A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Credit: Sandy Schaeffer

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is pleased to issue its Agency Financial Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. NSF's mission is to promote the progress of science, to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare, and to secure the national defense. For 65 years, NSF has pursued this mission by supporting basic research and education across a broad range of science and engineering disciplines.

NSF's investments in basic research have enabled breakthrough discoveries and transformative technologies that address key national and scientific priorities. NSF's investments combine research and educational resources to support the development of a world-class scientific workforce which has made profound contributions to the global science and engineering enterprise. The scientific discoveries made possible by NSF support today become the foundation of our shared future – driving our Nation's economy and enhancing its security while inspiring the next generation of Americans to push the frontiers of science to unprecedented heights.

NSF directly supported an estimated 350,000 researchers, graduate and undergraduate students, postdoctoral fellows, trainees, and teachers in FY 2015. NSF-supported discoveries position U.S. researchers and research institutions at the leading edge of scientific advancement in an increasingly competitive global marketplace of innovation and ideas. Over the years, 217 Nobel Prize winners have received NSF support during some point in their careers, including three laureates in 2015: Paul Modrich and Aziz Sancar in chemistry, and Angus Deaton in economics.

In FY 2015, NSF's support fostered discoveries across a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines. An NSF-funded research team with CERN's Large Hadron Collider discovered a class of particles known as pentaquarks. Physicists have long speculated about the existence of pentaquarks, and their discovery could reshape our understanding of the basic properties of matter. In Antarctica, an NSF-funded drilling team gathered sediment samples from hundreds of meters below the surface of the ice, and these samples will provide clues about ice-sheet mechanics and their potential effects on increases in sea levels. Another team of NSF-funded researchers sequenced the first octopus genome, enabling new studies on brain function and development. NSF-funded researchers also advanced 3-D printing technology, developed next-generation robots that learn from human behavior, and detected high-energy neutrinos that likely originated far away in our galaxy or beyond. Physicists used large-scale computer simulations to explore the possibility that galaxies much like our own Milky Way existed in the early universe, and scientists continued to shed light on critical ecological challenges such as the global decline of honeybees and other pollinators.

NSF posted another year of strong organizational performance in FY 2015, reviewing 49,600 proposals and funding 12,000 new awards to 1,859 institutions in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 4 U.S. territories. The full report on NSF's performance management process and the complete results of our FY

2015 annual goals under the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 will be included in NSF's *Annual Performance Report* as part of NSF's *FY 2017 Budget Request to Congress*. In keeping with government-wide requirements, NSF's GPRA data are subject to a rigorous verification and validation review by an independent, external management consultant based on guidance from the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

I am pleased to report that NSF received its 18th consecutive unmodified opinion from an independent audit of its financial statements. The Independent Auditors' Report identified no material weaknesses. In addition, NSF can provide reasonable assurance that the agency is in substantial compliance with the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act of 1982 and the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996, and that internal control over financial reporting is operating effectively to produce reliable financial reporting.

Thank you for your interest in the National Science Foundation.

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FRANCE A. CÓRDOVA

November 16, 2015