

# Compete Connect

November 2025 Edition

## From the CEO's Desk



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

Dear Council on Competitiveness Community,

In this season of Thanksgiving, the Council team is grateful for so much — starting with our members and the broader Council community. Because of you, the Council has had the opportunity to engage in and lead some of the most important policy conversations facing our nation for nearly 40 years — and, in doing so, having tremendous impact.

Thanksgiving is also a time for optimism. Our series of “Competitiveness Conversations Across America” have reminded me there is no more innovative, productive, or prosperous place to build a life, raise a family, or grow a business than here in the United States. Our work is dedicated to ensuring the nation’s long-term productivity, security, and prosperity endures today and for generations to come.

And as we approach the end of the year and our [2025 National Competitiveness Forum \(NCF\)](#), I want to offer my sincere appreciation to all who are making this gathering possible. Your sponsorship, thought leadership, and participation — all tracking toward what promises to be our best NCF yet — are critical not only to making the NCF a world-class event, but also to supporting our work year-round.

Registration for the NCF is still open [here](#), and [sponsorship benefits](#) remain

available for those who wish to bolster this flagship event.

We have an exceptional NCF program planned, featuring renowned speakers addressing topics critical to U.S. competitiveness — from AI, quantum, and supercomputing, to place-making innovation, and to strengthening national and energy security through innovation.

And a core focus of this year's NCF will be advancing the U.S. bioeconomy — a projected \$30 trillion global sector poised to transform every aspect of how we work and live. My latest Forbes.com article addresses this opportunity, highlighting how breakthroughs in biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and regional innovation ecosystems are positioning the United States — *with the right policies in place* — for leadership in this transformative sector. I encourage you to take a few minutes to read and share the article — find on [Forbes.com here](#).

While planning for the NCF is full-time work, our team is already looking ahead to 2026, working to deliver an even stronger slate of programming. We are actively planning the next editions of our “Competitiveness Conversations”: Baltimore and College Park, March 23-24; Omaha, April 29-30; and San Diego, July 20-22. Each will bring together leaders from business, academia, government, and the national laboratories to explore strategies for sustained U.S. competitiveness. Also, of course, we will share early in the new year plans for our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 2026 National Competitiveness Forum.

In this season of thanks, let me, on behalf of the Council team, end by saying how deeply grateful we are for your support, collaboration, and dedication to building a more innovative and competitive United States. We wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and joyful Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

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

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## Council News

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[Join the Council for the 2025 Gala Dinner & National Competitiveness Forum](#)

# 2025 National Competitiveness Forum



**Salamander Washington D.C.**

1330 Maryland Ave SW

Washington, D.C. 20024

**Annual Dinner**

December 15

**National Competitiveness Forum**

December 16

Join 200 of the nation's top leaders at the Council on Competitiveness' flagship event, the 2025 National Competitiveness Forum (NCF), December 15–16 at the Salamander, Washington, D.C.

[NCF registration is still open.](#)

Importantly, Council Members enjoy a significant discount; contact Council Executive Vice President and COO Chad Evans for the code.

The NCF is your chance to engage directly with CEOs, university presidents, labor leaders, national lab directors, and top government officials as we explore the trends, policies, and breakthroughs shaping U.S. competitiveness today and for decades to come.

Highlights include:

- Forging the Future: Quantum, AI & Supercomputing – How can the U.S. lead in the technologies powering the next economy?
- Building the “Bio+” Economy – Opportunities and challenges in a sector projected to hit \$30 trillion by 2050.
- Igniting Innovation Across America – Bold strategies to expand opportunity, strengthen resilience, and secure U.S. leadership globally.

Dive into dynamic keynotes, tech talks, and cross-sector panel discussions, connect with peers, and help shape the national innovation and competitiveness agenda that will help define the future of U.S. innovation and economic leadership.

If you have questions about attending, please email [Chad Evans here](#).

