Mr. Russell Vought, Director
Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503

October 7, 2020

Mr. Vought:

The undersigned scientific societies strongly urge the Administration to rescind its elimination of federal employee training programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion as specified in the Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies issued September 4th, 2020 and the September 22nd Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping. These executive actions run counter to current efforts by federal agencies, contractors and grantees to foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment and are detrimental to efforts to address discrimination based on race or gender identity

Federal employees, contractors and recipients of federal grants are at the core of the U.S. research and development (R&D) ecosystem, and they play a crucial role in creating a diverse scientific workforce. While there has been progress, the participation of women and racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. scientific and technical workforce does not reflect the diversity of our population.[1] Their underrepresentation negatively impacts the U.S. R&D enterprise by depriving it of diverse perspectives that are shown to boost innovation and productivity.[2,3] In many scientific fields, this lack of diversity cannot be solely attributed to inequities in education or the workforce pipeline[4] – the scientific, technical, engineering and math (STEM) community must also confront systemic discrimination and racism. For example, it has been shown that, historically, the percentage of federal grants awarded to minority scientists has been lower than their white peers largely due to underlying biases.[5]

Research shows that there are systemic and cultural aspects of the current R&D ecosystem which negatively contribute to an inclusive and productive career environment.[3,4,6] However, specific actions have been identified to address them, including the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) trainings using an evidence-based approach.[4,6,7] Such trainings help employees become more aware of barriers to increased diversity, motivate positive behaviors and attitudes, and improve cognitive skills.[3,7,8]

The September 4th memorandum and September 22nd Executive Order do a disservice to our community and research itself by wrongfully linking DEI trainings to the notion that anyone is inherently racist or sexist. While evidence-based DEI trainings are not impacted by these actions, wrongfully insinuating that DEI trainings are inherently anti-American sends a message of division, intolerance and subjectivity that is damaging to our R&D community.

We urge you to rescind these executive actions to help create and sustain a more diverse, inclusive, equitable and productive scientific community. A thriving scientific enterprise makes our nation stronger which in turn will drive a quicker recovery from COVID-19 and secure a healthy and prosperous future for all Americans. Please let us know if we can help with any additional information or ideas.

Sincerely,

American Anthropological Association
American Association for Anatomy
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Immunologists
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Astronomical Society

American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Indian Science and Engineering Society
American Institute of Physics
American Meteorological Society
American Physical Society
American Political Science Association
American Society for Gravitational and Space Research
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Human Genetics
American Society of Plant Biologists
American Society of Plant Taxonomists
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Thoracic Society
Association of Population Centers
AVS - The Society for Science and Technology of Materials, Interfaces, and Processing
Biophysical Society
Botanical Society of America
Council on Undergraduate Research
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Endocrine Society
Entomological Society of America
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)
Materials Research Society
National Communication Association
NOGLSTP
OSA-The Optical Society
Population Association of America
Seismological Society of America
Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for the Study of Reproduction
Society of Toxicology
Soil Science Society of America
The American Crystallographic Association
The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society
WiBBE

[1] National Science Board, National Science Foundation. 2020. Science and Engineering Indicators 2020: The State of the U.S. Science & Engineering. NSB-2020-1. Alexandria, VA. Available at https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20201/u-s-s-e-workforce.

[2] Bowman, N. A., Denson, N., & Park, J. J. (2016). Racial/cultural awareness workshops and post-college civic engagement: A propensity score matching approach. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*(6), 1556-1587.

[3] National Institutes of Health, Bibliography of Diversity Research Articles. Available at https://diversity.nih.gov/find-read-learn/diversity-research-articles

[4] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2020. Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine: Opening Doors. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/25585.

[5] Ginther, Donna K., et al., *Science*, "Race, Ethnicity, and NIH Research Awards," 19 Aug 2011: Vol. 333, Issue 6045, pp. 1015-1019. DOI: 10.1126/science.1196783; Hoppe, Travis A., et al., "Topic choice contributes to the lower rate of NIH awards to African-American/black scientists," *Science Advances*, 09 Oct 2019: Vol. 5, no. 10, eaaw7238. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aaw7238

[6] American Institute of Physics. 2020. The Time is Now: Systemic Changes to Increase African Americans with Bachelor's Degrees in Physics and Astronomy. College Park, MD: American Institute of Physics.

[7] Pfund, Christine, et. al., Building National Capacity for Research Mentor Training: An Evidence-Based Approach to Training the Trainers CBE—Life Sciences Education 2015 14:2 10.1187/cbe.14-10-0184

[8] Chang, M. J., Denson, N., Saenz, V., & Misa, K. (2006). The educational benefits of sustaining cross-racial interaction among undergraduates. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *77*(3), 430-455.