

School chief wants renewed science focus

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The president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute wants U.S. President George Bush to urge a renewed national focus on science and technology.

Shirley Ann Jackson wants Bush to use his Tuesday night State of the Union address to outline a national agenda to "spark a legacy of innovation."

Jackson has long warned of what she calls the "Quiet Crisis" in the United States -- the threat to the nation's capacity to innovate due to a looming shortage in the nation's science and technology workforce.

"Mr. President, our science and technology position is a looming national crisis because it robs us of our capacity for innovation (that's) so critical for our economic and national security," Jackson wrote in her January 25th letter to Bush. "Just as President Kennedy galvanized the nation in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik, so too could you galvanize the nation around energy security -- indeed, energy security is the 'space race' of the 21st century."

Jackson is chairwoman of the board and past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, former chairwoman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

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