



Dear Colleagues,

Over the last few weeks, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) has been working non-stop to continue advancing the scientific enterprise. Unfortunately, many of the reports from the media and discussion in other forums do not reflect the hard work and dedication shown every day by each of my colleagues. That is why I am taking the opportunity to write to you today.

Since arriving as Director of NSF in June 2020, I have remained true to my pledge to serve the American public and the research community – doing everything within my power to prioritize the mission of NSF and advance the progress of science and engineering to unleash American economic prosperity and strengthen our national security. Let me be clear, my priorities have not changed. Every day, as I arrive at the NSF headquarters in Alexandria, I am renewed in my commitment to this mission, the scientific community and the workforce.

As a federal agency, NSF must navigate the complex landscape of statutory obligations, executive actions, and judicial orders. I recognize that some of the decisions I have made, and the resulting actions the agency has taken, have resulted in real impacts on individuals and institutions. I am not asking you to agree with these decisions, but please know that every action I have taken throughout my tenure thus far has been carefully evaluated through the lens of my commitment to the mission, the scientific community and the workforce. That is why I moved quickly to reinstate the probationary staff when it became clear that the agency had the ability to do so. Each member of the NSF team is crucial to achieving the NSF investments that continue to advance discoveries and innovations throughout the country.

These investments provide an excellent value for the American people. As an example, NSF's Regional Innovation Engines, launched only a year ago with an initial NSF investment of \$150 million, has already garnered more than \$1 billion in partner funding. Thanks to the dedication of our staff, the agency has not slowed down. In fact, we have continued to make significant progress over the past few weeks and have issued 95 percent of our funding as compared to the same time last year. NSF staff have also led more than 290 merit review panels, and made over 600 awards, including nearly 100 CAREER awards across the country.

For example, through NSF's EPSCoR program, NSF invested in strengthening Louisiana's research ecosystem to develop the workforce of the future. We have invested in AI-enabled cyberinfrastructure in Illinois, and advanced chemistry infrastructure in Maryland. Through the SBIR program, NSF invested in a small business in Florida that is working to reduce flooding in coastal communities. In Texas, we invested in furthering the security and privacy of high-performance computing, and in Utah, researchers are working with colleagues in Ireland on scalable, laser-driven manufacturing processes for printable glass. Again, these are just a few examples of important work NSF continues to do every day, across all disciplines of science and engineering.

In his report to President Roosevelt, Vannevar Bush made the case for a sustained national commitment to investing in science. Bush noted how those investments had led to penicillin saving countless lives and how radar had helped win the war. He also went on to say that "What we often forget are the millions of pay envelopes on a peacetime Saturday night which are filled because new products and new industries have provided jobs for countless Americans. Science made that possible too."

NSF will continue to make such things possible – unleashing discoveries and seeding the industries of the future to create jobs, improve lives, and investing in the future. NSF staff continue to work around the clock, even under great stress and uncertainty, to do the hard work that is necessary. They do so because they understand that NSF's mission is incredibly important to our economic and national security. However, it is equally important that everyone who plays a role in the research enterprise also does their part to communicate broadly the value and impact of America's scientific enterprise and what it makes possible for individuals, communities, our states, and the nation.



Sethuraman Panchanathan
Director, U.S. National Science Foundation

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