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STATEMENT From:
ASSEMBLYMAN ROBIN SCHIMMINGER

“When University at Buffalo President Satish Tripathi approached me over the legislative break about establishing a second Center of Excellence – in material informatics, I immediately sprang into action and was successful in gaining support from my State Assembly colleagues for inclusion in the Assembly one-house resolution.

UB has developed areas of research strength in recent years through strategic faculty hiring in certain science and engineering areas, which could play a vital role in addressing global crisis in the availability of rare earth elements – often used in high-demand consumer products such as cell phones, televisions, computers and automobiles. Mining and refining rare earths present considerable environmental drawbacks, often leading to countries neglecting their own reserves. China, however, has exploited its supply of rare earth metals with little regard for the environmental consequences, resulting in a large control of the global supply.

The concept of establishing a second Center of Excellence at UB – in material informatics – would be research intensive and would leverage existing state resources, lend itself to industry collaboration and public-private partnerships that fit with the energy highway and global energy hub concepts outlined by the Western New York Regional Economic Development concept. Once established, research scientists at UB can accelerate the discovery and commercialization of new advanced synthetic versions of these rare earth elements, putting New York at the forefront of restoring and growing our nation’s global competitive advantage.

The UB Center of Excellence in Material Informatics legislation included in the Assembly one-house budget mirrors the language that would establish a second Center of Excellence at Stony Brook University as included in the Governor’s 21-day amendments to his Aid to Localities budget bill (S.6253/A.9053).

It’s unfortunate that the Senate did not feel it necessary to include UB second Center of Excellence in its Senate one house resolution although it included Stony Brook’s. However, I remain hopeful that the second Center of Excellence at UB will be included in our final budget adoption.”

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