



National Science Foundation
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN



Director's Notes

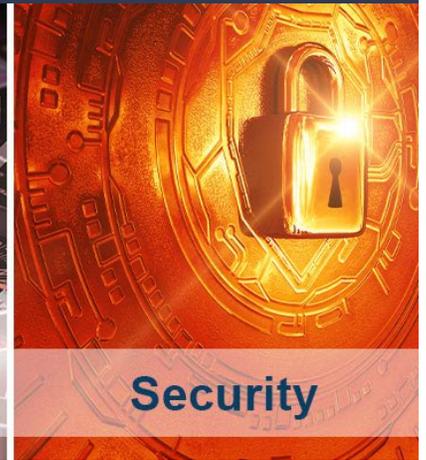
March 2020



Global Leadership



Economy



Security

A Message from the Director of the National Science Foundation

For the past six years, it has been my privilege to lead the National Science Foundation. It has been a time of growth and Big Ideas. It has been a time of significant breakthroughs. We have seen exciting progress across so many areas of science and engineering.

I'm deeply proud of the NSF community. In particular, I am grateful for the hard work and dedication that I saw on a daily basis and I am in awe of the many accomplishments of all who are associated with NSF.

Together, we have stepped up to demonstrate the value of NSF's vital mission. We've done tremendous work to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders and communicate the many ways in which federally-supported fundamental research grows our economy, enhances national defense, and improves our daily lives. I'm grateful for the consistent, strong support we receive from members of Congress from all across the nation. We are also grateful to the White House and many agencies with whom we have worked to shape the future of revolutionary technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Moreover, we are grateful to all those in government who have embraced our Big Ideas as a strategic framework for advancing scientific discovery, who have supported our efforts to bolster the high-tech workforce, and who have informed our strategies for improving STEM education and training.



NSF has also stepped up as a leader on large, systemic challenges that go to the heart of science's vital role in today's society. In 2018, we took on harassment, a pervasive and deeply rooted problem that undermines women and minorities, and thereby diminishes scientific workplaces across the country. Through a new Term & Condition, we are combatting harassment more directly than ever before. And as research security became a heightened concern, NSF is at the forefront of developing measures to protect research integrity. Our work on these and many other critical issues are ongoing. My thanks goes out to the NSF leaders and staff who have established an extraordinary foundation for our country's continuing scientific leadership.

In recent years, NSF has embraced new ways of spurring creativity and entrepreneurship. Consider convergent research. Although collaboration and interdisciplinary methods have long been part of how scientists and engineers work, convergence takes these collaborations in exciting new directions. It is an even more powerful method for advancing our knowledge and technical capabilities. I am excited for the new heights of success that convergence will make possible - and for how this success will augment NSF's seven decades of astounding breakthroughs.

Vannevar Bush's 1945 conception of the National Science Foundation was focused on the connection between the federal government and universities. This relationship is at the core of everything we do. We are moving into a future that also includes dynamic partnerships with industry, the international community, and other novel sources of innovation. We have only just begun to realize the many ways that those alliances will augment research. Our initial ventures in this area have taught us valuable lessons and given us a glimpse of a bright future for research partnerships.

One of the most important lessons I've learned during my time as director is the value of leadership. The highlights I've mentioned so far are just a small sample of the great things NSF has set in motion. Each one is due to fantastic leadership by individuals and teams throughout NSF. From convincing Congress to support our mission and to stepping up to take on difficult issues like harassment, to helping guide many different research fields and fighting for proposals that have the potential to result in big breakthroughs, their dedication and commitment has been central to our progress.

Leadership in discovery and innovation will only be more important going forward. As technology becomes a greater part of our daily lives, and as revolutions in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, and other fields remake the technological landscape, NSF offers the nation a bedrock of support and a beacon of inspiration. NSF and the research community reflect the awesome potential of scientists and engineers, educators and their students, to be the discoverers and the innovators that will make a difference for humanity.

As I write this, our nation is confronting the COVID-19 epidemic. I am encouraged by, and grateful for, the actions of medical professionals who are working tirelessly to treat patients and support public health. I'm proud that NSF has enabled research that underpins so much of our medical technology, from the physics of magnetic resonance imaging, to precision engineering behind biotechnology devices, to techniques in microbiology and genetics that help the medical community identify and treat diseases, and social and behavioral research that helps streamline the delivery of healthcare. NSF's RAPID grants help ensure that researchers can contribute actionable insights to serious challenges. Events like this reveal the power of science and engineering to improve quality of life - and the great service that we can provide to the world when we work together on the biggest questions of our time.

To everyone who has been part of the NSF community over the past six years—those who have supported the scientific enterprise, those who have fostered curiosity and furthered our knowledge of the world around us—you have my deepest gratitude for your hard work and commitment to our mission. The future of discovery begins with you. I am excited at the great things on the horizon for NSF.



NSF Director's Farewell

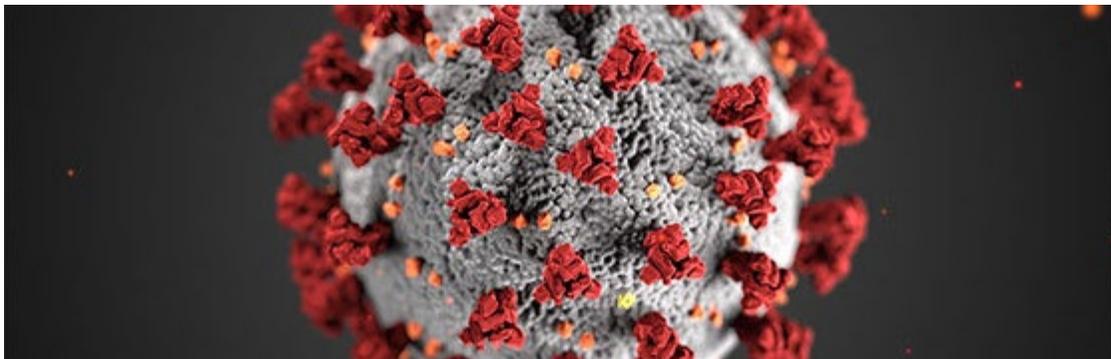
Dr. France A. Córdoba, 14th Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) delivers a farewell message to NSF staff in the final week of her six-year term as Director of NSF.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "France A. Córdoba".

Dr. France A. Córdoba
Director, National Science Foundation

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NSF encourages you to take extra precautions to protect yourselves and your families against COVID-19. If you are an NSF employee looking for guidance, please visit [InsideNSF](#). If you are a member of the public, please visit [cdc.gov](#).

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