



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Office of the President

April 18, 2017

Dear Colleague:

In my first year as president of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), I have travelled extensively to regional meetings, where members discussed the future of the NAS and the role of science in the changing social and political landscape. These meetings and many discussions with individual members have been invaluable and I greatly appreciate this feedback. I hope the recent note to Academy members on our response to these changes clarifies our responsibilities, as well as our limitations. Independent funding is one important prerequisite for our taking action today.

At many of the regional meetings we had frank discussions of the role of philanthropy and the importance of member participation in giving. I think it surprised many members that fundraising is essential to fulfilling the Academy's mission. I can only imagine how many worthy causes you support, because I know that there are many that I contribute to as well, and even more that solicit my help. However, if there ever was a time when the Academy needs your financial support, it is now.

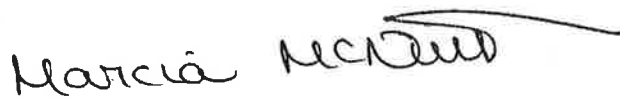
I want to share with you one important example of how your philanthropy allows the NAS to provide independent, objective, and expert scientific advice not just to policy makers, but to all sectors of society. *America Asks; Science Answers* is an exciting new communication effort that asks the public to identify critically important questions about science, to which the Academy will provide short, factual, and accessible answers based on our work. The overarching message is that decisions about our health, welfare, prosperity, security, and the environmental health of the planet should be supported by evidence, and that we, as citizens, ignore this rich evidence base at our peril. A broad promotion and outreach campaign will be essential to our success.

We can't launch efforts such as these with federal funds, and your support will be necessary for us to better communicate the scientific evidence that bears on today's critical issues, ranging from climate change to vaccine safety. The NAS annual fund is an important way for members and friends of the Academy to support our ongoing work and to launch new initiatives. Many major foundations and other funders look at the rate at which our members give when considering their own funding, and ours is woefully low at 21%. In comparison, 25% of NAE members and 27% of NAM members made gifts to support their respective academies in 2016. Your participation really does make a difference.

Since becoming president I have learned that a member must pay annual dues for several decades to simply compensate for the cost of our election process. Therefore, we do depend on annual giving for so much else that is important to our mission. My dream would be to see member participation at 100%, even if the contributions are modest. Please join me in supporting the NAS annual fund and help strengthen the Academy and better engage the public and policy makers with evidence-based science. Your contribution at any level will truly make a difference in advancing science – 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcia McNutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Marcia McNutt
President

P.S. Many members have asked me to share more stories of the importance and impact of their donations. The enclosed summary of giving for the NAS provides a helpful overview.

Enclosure