



*Press Release*

**Tuesday, October 11, 2016**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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## **SURA To Honor Senator Warner with “Friend of Science” Award**

**Washington, DC** – SURA today announced that the U.S. Senator Mark Warner would receive its 2016 Distinguished Friend of Science Award during its Board of Trustees meeting on November 3. The Senator is being honored for his extraordinary efforts to “advance collaborative research and education and to strengthen the scientific capabilities” of our nation.

“Senator Warner has been a tireless champion of the innovation agenda on Capitol Hill, and has brought to Congress a common sense approach to fostering opportunities to the global economy,” said Gordon Gee, President of West Virginia University and Chair of the SURA Council of Presidents and Executive Committee. “He brings a needed bi-partisan voice of advocacy for research and science investments.”

As Governor of Virginia from 2002-06, Warner supported growing the Commonwealth’s general support for Jefferson Lab – the nuclear physics research lab in Newport News, managed by SURA for the U.S. Department of Energy. That funding had fallen by one-third due to budget cuts, but was brought back to its historical \$1M level under Governor Warner. That support also laid the groundwork for the 12GeV Upgrade contribution of \$9M from Virginia in the next governor’s term. That contribution helped keep the lab’s \$328M upgrade on schedule, ensuring the lab’s high reputation and performance within the national lab complex. Additionally, Governor Warner participated in SURA’s 2003 announcement of AT&T’s donation of dark fiber to help grow the next generation IT infrastructure. Those assets helped leverage growth within regional research and education networking organizations within Virginia and across the country.

“As a former technology executive, I know the vital role government can play in encouraging entrepreneurship and the development of new technologies. We need to increase —not scale back—this support so we can continue to be a leader in the field of science around the world,” said Sen. Warner. “I want to thank SURA for this valuable distinction. I look forward to help continue the strong partnerships we began during my time as Governor so we can build on the progress we have made, and power the future innovations that will provide new methods of productivity, security systems, and medical advances to the benefit our society.”

In the Senate, Warner has been committed to ensuring student access to the quality education and training needed to succeed in our global economy, without the burden of crippling student debt. Senator Warner co-sponsored the Computer Science Education and Jobs Act, a proposal to promote and increase computer science and STEM education. He was also helpful in passage of last year’s Omnibus Appropriations Bill that included permanent extension of the Research and Development Tax Credit, which helps encourage business innovation, research and collaboration. The Senator also serves as the co-chair of the Senate Science Forum and was co-

founder of the Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine (VASEM) – which “promotes research and the application of knowledge in science, engineering and medicine.”

The SURA Distinguished Friend of Science Award was established in 2006 to commemorate the organization’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. SURA’s Executive Committee manages the solicitation, screening and selection of the recipient for this award. Past honorees included U.S. Senators Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and John Warner of Virginia; Norman Augustine, former CEO of Lockheed Martin and advocate for American leadership in research and innovation; Chuck Robb, former governor and U.S. Senator from Virginia; Neal Lane, former NSF Director and White House science advisor; and the Task Force for American Innovation. Each of SURA’s 59 member institutions is eligible to nominate candidates for the award.

Senator Warner will be presented the award at a reception held in conjunction with the SURA Board of Trustees Fall Meeting in Arlington, Virginia.

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*The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit [www.sura.org](http://www.sura.org).*