first woman to lead LLNL in its 70+ year history and for landmark achievements, including the first-ever lab demonstration of fusion ignition and the installation of the world's fastest supercomputer, *El Capitan*. Budil leads 8,700 employees and a \$3 billion annual budget, advancing LLNL's mission at the nexus of science, national security, and economic competitiveness. "This recognition reflects the excellence, innovative spirit, and dedication of the extraordinary people I have the privilege to represent," she said. Read more about [Dr. Budil's recognition here](#).

Idaho National Laboratory and Idaho State University Launch Critical Materials Building to Strengthen America's Strategic Supply Chains



Left to Right: Dr. Robert Wagner, President, Idaho State University; and Dr. John Wagner, Laboratory Director, Idaho National Laboratory.

Photo Credit: Idaho Business Review

Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and Idaho State University (ISU) officially rededicated the former CAES Building in Idaho Falls as the Critical Materials and Energy Systems Innovation Center — now referred to as the Critical Materials Building. The 55,000 sq. ft. facility will serve as a joint hub for advancing research in critical and strategic minerals and materials. The launch reflects INL's and ISU's leadership in strengthening the domestic supply chain for materials vital to electric vehicles, wind turbines, advanced nuclear energy, and national defense systems. The dedication ceremony featured remarks from long-time Council partner Dr. John Wagner, INL Laboratory Director and National Commissioner Dr. Robert Wagner, ISU President. [Discover this new center here.](#)

Purdue University and Los Alamos National Laboratory Sign MOU to Advance National Security Research

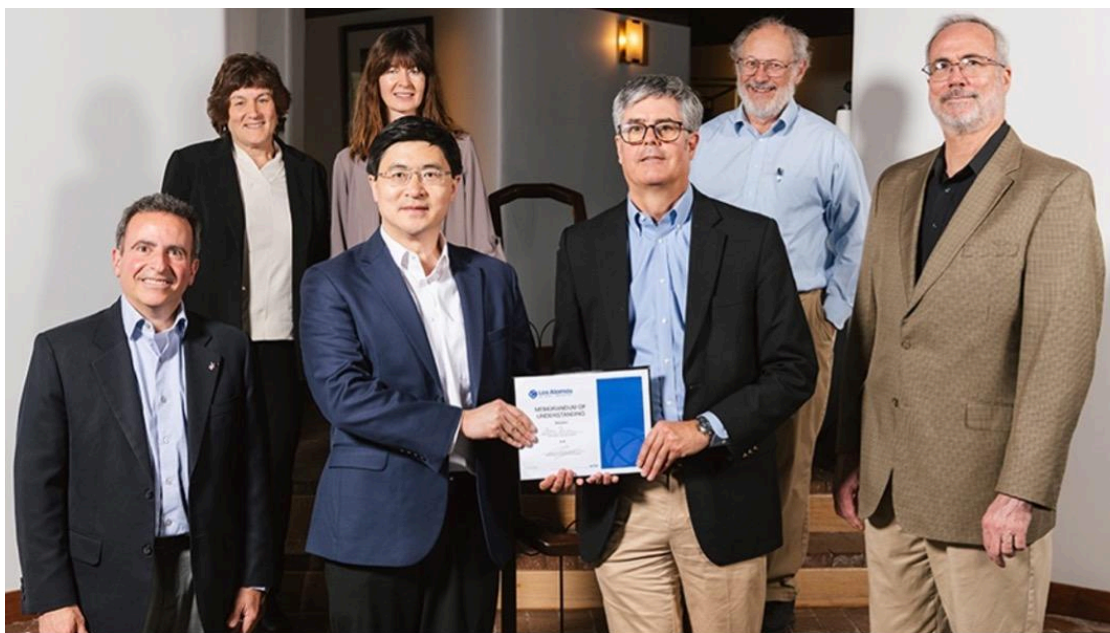


Photo Credit: Purdue University

Council Executive Committee Member Mung Chiang, President of Purdue University, and National Commission Co-chair Dr. Thom Mason, Director of Los Alamos National Laboratory, have signed a landmark memorandum of understanding to accelerate collaboration on research central to U.S. national security. The agreement establishes a framework for joint work in hypersonic

materials, cybersecurity, AI-driven computational modeling, and energetics. As part of this partnership, Los Alamos will create its first duty station near Purdue.

As noted by President Chiang, “Purdue researchers have collaborated with Los Alamos National Lab researchers for decades since the Manhattan Project. This MOU creates a new framework for partnering ... to make critical advances that strengthen our national security.” [Learn more about this partnership here.](#)

University of South Florida Vice President Sylvia Thomas Shows How Florida’s Research is Driving Innovation and Jobs



Photo Credit: University of South Florida

Dr. Sylvia Wilson Thomas, Vice President for Research and Innovation at the University of South Florida, in an op-ed with VPRs from universities across the state, highlights how Florida’s public universities are translating \$3 billion in annual research into real-world impact — 800 patents, 83 startups, and nearly 4,000 jobs since 2022 — not to mention the broader impact of research on health care, agriculture, technology, and community resilience. Thomas showcases how the One State University System approach aligns all 12 universities to tackle pressing challenges, ensuring Florida remains a national leader in innovation and economic growth. [Read the full article here.](#)

Competitiveness News

White House OSTP Director and Council Distinguished Fellow Emeritus Michael Kratsios Urges Congress to Act to Secure AI Leadership



Michael Kratsios — Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and Council Distinguished Fellow Emeritus—urged lawmakers to take decisive action to ensure U.S. leadership in artificial intelligence. Speaking at a July 30 CSIS event, Mr. Kratsios said the success of the new AI Action Plan depends on establishing uniform federal regulations and avoiding a patchwork of state rules. [Read Kratsios' main points here.](#)

