

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