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Behavioral & Brain Sciences

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The Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS) appreciates the opportunity to submit the following comments in response to the administration's Request for Information (RFI) for Accelerating the American Scientific Enterprise. FABBS is a coalition of 34 scientific societies and 55 academic departments that come together to advance the rigor and impact of our disciplines. Our members are strongly committed to pathways from basic and fundamental research to real world benefit. FABBS recognizes the tremendous innovation and progress that this country has achieved – and also – the continuing need to bolster science to benefit all Americans.

FABBS disciplines hold critical insights to the very questions posed in this RFI. For example, implementation science is the scientific study of the process of promoting the systematic uptake of research findings into routine practice. While best known in health fields, it is still a relatively new field with great potential for growth. Another critical discipline, organizational psychology, includes researchers who apply behavioral science principles to the workplace to improve productivity, satisfaction, and overall organizational health by studying management, employee behavior, and company culture.

Recognizing the keen interest in technology, FABBS is proud to underscore fundamental research in cognitive sciences that have helped to lay the groundwork for today's artificial intelligence. While deeply engaged with the development of cutting-edge technology, our members caution the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) that we will not realize the promise of technology without the fundamental research to anticipate and address human users, uptake of new technologies, human machine interaction, and unintended consequences for users. For example, initially, there was a widespread assumption that cyber security was a matter of developing the right technology. Today, we understand that human decisions and behavior are major risk factors, such as being susceptible to phishing and user failures to take simple precautions (e.g., using strong passwords and changing them regularly). Accordingly, FABBS strongly supports OSTP's efforts to bolster interdisciplinary research and proactively engage behavioral and brain sciences in service to accelerating science in the United States. FABBS cautions that prioritizing certain fields over others would be a mistake and limit us to what we already know.

One final overarching point: When measuring the return on investment of taxpayer dollars, FABBS encourages OSTP to include the potential savings of investing federal taxpayer dollars in programs and benefits. For example, reducing the burden of chronic disease, a laudable goal of the administration,



will require up-front investments in basic science with the potential to yield long-term savings. As written, the RFI focuses on earnings and tax revenue rather than potential financial benefits of prevention.

(i) What policy changes to Federal funding mechanisms, procurement processes, or partnership authorities would enable stronger public-private collaboration and allow America to tap into its vast private sector to better drive use-inspired basic and early-stage applied research?

When considering partnership authority, FABBS encourages OSTP to prioritize collaboration with state and local governments in addition to the above listed potential partners. State and local governments often lack the scientific workforce necessary to drive evidence-based policymaking.

(ii) How can the Federal government better support the translation of scientific discoveries from academia, national laboratories, and other research institutions into practical applications? Specifically, what changes to technology transfer policies, translational programs, or commercial incentives would accelerate the path from laboratory to market?

The Federal government should provide robust and reliable funding for agencies investing in fundamental science, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The entire science ecosystem builds on these investments, leading to improved health, economic, and education outcomes. Considerable changes, funding uncertainty, inadequate staffing, and dramatically shifting research priorities have done a tremendous disservice to science agencies in 2025, redirecting time and energy away from most effectively investing taxpayer dollars in the most rigorous and impactful research.

(iii) What policies would encourage the formation and scaling of regional innovation ecosystems that connect local businesses, universities, educational institutions, and the local workforce – particularly in areas where the Federal government has existing research assets like national laboratories or federally-funded research centers?

No response

(iv) How can Federal policies strengthen the role played by small- and medium-sized businesses as both drivers of innovation and as early adopters of emerging technologies?

No response



(v) What empirically grounded findings from metascience research and progress studies could inform Federal grantmaking processes to maximize scientific productivity and increase total return on investment? Please provide specific examples of evidence-based reforms that could improve funding allocation, peer review, or grant evaluation.

No response

(vi) What reforms will enable the American scientific enterprise to pursue more high-risk, high-reward research that could transform our scientific understanding and unlock new technologies, while sustaining the incremental science essential for cumulative production of knowledge?

The best way to incentivize high-risk, high-reward research is to provide robust and reliable funding for science. Without adequate and sustainable funding, scientists may be less willing to pursue high-risk research if it could threaten their professional security. Some FABBS scientists have lamented the limited grant amounts, particularly at NSF. They have submitted rigorous, ambitious proposals and received outstanding scores, only to be directed to revise and resubmit with a greatly reduced budget. One scientist shared that he has been approached by Chinese individuals and investors eager to fund his work at the levels necessary to maximize innovation.

Scientific experts should evaluate and ultimately determine which grant proposals get funded, particularly for fundamental research questions. Directing funds to narrow priorities or certain disciplines would limit possibilities to what we already know by favoring preconceived ideas rather than following the most innovative science.

(vii) How can the Federal government support novel institutional models for research that complement traditional university structures and enable projects that require vast resources, interdisciplinary coordination, or extended timelines?

