



JUL 14 2017

The Honorable Bill Foster
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Foster:

Thank you for your June 9, 2017 letter requesting estimates of the impact of the FY 2018 President's Budget request on the nation's universities and on the National Laboratories.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) supports biomedical scientists through its extramural program, providing institutions throughout the country with grants and contracts, and through its intramural research program (IRP), which supports NIH's internal research scientists. The NIH primarily provides grants to the extramural community, leaving staffing levels to the discretion of the grantee institution. It is, therefore, difficult to provide an exact accounting of the numbers of researchers and staff supported through NIH extramural funding.

A recent report from United for Medical Research^{1,2} and data collected by the NIH using methodology described in a recently published report³ suggest that in 2016, more than 50,000 NIH grants supported nearly 380,000 full and part-time positions. In addition, NIH's IRP, which receives approximately 11 percent of the NIH annual budget, currently employs approximately 4,000 research scientists, and 6,000 staff.

It is difficult to predict the workforce impact of the proposed changes to NIH's budget as many decisions are made in the implementation process. The exact details of the appropriations law, policy decisions by the Department of Health and Human Services and NIH about how proposed cuts would be distributed throughout NIH activities, and the personnel requirements and decisions by grantee institutions and research groups, all influence the potential effects on the scientific workforce, complicating any such attempts at prediction.

We appreciate your interest in and concern for scientists, and we look forward to the opportunity for ongoing discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.

¹ Erlich, e. NIH's Role in Sustaining the U.S. Economy, 2017.

² <http://www.unitedformedicalresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/FY2018-Budget-Cuts-and-NIH-Economic-Impact-FINAL-5.10.17.pdf>

³ Pool et al FASEB Journal 30: 1-14, 2016.