



FASEB

Federation of American Societies
for Experimental Biology

Representing Over 115,000 Researchers

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National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite W14200
Alexandria, VA 22314

Comments submitted electronically via ncesweb@nsf.gov

Dear NCSES WMPD contributors,

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) is grateful for the work of National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) staff on the 2023 [Diversity in STEM: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities](#) (WMPD) report and data tables. WMPD is a vital resource of information focused on historically excluded populations in science and engineering (S&E). A powerful aspect of WMPD is collating data from disparate sources, including special tabulations that are not otherwise readily available in standard public data tables. However, FASEB was disappointed to see the dramatically reduced number of data tables this year compared to prior WMPD releases.

The [2021 WMPD release](#) had special tabulations of great interest to our community. For example, [table 7-23](#) analyzed primary source of support by race, sex, and broad field. This level of granularity was unavailable from standard [Survey of Earned Doctorates data tables](#) at the time, and was so impactful FASEB incorporated this data into a [factsheet](#) on doctorate recipient debt. Additional examples of missing data in the current WMPD include, but are not limited to: overall U.S. demographics as a baseline comparator to S&E populations; information on postdoctoral scholars and early career doctorate holders; graduate enrollment comparisons by field, degree, sex, and institution type—such as [historically Black colleges and universities](#) and [high-Hispanic enrollment institutions](#); and doctorate recipients by various [demographics and Carnegie classification](#).

Furthermore, ease of usability of the 2023 degrees awarded tables has decreased substantially. FASEB appreciates the disaggregated view of the data by field, sex, citizenship, race, and ethnicity. This level of detail provides an opportunity to assess degrees awarded data over time in new ways. However, these degrees awarded tables lack summary statistics. Tables [6-1](#) and [7-1](#) in the 2021 WMPD allowed users to easily identify the number of master's and doctoral degrees awarded by sex and field overall for various broad, major, and fine fields. For example, it was very straightforward to

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identify the number of master's and doctoral degrees awarded in all of science each year from 2008 to 2018. This is no longer the case in current WMPD tables [2-3](#) and [2-4](#), where the user must create the summary statistics on their own. The [NCSES table builder](#) is a helpful tool capable of creating some of these summary statistics; however, custom built data tables do not hold the weight of citing WMPD data tables in factsheets and policy statements.

FASEB recognizes the impact of COVID-19 on the [2020 American Community Survey data release](#) and likely downstream effects on NCSES's ability to craft the full slate of typical WMPD data tables. We are also grateful for the [public use data files](#), but again note that individual analysis of data does not carry the influence of citing official NCSES data tables. Furthermore, public use data from the Survey of Earned Doctorates and other microdata are available only by [restricted access](#). Special tabulations in the WMPD highlight trends from this restricted data and are easily available to all.

Transparent information from NCSES on the scientific workforce and progress of STEM education in the U.S. is of utmost importance and held in high regard. To that end, FASEB encourages NCSES to return to robust data tables in the next release of the WMPD, more akin to the [2021](#) release than the [2023 data tables](#). We appreciate the effort it takes to create such a meaningful product and look forward to future iterations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Kregel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "K".

Kevin C. Kregel, PhD
FASEB President