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Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

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Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite E6400
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

FASEB comments Regarding NSF's Intent to seek approval to extend an information Collection of Survey of Earned Doctorates for three years.

Submitted electronically via email: splimpto@nsf.gov

Dear Ms. Plimpton,

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed renewal of the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), published in the Federal Register on November 21, 2024. This survey provides valuable data on the emerging workforce, including educational history, demographic characteristics, funding sources, educational debt, and postgraduation plans. Metrics collected over time aid in evaluation of changing trends doctoral education and degrees, allowing policies to be data-driven and reflect realities of the next generation of researchers. The information gathered by the SED is crucial to advancing NSF's commitment to broadening participation.

Consistent with prior FASEB comments on SED renewals, FASEB commends the inclusion of more comprehensive demographic data in the 2025 SED questionnaire to better reflect the diverse identities of the research community. Expanding beyond traditional categories of sexual orientation and gender identity, which previously included only male and female, is particularly impactful for historically excluded groups with small sample sizes who represent a vital component of a diverse workforce. Standardizing questions on sexual orientation and gender identity across federal surveys will enhance data analysis and streamline administrative processes

FASEB was pleased to see the 2021 updates to the SED's categorization of broad and major fields, which enhance the ability to analyze trends in doctoral education. Separating biological and biomedical sciences from science and engineering now enables a more detailed examination of doctoral trends than was previously possible. FASEB also appreciates the inclusion of data on disability and dependent care, disaggregated by citizenship, race, and ethnicity. Collecting information about PhD scientists with disabilities helps identify barriers and supports a more inclusive and productive biomedical research workforce. To further enhance understanding, FASEB recommends gathering additional data on the estimated number of dependents doctoral

recipients have and whether they took leave during their PhD for caregiver responsibilities. To effectively support the future leaders and innovators of our society, data that better reflect their diverse backgrounds and experiences must be collected. Data on marginalized scholars are critical for shaping policies and practices that foster equitable environments.

Every year without comprehensive data collection on marginalized groups represents a loss of invaluable information. Given the limited existing data on vulnerable populations, any increase in quantitative data is significant. NSF has an opportunity to be the leader and standard-bearer in enabling reporting vital disaggregated data that acknowledges multiple intersecting identities. Assessment of expanded information collected will provide key awareness and understanding of the evolving workforce ecosystem. Therefore, FASEB encourages NSF to evaluate and update the SED questionnaire with disaggregation of data and intersectional identities at the forefront.

Sincerely,

Beth A. Garvy, PhD

FASEB President