

October 25, 2019

France A. Córdova
Director
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: 2020 GRFP Awards

Dear Dr. Córdova:

We are writing to express our strong support for NSF's Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) and to encourage NSF to fund at least the same number of awards this year as were funded last year. We recognize, as we know that you do, that GRFP awards encourage the best and brightest students to pursue STEM as a career and recognize those individuals who propose to conduct meritorious scientific research capable of broad impacts; they set promising students on a trajectory for success in their scientific careers.

With the GRFP annual submission and review process now occurring, we are concerned, per the current GRFP program solicitation, that NSF is planning to reduce the number of awards to below the previous year's level. A cut in the number of awards sends an unintended message to those at early career levels that NSF's support is declining and risks affecting women and those from underrepresented groups disproportionately.

In FY 2019, NSF funded 2,000 new fellowships; we strongly urge you to support at least that many in FY 2020. This recommendation echoes the support for GRFP recently relayed by the Senate in the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2020, which, as you know, reads, "The Committee does not adopt the proposed funding reductions for the ... Graduate Research Fellowship and instead provides the fiscal year 2019 funding level for these programs" (S. Rept. 116-127, p. 168).

Continuing to make the GRFP a priority at NSF will affirm to potential student scientists and engineers that more of them, not fewer, should pursue STEM careers, a goal we all share.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations

American Association of Physics Teachers
American Chemical Society
American Geophysical Union
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Mathematical Society
American Physiological Society
American Phytopathological Society
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society for Investigative Pathology
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association for Psychological Science
Association for Women in Mathematics
Association of American Universities
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Biophysical Society
Computing Research Association
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cornell University
Council of Graduate Schools
Council on Undergraduate Research
Crop Science Society of America
Duke University
Ecological Society of America
Georgia Institute of Technology
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology
Mathematical Association of America
Natural Science Collections Alliance
Northwestern University
OSA-The Optical Society
Population Association of America
Princeton University
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Society for Research in Child Development
Soil Science Society of America
UCLA
University of California System
University of Florida
Washington State University
West Virginia University