The Federal government should adequately measure and fund the cost of rigorous and impactful research at institutions of higher education. FABBS encourages OSTP to work with Congress to adopt and implement the Financial Accountability in Research (FAIR) model. FAIR improves on the current process for reimbursing research institutions for related facilities and administration costs by requiring institutions to classify all costs for each project as research performance costs and essential research performance support and general research operations. This model increases transparency of costs and



reimbursement. (See supporting materials here:
<https://www.cogr.edu/fa-cost-reimbursement-materials>)

(viii) How can the Federal government leverage and prepare for advances in AI systems that may transform scientific research – including automated hypothesis generation, experimental design, literature synthesis, and autonomous experimentation? What infrastructure investments, organizational models, and workforce development strategies are needed to realize these capabilities while maintaining scientific rigor and research integrity?

No response

(ix) What specific Federal statutes, regulations, or policies create unnecessary barriers to scientific research or the deployment of research outcomes? Please describe the barrier, its impact on scientific progress, and potential remedies that would preserve legitimate policy objectives while enabling innovation.

FABBS works to actively deploy insights from the behavioral and brain sciences to real world impact. While this is a broadly shared goal, there are few mechanisms and rewards for researcher efforts to disseminate research findings beyond peer review articles.

Across scientific disciplines, publishing peer review journal articles is often considered the end product of research. Our unique journal, [*Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*](#) (PIBBS), offers short, plain language articles for policymaker and practitioner audiences. FABBS researchers have repeatedly commented on how much they learn in the process of translating scientific findings for non-academic audiences, noting the lack of relevant training for their degrees.

FABBS academic departments are actively revisiting tenure review and promotion criteria to reward engagement and communication activities beyond publishing journal articles.

Sciences that inform prevention and well-being lack clear pathways and mechanisms for deployment. The Federal government frequently has an early role in drug and technology development, building on fundamental research long before the application or potential benefit is known. The pharmaceutical and tech companies often wait to invest in research and discovery until the potential benefits – and profits – come into focus. Other areas that would be enormously beneficial to taxpayers do not have the same established partners to take up and apply science, a significant barrier to maximizing the impact.

Take, for example, this administration's commitment to reducing the burden of chronic diseases. Research has established the value of regular exercise, the



importance of good sleep, and benefits of healthy diets, and yet, health insurance models neither incentivize nor reward these pro-health behaviors. The role of the Federal government is to fill societal needs not well met by the private sector.

(x) How can Federal programs better identify and develop scientific talent across the country, particularly leveraging digital tools and distributed research models to engage researchers outside traditional academic centers?

FABBS commends OSTP for asking this critical question. FABBS members include education and developmental scientists who have informed our understanding of teaching and learning. Federally funded research has revealed that even young children have the capacity to learn math and science. The Federal government should invest in early learning STEM programs to spark interest, build confidence, and expose youth to concepts and opportunities, including STEM laboratories and experiential learning.

(xi) How can the Federal government foster closer collaboration among scientists, engineers, and skilled technical workers, and better integrate training pathways, recognizing that breakthrough research often requires deep collaboration between theoretical and applied expertise?

FABBS encourages OSTP to prioritize fostering closer collaboration with state and local governments that frequently lack adequate budgets to conduct their own research and to build on existing effective federal mechanisms:

- Regional Educational Laboratories (REL), Institute of Education Sciences (IES) – RELs collaborate with school districts, state departments of education, and other education partners to help generate and apply evidence to improve learner outcomes. REL work is change-oriented, rigorous, and high leverage—supporting consequential local, regional, or statewide decisions about education policies, programs, and practices. RELs contribute to the growing body of research on how experiences within the nation’s education system differ by context and student group, thereby impacting outcomes and identifying potential solutions. ([WestEd](#))
- [Societal Experts Action Network \(SEAN\)](#), National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) with support from the NSF – SEAN brings timely, actionable guidance to the critical and complex questions that decision makers face. SEAN collates and contextualizes the latest research and perspectives to address pressing societal issues ranging from emerging infectious diseases to extreme weather events.



(xii) What policy mechanisms would ensure that the benefits of federally-funded research – including access to resulting technologies, economic opportunities, and improved quality of life – reach all Americans?

No response

(xiii) How can the Federal government strengthen research security to protect sensitive technologies and dual-use research while minimizing compliance burdens on researchers?

FABBS encourages the Federal government to leverage insights from the behavioral and brain sciences to most effectively strengthen research security by understanding the human users. Access protections and compliance measures should incorporate careful consideration of the cognitive burden and human decision making processes. FABBS encourages OSTP to build on the NASEM report, [Simplifying Research Regulations and Policies: Optimizing American Science](#) 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these important questions. FABBS is eager to be a resource as the administration works to advance the goal of accelerating American science. Please do not hesitate to contact me at jbaron@fabbs.org or 202.669.4834.

Sincerely,

Juliane Baron