



FASEB

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Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Suite E7400
Alexandria, VA 22314

Submitted electronically via email: splimpto@nsf.gov

Dear Ms. Plimpton,

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) appreciates the dedication of the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) staff to ensure thorough analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of statistics on the scientific workforce. The proposed renewal of the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG), published in the *Federal Register* on May 4, is an important data collection tool aligned with the overall NCSES mission. Specifically, FASEB applauds the recent pilot to collect sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data in the NSCG, and recommends this effort be expanded.

A number of [other federal agencies](#) already collect SOGI data, and have [largely found](#) that respondents do not find SOGI questions to be too difficult or sensitive to report. FASEB was encouraged to see NCSES pilot SOGI questions in a careful sample of NSCG respondents in 2021, and, echoing prior comments, urges NCSES to implement SOGI questions on additional critical workforce surveys such as the Survey of Earned Doctorates ([SED](#)), Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering ([GSS](#)), and Survey of Doctorate Recipients ([SDR](#)). To reduce break-off and non-response rates to SOGI questions, NSF should consider including context as to why the information is being collected in survey instructions. Combined, the SED, GSS, and SDR data provide a thorough description of scientists and the research and development workforce from graduate school through independent working years, and high response rates to SOGI questions will help create a more complete picture.

A diverse, highly skilled scientific workforce is imperative for research to thrive in the United States. Data collected by NCSES are the best nationwide representation of demographic characteristics in this workforce, yet at present do not include any information on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities. NSF and NCSES are highly respected as safe harbors for demographic data and therefore well positioned to extend SOGI questions from only a sample of the NSCG to many other cornerstone evaluations. FASEB looks forward to future iterations of the SED, GSS, and SDR that assess the prevalence of the SOGI population in the research ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Morris, MS, PhD
FASEB President