A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Credit: Sandy Schaeffer

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is pleased to issue its Agency Financial Report for fiscal year (FY) 2014. Having begun my tenure as NSF Director this past April, it is an added pleasure for me to present this report for the first time.

NSF serves the national interest, as stated by NSF's mission to promote the progress of science, to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare, or to secure the national defense. We achieve this mission by funding research and education in nonbiomedical science and engineering at U.S. colleges and universities. Among the federal agencies that support basic research, NSF is responsible for strengthening the health of U.S. science and engineering over the broadest range of disciplines.

NSF's research and high-tech workforce development programs help lay the foundation for economic growth by building an innovation economy and educating globally-competitive American workers. By advancing the frontiers of science and engineering, our nation can develop the knowledge and innovative technologies needed to address the challenges we face. For more than 60 years, NSF's investments in science and engineering have led to important innovations that have spurred economic prosperity, increased our quality of life, and enhanced national security.

NSF supports core research activities both within and across disciplinary boundaries and activities that address emerging areas and national priorities. NSF supports creative people and great ideas—214 Nobel Prize winners have received NSF support during some point in their careers, including two in 2014, William Moerner in chemistry and Jean Tirole in economics.

In 2014, breakthrough research supported by NSF accessed previously unseen phenomena. These included the motion of a single molecule in real time and neutrinos from the sun's core. Researchers looking skyward produced maps of the Milky Way's interstellar material and found the smallest known galaxy harboring a supermassive black hole. Those focused on Planet Earth identified two new dinosaur species and found that bird migrations follow areas of new plant growth—a "green wave" of travel. Scientists also developed oral compounds that protect brain cells after traumatic injury, rapidly sequenced and analyzed 99+ Ebola virus genomes, and created the world's largest DNA origami (nanoscale folding of DNA), with applications ranging from drug delivery to electronics.

As NSF in 2014 continued to contribute significantly to the Administration's Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies initiative (BRAIN), NSF-supported researchers made advances in other large arenas as well, including cloud computing and data-driven discovery. Researchers also advanced driverless car technology, worked to make food banks more efficient, and developed a variety of useful smartphone apps, including one that identifies jaundice in newborns. People everywhere saw the

power of scientific research during the World Cup, when a paraplegic man wearing a mind-controlled robotic exoskeleton kicked off the event. The technology may one day replace wheelchairs, and was built on a foundation of neuroscience research funded by NSF.

NSF's overall performance remained strong in FY 2014, as the agency reviewed 48,000 competitive proposals and funded 11,000 new awards to 1,826 institutions in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 4 U.S. territories in FY 2014. This report also contains a brief discussion of results for FY 2014 under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The full report on NSF's performance management process and the complete results of our FY 2014 GPRA annual goals will be included in NSF's *Annual Performance Report* as part of NSF's *FY 2016 Budget Request to Congress*. In addition, in keeping with government-wide requirements, NSF's GPRA data undergo a rigorous verification and validation review by an independent, external management consultant based on guidance from the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Underlying NSF's programmatic activities is a commitment to transparency and accountability to ensure sound stewardship of the public funds for which we are entrusted. In October 2014, NSF successfully launched iTRAK, NSF's new financial accounting system that will improve the efficiency of financial and business processes and enhance financial and business accountability.

I am pleased to report that NSF received its 17th consecutive unmodified opinion from an independent audit of its financial statements. The Independent Auditors' Report identified no material weaknesses. In addition, NSF can provide reasonable assurance that the agency is in substantial compliance with the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act of 1982 and the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996, and that internal control over financial reporting is operating effectively to produce reliable financial reporting.

Thank you for your interest in the National Science Foundation.

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FRANCE A. CÓRDOVA

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