



A Message from the Director of the National Science Foundation

In science, change is one of the enduring constants. As we celebrate Women's History Month, we're reminded of the many women in science and engineering who made changes and thus improved the lives of others. Consider Marie Clark Taylor, a Howard University botanist and the first female to earn a doctorate at Fordham University. During the 1950s and 1960s, Taylor received funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to teach a series of summer institutes for high school biology teachers. Taylor's use of pieces and cross-sections of plants to teach about living organisms and biological processes enabled students to view the life cycle of a cell using a light microscope. In the mid-1960s, then President Lyndon B. Johnson learned of Taylor's institutes and asked her to expand her efforts.



With continued support from NSF, Taylor shared her methods both nationally and internationally and they have become a standard in science education. Taylor's desire to help students and teachers understand life processes firsthand, changed the way biology is taught. Over the last several years, NSF has changed the requirements for several programs to enhance opportunities for women, including the CAREER awards and the Alan T. Waterman Award. This year, the foundation also posted a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) supporting the re-entry of women and women veterans in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce through [NSF INCLUDES](#), one of [NSF's 10 Big Ideas](#). By also funding programs like ADVANCE, Broadening Participation in Computing and the national PBS multimedia project "SciGirls," NSF seeks to support the aspirations of girls and women who are inspired by careers in science and education.

Change is often daunting, but embracing a new way of thinking or a different approach can stimulate and inspire. Every day, the women and men funded by NSF confront big challenges that can lead to big change. Their efforts will continue to enrich the fields of scientific inquiry.

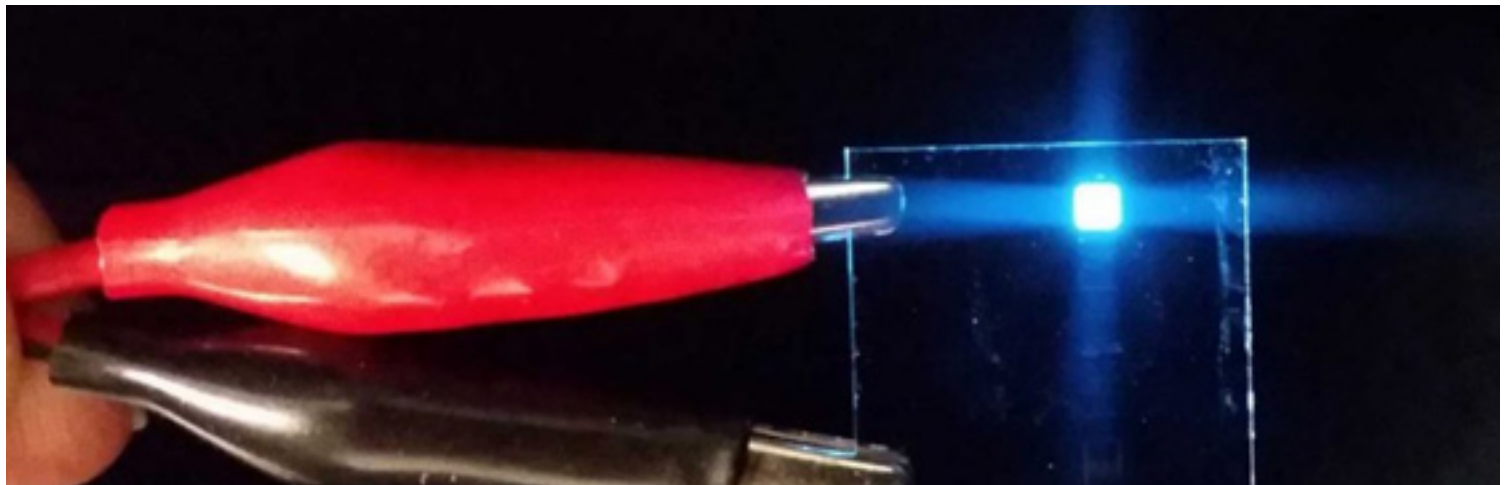
Dr. France A. Córdova

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What's Next

April 1-4 – NSF will present at the [US Ignite Application Summit and Smart and Connected Conference](#) in Denver, Colorado.

April 17 – Celebrate the premiere of the DisneyNature movie, [Penguins](#), for which NSF provided logistical support in Antarctica.

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