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September 27, 2016

C. Suzanne Iacono, Ph.D.  
Head of the Office of Integrative Activities  
National Science Foundation  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. Iacono,

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Vision, Core Values, Strategic Goals, and Strategic Objectives as described in its 2014 – 2018 Strategic Plan. As the agency reviews its strategic plan in preparation for the 2018 – 2022 strategic planning cycle, we urge you to consider the specific needs of postdoctoral trainees. The NPA represents approximately 79,000 postdoctoral scholars, individuals who play a critical role in driving research discoveries in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The availability of funding for research and training purposes are of paramount concern to our stakeholders and we appreciate your willingness to engage the research community as part of your strategic planning process.

NPA strongly endorses Strategic Goal 1 – to invest in research to ensure significant advances in science, engineering, and education. In addition to research grants for established scientists, we urge NSF to make funds available for postdoctoral fellowships, as investments in current postdoctoral fellows will ensure continued leadership of the Nation in STEM-related endeavors. NPA's advocacy efforts are focused on increasing postdoctoral scholars' access to training to enhance scientific and professional skills and ensure future career success. We also commend the agency's efforts to support and develop a diverse STEM workforce, which complements the NPA's goals of enhancing the postdoctoral experience for all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, national origin, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Similarly, as NSF leadership considers current Strategic Goal 2 – stimulating innovation through research and education - we encourage you to offer educational opportunities to specifically address the research and training needs of postdoctoral scholars. In addition to representing the core of the Nation's highly skilled research community, postdoctoral scholars can serve as a critical resource to NSF as the agency continues its efforts to educate the public about scientific and societal challenges.

*Providing a national voice and seeking positive change for postdoctoral scholars*  
[www.nationalpostdoc.org](http://www.nationalpostdoc.org)

The NPA looks forward to working with NSF as it evaluates its current strategic plan and prepares for the 2018 – 2022 strategic planning cycle.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Sleeth". There is a small horizontal line underneath the signature.

*Kate M. Sleeth, Ph.D.*  
*Chair of the Board of Directors*  
National Postdoctoral Association

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Postdoctoral Association.