



September 6, 2022

Charles Perfetti
Director
Learning Research and Development Center
3420 Forbes Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Dear Chuck:

In a year that was, once again, like no other in our lifetime, I thank you and the Learning Research and Development Center for your resilience and perseverance. Your efforts in the face of a continued global pandemic have been inspirational. You faced the Delta and Omicron COVID waves—and all the complications and teaching and learning concerns that came with them. I am both amazed and grateful for the ways our University community has responded to this ongoing situation. I certainly hope for a return to more normal operations in the months ahead. I also hope that we will continue to take the very best lessons from this experience to advance our institutional mission.

Despite the challenges, this was a productive year for the LRDC. I am glad that you are happy with the move to the Murdoch Building and that the new space lends itself to collaboration. It's also great to hear that you continue to work through the goals of your 2020 Strategic Plan, including launching a new website, boosting visibility of the LRDC's efforts, and creating a Learning Sciences Transcript Distinction for undergraduate students, which complements the center's robust undergraduate research portfolio.

In addition, the center has also devoted effort to equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. I appreciate that the center's DEI committee hosted discussions focused on building racial and cultural competence, equitable practices, and belonging, and it's outstanding that all units within the center have this as a key goal. I am also pleased to know that you are exploring ways to increase diversity among faculty, graduate students, and postdocs. As well, it is exciting that several Research-Practice Partnerships work with and provide opportunities for underrepresented students at the K-12 level.

I am also glad that strengthening graduate student support is a priority for the coming year with a focus on multi-year offers and fellowships.

Support for students and employees continues to be a particular focus for the LRDC. It is great that you encourage professional development training for staff and that the center has developed

a path to help research staff establish longer-term positions as well as to receive career mentoring from faculty.

On the research and engagement fronts, the center continues to be a powerhouse. I applaud your ongoing success with external grant applications, netting a five-year average of \$36.5 million. And I am delighted to see that the LRDC continues to lead in the area of Research-Practice Partnerships in educational research with an impressive list of programs and partnerships. In addition, it is wonderful to see the ways in which numerous other LRDC projects exert a local, regional, and even global impact, and I encourage you to explore areas where you might build additional productive partnerships.

Members of the LRDC received a number of nice accolades this year, including an Excellence in Research Award from the Society for Social Work and Research, an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, mentoring excellence awards, and recognition as top-cited researchers, not to mention features in national magazine articles.

In the coming year, it is good to know that you will be focusing on hosting a board of visitors meeting, welcoming new faculty into the team, reestablishing the strong in-person culture of the center, and bringing on a new executive director for the Institute of Learning, Angela Allie.

As I expect you are aware, the 2022-2023 academic year will be the Year of Emotional Well-Being. I hope that the center finds ways to engage with this Year of—through program development or other means—as I expect that there could be some exciting synergies.

I have enjoyed reviewing the Learning Research and Development Center's progress over the past year with members of my Cabinet, and I sincerely appreciate the good work that was done.

Sincerely,



Ann E. Cudd