



December 16, 2010

Scientific Management Review Board
ATTN: Lyric Jorgenson
Office of Science Policy, Office of the Director
National Institutes of Health
6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite 750
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Members of the Scientific Management Review Board,

Enclosed is a letter from NCCR Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) grantees.

We urge the Scientific Management Review Board to ensure continued strong support and funding for this important program which supports diversification of the scientific workforce, contributes to the science education pipeline, enhances scientific literacy from K to grey, and educates the public about the mission of the National Institutes of Health.

Best regards,

Louisa A. Stark, Ph.D.
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Since the Dec. 7, 2010 public discussion of the creation of the National Center for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics, the future of the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) and its programs has become somewhat uncertain. This raises concern about the continuation and vigor of a number of NCRR programs that we see as important to the research and educational communities nationwide.

Whatever form any NIH reorganization may ultimately take, we urge you to continue strong and coordinated support and funding for the Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) program funded by NCRR. This nationally-recognized program is a vital investment in the our country's future, building a diverse scientific workforce pipeline, enhancing scientific and health literacy for people of all ages and promoting public support for the NIH.

Since 1992, the SEPA program has mobilized diverse scientific and medical resources to strengthen the nation's K-12 education system and promote science learning in formal and informal settings by people of all ages and backgrounds. Through exposure to genuine biomedical science, SEPA programs inspire diverse young people across the US to become the next generation of biomedical researchers and educators. The SEPA program has demonstrated extraordinary success in promoting access for all students—including those from groups underrepresented in science-related professions—to the latest discoveries and excitement of biomedical research. In addition, K-12 teachers who are exposed to the latest scientific discoveries and are trained in using high-quality science curriculum materials through SEPA programs are better prepared to teach and share their excitement about science with millions of students each year. Many of these teachers participate in the research programs themselves. Furthermore, exhibits and programs at science centers and museums also build science literacy by engaging community members of all ages. Other web, television and multimedia resources also tell the stories of translational discovery. All of these SEPA programs engender public support for NIH and the public funding of

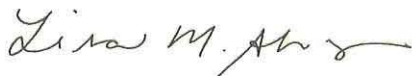
biomedical research. The SEPA program is already effectively addressing many of the 2010 recommendations on K-12 STEM education from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology.

SEPA projects have received numerous awards that recognize their high quality and their significant contributions to science education. For example, this year the journal *Science* gave three of the first six Science Prize for Online Resources in Education (SPORE) awards to current or past SEPA grantees.

The SEPA community is unlike any other group of federal education grantees. We address K-12 science education in both formal and informal settings, provide a forum for educational innovation, rigorously evaluate educational outcomes and impacts, and are a proven vehicle for fostering community engagement in the NIH mission. Much synergy has been gained by gathering formal and informal K-12 programs into a single cohesive community that works together and learns from each other. The SEPA program is unique among federal programs in bringing together this diverse group and in building this synergy.

The signers of this letter represent the nationwide community of people who lead SEPA-funded projects. We are scientists, physicians, university and K-12 educators, science center and museum leaders, and scientific society staff. We believe strongly that NIH's promotion of science and health education through the SEPA program is highly successful despite a very modest annual budget, currently less than \$25 million. It provides an indispensable positive contribution to the education and health of the American public. We thus urge you to continue strong support for a coherent SEPA program with funding at the current level or higher.

cc: Dr. Francis Collins, Director, NIH
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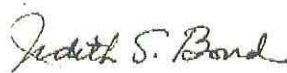
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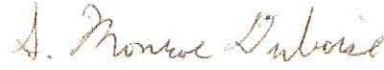
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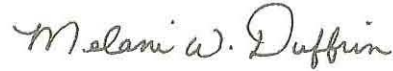
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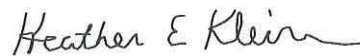
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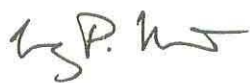
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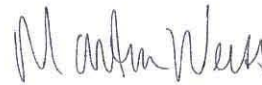
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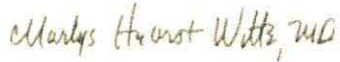
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