



American Society for  
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
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Subject: Written Comments from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Advisory Council

The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology represents 12,000 basic life scientists largely conducting their research in academia. Of our members who are funded through federal dollars, many rely on support from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to fund their research. As a society of members who conduct basic research, we greatly support increased funding opportunities that promote the fundamental research that leads to future discoveries and cures. We applaud NINDS' efforts to track basic/basic funding and the institute's efforts to increase funding to basic research. We are appreciative of the NINDS leadership and their views regarding basic science, and encourage them to continue being a leading voice within NIH promoting the idea that basic science provides the foundation necessary for addressing the major public health issues of our time. We fully support the NINDS's reissuance of [PAS-18-483](#) and encourage the institute to continue developing innovative avenues to ensure that basic science thrives.

The ASBMB maintains a Public Affairs Advisory Committee (PAAC) that over the past decade has monitored the evolving policies at the NIH to increase support for the next generation of researchers. We see the efforts to support early- and mid-stage researchers as the most important issue facing the NIH. While the percentage of late career investigators continues to increase, the percentages of early- and mid-career investigators [continues to flatten and decrease respectively](#). It is because of these worrying trends that the ASBMB PAAC finds that developing and adopting new policies to support these at risk demographics is essential. Chaired by Dr. Matthew Gentry, professor of molecular and cellular biochemistry at the University of Kentucky College Of Medicine, and directed by Benjamin Corb, director of public affairs, the PAAC has spent the last year focusing on many of the issues that affect the next generation of biomedical researchers. As representatives of a struggling workforce, the PAAC was very pleased to see that the NINDS funding strategy for FY 2017 included a specific initiative to increase the success rate of early stage investigators. We would like to encourage the institute to not only continue that initiative but also to provide new opportunities to increase support for mid-career investigators at risk of losing funding.

Without robust mechanisms for supporting the next generation, we stand at risk of allowing our training investments to go to waste. The 21st Century Cures Act tasks the director of the NIH to develop new ways to better support the next generation. To achieve this goal the NIH must think boldly and develop new strategies to effectively repair the inequities that exist and provide better



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support for all career levels. The Grant Support Index and now the Next Generation of Researchers Initiative are ideas that in our view move the NIH in the right direction. While not perfect, the ASBMB voiced support for the GSI and provided [feedback](#) on ways in which it could be improved. Now that the NGRI will be the policy moving forward, we are encouraging the NIH to continue its bold thinking by developing guidance that is ubiquitous across all of its institutes. The ASBMB's PAAC will continue to engage with leadership at the NIH and provide [feedback](#) on the NGRI as it develops. Effectively addressing the funding imbalances facing the biomedical research enterprise is critical for ensuring sustainability and will require that every institute at the NIH implements new strategies. We urge the NINDS to help craft and support the recommendations that will be produced by the NGRI.

The ASBMB will continue to support the creation of policies across the NIH to improve the sustainability of the biomedical research enterprise and we hope to work with the advisory committee and leadership moving forward. These issues are of extreme importance to our membership and the broader biomedical research community and we look forward to continuing a dialogue with the NINDS.