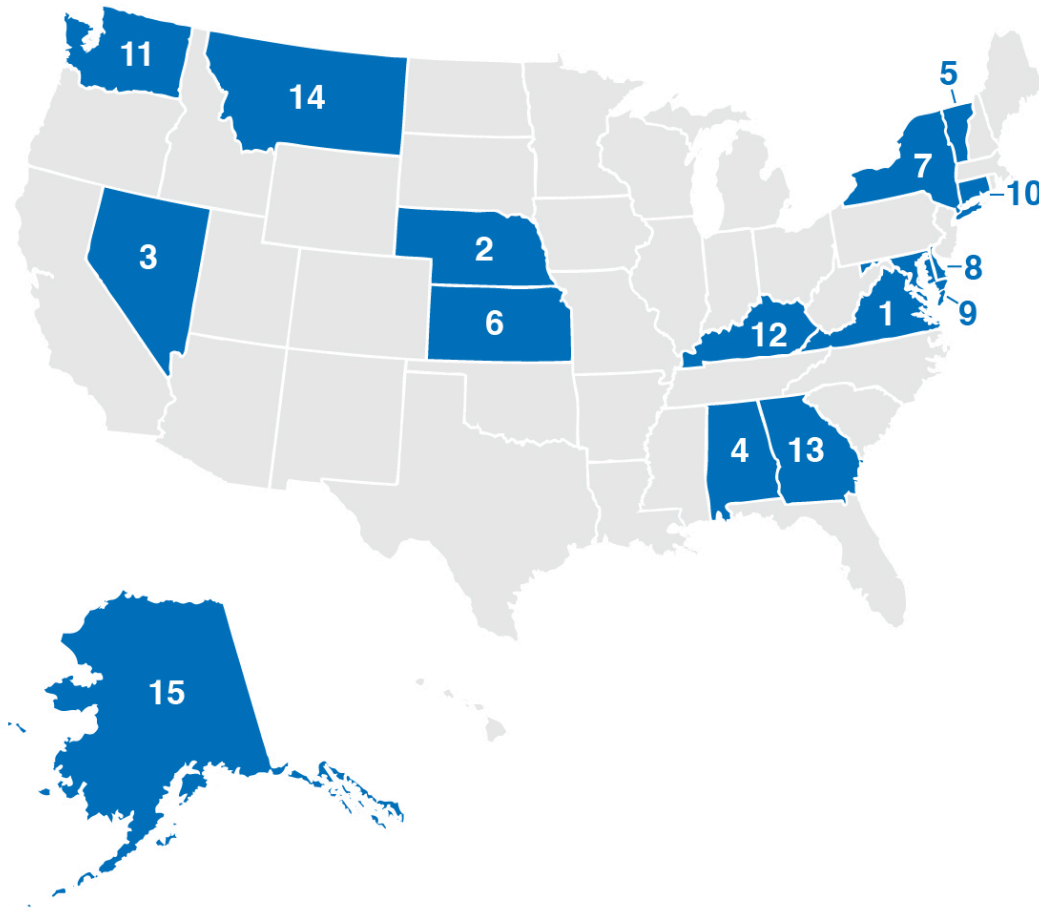
Photo Credit: MeriTalk

Council Insight

15 States Adopting ChatGPT the Fastest

U.S. States with Fastest Quarter-Over-Quarter User Growth

Source: OpenAI, *Unlocking Economic Opportunity: A First Look at ChatGPT-Powered Productivity*, July 2025.



Data Source: [OpenAI](#)

Having just launched in November 2022, ChatGPT has grown to [800 million weekly users as of May 2025](#). In July 2025, OpenAI data show that states including Utah, Vermont, Delaware, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Colorado, New Hampshire, Oregon, Minnesota, Washington, New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, Montana, and California have the fastest quarter-over-quarter user growth of the service. Given the diversity of these states across multiple factors, this rapid growth signals AI productivity tools are spreading rapidly beyond those states typically considered high-tech.

Nationwide, [28 percent of employed adults now use ChatGPT at work](#)—up from just eight percent compared to 2023—while Americans send over [330 million daily messages](#) to the platform. [According to the Pew Research Center](#), top use cases include learning and upskilling (20 percent), writing and communication (18 percent), and programming and data analysis (7 percent). And younger users dominate adoption—over half are under 35—suggesting long-term economic gains as AI-native workers enter and advance in the labor force.

This rapid uptake, fueled by low barriers to entry, broad use cases, and free access tiers, reinforces the expectation of many that AI is a key driver of future U.S. productivity growth.

Fellows Insight

Nationally Coordinated Innovation: America's Answer to China, Inc.



In the Council on Competitiveness's August Fellows Insight, Dr. Thomas A. Campbell — Council Fellow and Co-founder & Growth Director of LEAP Manufacturing— examines the growing U.S. dependence on China for critical minerals, manufacturing tools, and processing equipment that underpin both national security and economic strength. He details how the Chinese Communist Party's "whole-of-government, whole-of-industry" strategy — which he refers to as

China, Inc. — has strategically positioned China to dominate emerging technologies and disrupt U.S. supply chains.

Dr. Campbell calls for a nationally coordinated, three-pillar approach to restore America's manufacturing autonomy: creating strategic stockpiles and investing in critical minerals; building robust, multi-state innovation ecosystems; and leveraging U.S. leadership in artificial intelligence to accelerate domestic manufacturing. He argues that decisive, whole-of-country action can secure resilient supply chains, maintain U.S. technological leadership, and safeguard the nation's long-term security and prosperity.

[Read Dr. Campbell's full *Fellow Insight* here.](#)

CONTACT US

CONNECT WITH COMPETE



The Council On Competitiveness | 900 17th St. NW Suite 700 | Washington , DC 20006 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!