[Click to Register](#)

**A BIG Thank You to our Current 2025 NCF Sponsors:**

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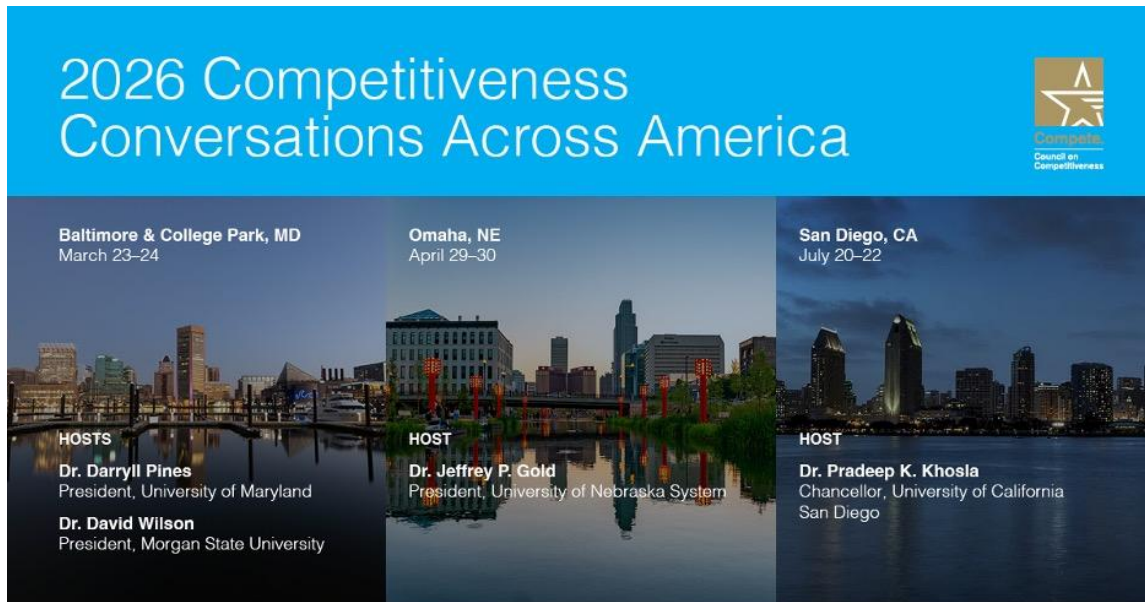
NCF 2025 Sponsorships are Available — Secure Your Spot



Generous benefits are available to 2025 NCF sponsors, including distinctive visibility and engagement with leaders shaping the future of U.S. competitiveness. Find more details in the [sponsorship brochure](#), and please email [Chad Evans](#) if you would like to join your peers in supporting the NCF.

[Click for 2025 NCF Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

## Mark Your Calendars for the 2026 Competitiveness Conversations



The Competitiveness Conversations Across America series is going east to west in 2026, as we dive into the innovation ecosystems shaping the next decade of U.S. competitiveness.

The series kicks off March 23–24 in Baltimore and College Park, MD, with a focus on *unlocking U.S. innovation in the AI and quantum era*—hosted by Morgan State University President David Wilson and University of Maryland President Darryll Pines. Then we head to Omaha, NE, on April 29–30, where University of Nebraska System President Jeff Gold will cohost an edition focused on “Leading the New Frontier in the Global Bioeconomy.” Finally, we head to the Pacific Coast July 20–22, where University of California San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla will welcome participants to one of the nation’s — and world’s — most important innovation ecosystems, encompassing information technology and telecommunications, transformative computing, biotechnology, security, and space. Learn more about the [2026 Competitiveness Conversations here](#).

## The U.S. Bioeconomy: From Farm to Factory — A Generational Opportunity

The Council’s September Executive Committee and National Commissioner meeting in Lafayette, Indiana — made possible with the support of National Commissioner Jim Stutelberg — brought together leaders from across the bioeconomy value chain. The meeting was expansive (a full summary report to follow in December), but one message rose to prominence: the United States is distinctively positioned to lead the global bioeconomy—if we act now. Wince-Smith outlines the stakes, the key opportunities, and the path ahead in her latest Forbes.com piece. Read it [here](#).

