December 7, 2020

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President-elect Joseph R. Biden
c/o Office of the Presidential Transition
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President-elect Biden:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the hundreds of thousands of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians that make up the U.S. research community we are looking forward to working with you, as 46th President of the United States, and your administration.

As we all know, our nation faces pressing challenges, including the global pandemic, climate change, advancements in artificial intelligence, food and water security, and threats to U.S. economic competitiveness. These challenges share one essential component: the need for scientific knowledge and technological expertise to address them successfully.

As you noted in your address at the 2018 AAAS Annual Meeting, research is at an “inflection point” and scientists must adapt quickly to accelerate new ways of tackling these challenges. The scientific community is up to the task. In lab coats, work boots and behind computer screens, scientists and engineers have been the wellspring of innovation, better health, a safer environment and economic progress. This is because the United States has invested in scientists and engineers for decades and entrusted them to move our nation forward.

However, our country’s scientific tradition has begun to fray and is in need of serious repair. Unpredictable federal investment in research and development (R&D), political interference in scientific advice and the undermining of scientific integrity, considerable disparities in a diverse science technology, engineering and math (STEM) pipeline – these are just a few of the issues impeding science from tackling the most pressing challenges facing our nation.

Your platform recognizes the challenges and opportunities that America faces today to leverage our S&T capacity to innovate, create, and build an innovation ecosystem for the benefit of all society. Consequently, as you form your administration and plan for the next four years, a reset on science is needed. We have outlined below some core tenets to affirm and strengthen the United States’ commitment to science and engineering.

Robust and Sustained Funding
U.S. innovation emanates from an ecosystem that relies on sustained support for science and engineering. For many years, erratic funding from continuing resolutions, government shutdowns, and ever-shifting budgets has prohibited that ecosystem to recover and plan sufficiently, let alone thrive. Consistent and strong support for research and development is vital to unleash the promise of science and our scientists. Our recommendation is to pursue a federal research budget with a goal to return to investments of
1.4% of GDP. We urge your administration to work with the incoming Congress to advance robust and sustained funding for R&D that continues our nation’s tradition of bipartisan support for science.

**Scientific Integrity**
The progress of science depends on its integrity – the lynchpin that engenders the public’s trust. No U.S. administration should censor scientists, ignore scientific evidence, or hinder federal agencies from sharing peer-reviewed scientific information with the public. The United States must renew its commitment to upholding the principles of scientific integrity so Americans can trust in the veracity and reliability of the U.S. scientific enterprise.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the Sciences**
Science, engineering and medicine are not immune to the discrimination, subjugation and silencing of minority voices. The consequences of systemic racism are compounded as they deny certain groups full participation in STEM and subsequently the rest of society of the benefits we would have gained from their talents and contributions. This includes the participation and contributions of foreign scientists and engineers who come to the U.S. to study and work. The STEM pipeline, from its beginning in early education through to wherever the fruits of that education lead, should strive to be as diverse and inclusive as the society it serves. We must make DEI normative and ensure that everyone can contribute to, and benefit from, science.

**Science as an International Enterprise**
As stated above, society benefits from an array of talents, experiences and contributions, this includes the participation and contributions of foreign scientists and engineers who come to the U.S. to study and work. Science, technology, and innovation thrive when it includes international perspectives and collaboration. Concerns about potential and real threats to research integrity posed by foreign influence combined with inflammatory rhetoric and changes to immigration policies have led international students and scientists to feel stigmatized and concerned about their future. Science is a globally interconnected enterprise and we encourage the administration to work in concert with universities, government agencies, and professional societies in developing and maintaining policies that protect U.S. interests in balance with ensuring that the U.S. continues to remain a welcoming society.

Supporting these core principles will begin to rebuild the United States’ support for science and ensure the U.S. innovation ecosystem grows and flourishes under your administration.

AAAS and its members stand ready to assist you and your administration in any way we can, and we invite you to give a virtual keynote address on your administration’s priorities and plans for science at the 2021 Annual Meeting, February 8-11.

Sincerely,

Sudip Parikh