

Member Societies

The American Physiological Society
 American Society for Biochemistry and
 Molecular Biology
 American Society for Pharmacology and
 Experimental Therapeutics
 American Society for Investigative
 Pathology
 American Society for Nutrition
 The American Association of
 Immunologists
 American Association of Anatomists
 The Protein Society
 Society for Developmental Biology
 American Peptide Society
 Association of Biomolecular Resource
 Facilities
 The American Society for Bone and
 Mineral Research
 American Society for Clinical
 Investigation
 Society for the Study of Reproduction
 Teratology Society
 The Endocrine Society
 The American Society of Human
 Genetics
 Society for Gynecologic Investigation
 Environmental Mutagen Society
 International Society for
 Computational Biology
 American College of Sports Medicine
 Biomedical Engineering Society

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FASEB Recommendations for the NIH Transition Team

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) comprises 22 research societies involved in basic, translational, and clinical research and represents more than 80,000 scientists. The recommendations below are derived from position statements approved by the FASEB Board of Directors:

Restore Sustainable Funding Levels for Research

Our quality of life and hopes for a better future are inextricably linked to research. Research is also a major economic driver that, in recent years, accounts for 50% of the growth in the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. We strongly support President-Elect Obama's plan to double the research budgets for key science agencies, including NIH, within ten years. This requires annual increases of approximately 7.2%. Funding for the backlog of peer-reviewed scientific proposals with excellent evaluations should be included in short-term allocations geared toward rapidly stimulating the economy.

Emphasize Investigator-Initiated Research

Investigator-initiated, competitive, peer reviewed grants, a distinguishing characteristic of the NIH that has made our nation the world's leader in biomedical research, must remain the core mechanism for distributing research funding. This mechanism allows highly skilled, innovative scientists to help set the directions for basic, translational, and clinical research based on their unique expertise and preliminary data. Investments in investigator-initiated peer reviewed research ensure that federal taxpayers' dollars support the best science. Funding for R01 grants, the principal mechanism for investigator-initiated research, has declined from 74.6% of the research grant budget in 2000 to 65.2% in 2007. The total number of R01 grants has decreased by 1,200 since 2004. We urge the new NIH Director to halt this erosion of support for investigator-initiated research.

Continue to Foster the Development of the Research Workforce

Economic pressures caused by flat science budgets are threatening the survival of the world's most productive research workforce. Reduced funding for training programs and declining funding opportunities are discouraging talented and highly trained individuals from entering or continuing in research careers. At a time when the scientific challenges and opportunities are greater than ever, we risk losing a generation of new scientists with fresh insights and ideas. With researchers' careers increasingly dependent on securing external funding, it is a growing challenge to recruit and maintain the highly talented workforce needed.

Continue Efforts to Improve the Operations of NIH Programs

NIH must continue to examine and improve its organization and operating procedures to ensure maximum efficiency. Consultation and engagement with stakeholders, as was the case in the "Enhancing Peer Review" initiative, will lead to optimal results.

Promote Awareness of NIH Accomplishments

The NIH must continue to enhance its outreach efforts, explaining to the public, Congress, and the media how the nation's investment in the health sciences is improving our quality of life. The Director of NIH must be able to effectively communicate the return on the public investment in biomedical research.

Preserve Public Trust in Science through Management of Financial Conflicts of Interest

While NIH must develop more robust reporting mechanisms, concern over this issue should not shift the responsibility for managing financial conflicts of interest from research institutions and their investigators. The next NIH Director should work closely with the extramural community to develop more effective mechanisms for disclosure and oversight. FASEB has undertaken a program to educate scientists and will work closely with all interested groups.

Protect Against Unnecessary and Ineffective Regulatory Requirements

FASEB endorses the concept that scientists must be exceptionally conscientious stewards of public dollars. Most research regulations are designed to responsibly protect the public interest. However, several recent studies show that the growing regulatory environment has increased research costs and slowed progress. We must resist the over-reaction to threats, both real and perceived. NIH must promote the establishment of responsible standards of conduct and, at the same time, ensure that the public investment in research is used efficiently and productively. One immediate reform would be to make financial conflict of interest disclosure a just-in-time process.

Protect the Humane and Appropriate Use of Animals in Research and Education

Animal experimentation remains critical to the understanding of the fundamental processes of life and in developing treatments for injury and disease. The use of animals in research and education is a privilege and imposes a major responsibility to provide for proper care and humane treatment. Good animal care and good science go hand-in-hand. Initiatives to ban research on animals are harmful to both human and animal health, and animal researchers must be protected. It is essential for NIH to take a leading role in educating the public about animal research.

Develop Ethical Guidelines for Stem Cell Research

Pluripotent stem cells exhibit great scientific and medical promise. With the anticipated expansion of federal funding available for research using embryonic stem cells, NIH needs to promote responsible conduct of research through scientifically sound, ethical guidelines, such as those produced by the National Academies and the International Society for Stem Cell Research.

FASEB Eagerly Anticipates Working Closely With the New Administration

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology looks forward to working with the Obama administration and the new NIH Director to promote the advancement of biomedical science and to inform the public about the benefits of research.

For Further Information:

- For a compilation of data, advocacy materials, and statements by FASEB and others in the biomedical research community about NIH: www.NIHAdvocacy.org
- For additional information on humane animal research and the harassment of scientists by those who oppose the use of animals in research: www.animalrightsextremism.org
- For more information about FASEB and our biomedical research policy positions: www.opa.faseb.org/