### DOE Renews Q-NEXT for Five Years, Advancing the Future of U.S. Quantum Science



Photo credit: [Paul Kearns LinkedIn](#)

The U.S. Department of Energy announced a five-year renewal of Q-NEXT, the national Quantum Information Science Research Center led by Argonne — headed by Laboratory Director Dr. Paul Kearns (National Commissioner) — in partnership with SLAC. Since 2020, Q-NEXT — with partners across government, academia, and industry — has shaped the nation's quantum ecosystem through foundational research, national foundries, and workforce development. The center is poised to advance its renewed mission, harnessing distributed entanglement to demonstrate scalable quantum platforms, enabling breakthroughs from chip-to-chip to city-to-city quantum communication. DOE Undersecretary for Science Darío Gil provided the keynote at the Chicago Quantum Summit. Read the announcement [here](#).

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### University of Texas San Antonio Merger Sets a New Model for Public Higher Education



Photo Credit: The Chronicle of Higher Education  
Left to right: UTSA President, Taylor Eighmy, PhD;

The University of Texas System has officially merged UT San Antonio with UT Health San Antonio, creating the state's third-largest research university and a new model for public higher education transformation. As highlighted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, UTSA President Taylor Eighmy (Executive Committee member) describes the merger as a bold response to a shifting higher-ed

Senior Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and Health System, Francisco Cigarroa, MD

landscape — uniting complementary strengths in biomedical science, healthcare, AI, and cybersecurity to meet regional and national workforce needs. Read more [here](#).

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### Notre Dame Launches Decade-Long Research Partnership



Photo credit: University of Notre Dame

Pictured: TLSI member Jeffrey F. Rhoads, John and Catherine Martin Family Vice President for Research, and professor in the Department of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering

The University of Notre Dame and has announced a 10-year partnership with Under Armour to drive joint research and innovation across materials science, sustainability, data analytics, and human performance. TLSI member Jeffrey F. Rhoads, VPR at Notre Dame, said, “We are thrilled by this evolution in our relationship ... which will ... drive excellence in the research lab and shape the next generation of elite scientific, engineering, and business innovators.” More about this exciting partnership is available [here](#).

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### University of Arizona Driving Southern Arizona’s Rise as a Tech Hub



Photo credit: Photo by Brent G. Mathis; biztucson.com

Left to right: Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, SVP for Research & Partnerships, University of Arizona; Suresh Garimella, President, University of Arizona.

The University of Arizona is anchoring Southern Arizona’s economic growth through research, workforce development, and industry partnerships. Under President



Suresh Garimella's (Executive Committee) leadership, UA is expanding cutting-edge programs in AI, semiconductor manufacturing, fusion energy, precision agriculture, and biomedical engineering — while working diligently to boost employer engagement. With a focus on translating research into solutions and building a robust talent pipeline, UA aims to grow its research enterprise to \$2 billion annually, strengthening Arizona's competitiveness in the technologies that will shape the next economy. Learn more about the University of Arizona's impact [here](#).

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### **The College Autism Network Honors Council Member and The Precisionist, Inc. CEO Ernest Dianastasis for Neurodiversity Leadership**

The College Autism Network honors employers creating programs that recruit, support, and advance autistic and neurodivergent professionals. Under Dianastasis' leadership, TPI is on a mission to create 10,000 careers for neurodiverse adults nationwide — achieving this recognition in less than 10 years. TPI now joins past winners like JPMorganChase, IBM, Dell Technologies, and Wells Fargo.

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### **University of Tennessee Receives APLU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Award**



*Photo Credit: University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

*Pictured: University of Tennessee, Knoxville Chancellor Donde Plowman (left) accepts the 2025 Connections Award from University of Vermont President Marlene Tromp (right) at the annual meeting of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. The Connections Award is the top prize in the Innovation and Economic Prosperity awards category.*

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville received the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' (APLU) Innovation and Economic Prosperity Economic Engagement Connections Award for its leadership in driving innovation, regional development, and community impact. UT was also recognized for its achievements in student success and community engagement.



“It’s an honor to be recognized for such a prestigious award that validates our mission—supporting our state and improving life for Tennesseans,” said Chancellor Donde Plowman (Executive Committee Member). “I’m proud of our faculty and students for leading the way in research and collaboration that directly benefit our communities.” Read more about the award [here](#).

