



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Office of the President

October 5, 2017

Dear Colleague:

As the president of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), I appreciate the importance of the history and traditions of this venerable institution and my role in protecting and strengthening it. It is also my duty in this position to counter negative opinions and to correct distortions about science and the scientific enterprise. From my conversations around the country, I know that the Academy's work to advance science and its role in the constantly changing social and political landscape is of the utmost importance to our members. The Academy's responsibility to provide independent, evidence-based advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology is ever more necessary in a world of alternative facts. In order to promote our mission and to ensure that science has a strong and effective voice, we depend on support from donors like you. Please join me in making a gift to the NAS annual fund and help strengthen the Academy to better engage the public and policy makers with evidence-based science.

I want to share with you three examples of how private philanthropy allows the NAS to provide objective advice not only to policy makers, but also to society at large. All of these initiatives are intended to illustrate science's role in making life better and solving the problems that confront us as citizens and as a nation. First, we have recently hired a new director of the Koshland public engagement program, which is taking the place of the Koshland Science Museum. Dr. Geoffrey Hunt is leading the effort to expand on the museum's success in inspiring people to use science to solve problems through comprehensive, multi-platform experiences that are participatory, interactive, and immersive. The new Koshland program will promote evidence-based decision making on issues that have significant relevance to communities, and in which science is an important fact. It will engage audiences through online platforms and face-to-face group activities at the NAS Building, as well as other locations around the country.

Second, *From Research to Reward* is a new series that demonstrates how advances in our understanding of natural processes often lead to surprising and remarkable benefits to society. These are true stories of the men and women who strive to solve the puzzle of how the world works and who creatively apply new scientific knowledge to make it a better place. The series currently features six contributions from the social and behavioral sciences and includes social media and other outreach materials for each contribution.

The third initiative we've launched, *America Asks, Science Answers*, is designed to provide brief, easily understood, evidence-based answers to 30 questions about science, based on our consensus studies. We hope to break through the information overload that people face every day, and serve as a source for the facts necessary to making decisions, extending the reach of this information through Wikipedia and social media.

Effective communication with policy makers, industry representatives, and the public will be an integral component to the NAS's future. Despite my optimism about science, I see fundamental changes sweeping the nation and the world, and new situations to which we must adjust. "Business as usual" is not a viable option for the Academy if we are to fulfill our mission and remain relevant. The NAS receives no federal appropriation, and membership dues alone do not provide the sustained support necessary for many of our initiatives and programs. Your philanthropic support is essential to allowing the NAS to better communicate the scientific evidence that underlies solutions to today's most pressing issues, ranging from climate change to vaccine safety.

Many major foundations and other funders look at the rate at which our members give when considering their own funding, so your participation is important. Please join me in supporting the NAS annual fund and help strengthen the Academy while giving science a strong voice to better engage the public and policy makers with evidence-based science. Your contribution at any level will truly make a difference—now and in the future. Thank you for your consideration, your leadership, and your essential role in the National Academy of Sciences and the scientific enterprise.

Sincerely,



Marcia McNutt
President

P.S. Please mark your calendar to attend one of the regional meetings of NAS members that will take place around the country this fall and winter. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear from so many of you during last year's meetings, and look forward to talking with you again. More information about these meetings is being sent by email and is available online at www.nasonline.org/regional-meetings.