## ORNL Director Stephen Streiffer Honored with ANS Presidential Citation



Photo Credit: Carlos Jones, ORNL/  
U.S. Dept. of Energy

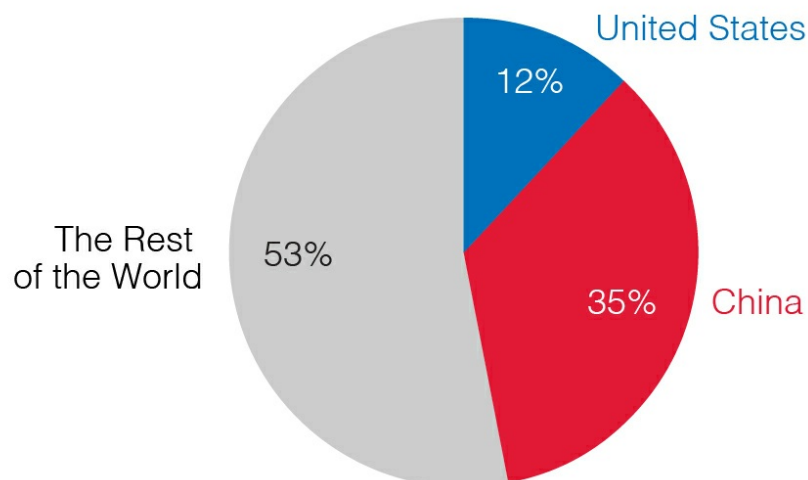
The American Nuclear Society awards Oak Ridge National Laboratory Director and National Commissioner Stephen Streiffer the prestigious Presidential Citation, recognizing his leadership in advancing nuclear energy, innovation, and national scientific infrastructure. Under Streiffer’s direction, ORNL is leveraging next-generation capabilities — from AI-driven supercomputing to breakthrough materials science — to accelerate nuclear progress and strengthen U.S. competitiveness. The Council congratulates Director Streiffer and the entire ORNL team on this well-deserved honor. Details about the award can be found on ORNL's website [here](#).

## Council Insight

### Global Manufacturing Power Is Concentrating — and the U.S. Must Compete Strategically

#### Share of Global Manufacturing Output

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development



Recent data on global manufacturing output spotlights a stark reality: China now accounts for 35 percent of the world’s manufacturing, nearly three times the United

States' share. The remaining 53 percent is spread across the rest of the world. This concentration is of strategic significance. Manufacturing underpins innovation ecosystems, supply chain resilience, national security, and long-term economic competitiveness.

For the United States, the declining share of global manufacturing is both an economic concern and strategic vulnerability. When production moves abroad, so too do the associated R&D investments, talent pipelines linked to advanced industries, ability to shape global standards, capability to secure and produce critical inputs, and technological leadership. Semiconductors illustrate this vividly: the enormous cost of reshoring production and expanding domestic talent underscores the risks of overreliance on foreign manufacturing.

In an era where supply chains are increasingly intertwined with geopolitics, domestic capability in biotechnology, emerging materials, advanced energy systems, critical minerals, and, yes, semiconductors is essential. The United States cannot afford to rely heavily on external production for technologies that define both economic strength and national security.

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## Fellows Insights



### NOVEMBER FELLOW INSIGHT

America's AI  
Moment: The Race  
We Must Win



Artificial intelligence is no longer the future — it is transforming the rules of the U.S. economy, national security, and global competitiveness today.

In our November Fellow Insight, Mark Minevich, Senior Fellow, Council on Competitiveness, and Strategic Partner, Mayfield, breaks down the stakes and presents a seven-point blueprint for keeping America at the forefront of AI. Do not miss Minevich's essential *Fellows Insight* — [linked here.](#)

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## New to Our Community

### [Dr. Jud Virden](#)

Laboratory Director  
National Renewable Energy



Laboratory (NREL)

Dr. Viriden joins the Council as a National Commissioner

Photo Credit: NREL



[Mr. Garry Jenkins](#)

President  
Bates College

President Jenkins joins the Council as a Member

Photo Credit: Bates College

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