

September 1, 2020

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
House Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson:

At this time of great challenges for our nation, we write to thank you for your leadership in confronting inequities in the U.S. scientific enterprise that have prevented full participation of racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in STEM. We therefore support your call for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to undertake a study to acknowledge and assess this structural problem, namely systemic racism in academia.

As we have seen in stark terms over the last six months, while the novel coronavirus is a threat to everyone living in the U.S., the burden has not been equally felt. There are disproportionately higher rates of illness and death in communities of color in the U.S. The reasons for this are many, but it illustrates with new urgency the need to foster a diverse and inclusive scientific workforce to tackle these and other challenges from a wider range of perspectives.

While efforts to increase diversity in the scientific workforce may have produced incremental change, we have yet to see large-scale results. Across disciplines, demographic representation throughout the ranks of academia still fails to reflect the diversity of our society. We are hopeful that a comprehensive study by the NASEM will yield the data and tools that the academic community needs to pursue evidence-based changes leading to more rapid progress.

A scientific enterprise that reflects the diversity of our nation will be more innovative and better equipped to address the challenges before us. Collectively, our organizations are working to change culture and improve diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within our staff, our members and our disciplines. The scientific community stands ready to work with you and your committee as you endeavor to address the systemic racism that exists within academia.

Sincerely,

Acoustical Society of America
Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation
American Anthropological Association

American Association for Anatomy
American Association for Cancer Research
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 College of Sports Medicine
American Educational Research Association
American Geophysical Union
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
American Society for Cell Biology
American Society for Investigative Pathology
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 Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
American Sociological Association
American Thoracic Society
ASME
Association for Molecular Pathology
Association for Psychological Science
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
AVS - The Society for Science and Technology of Materials, Interfaces, and Processing
AWIS - Association for Women in Science
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Biophysical Society
Coalition for the Life Sciences
Consortium for Ocean Leadership

Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Scientific Society Presidents
Council on Undergraduate Research
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Endocrine Society
Entomological Society of America
Federation of American Scientists
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences
Genetics Society of America
Geological Society of America
Harvard University
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
Mathematical Association of America
National Communication Association
National Council for Science and the Environment
National Institute of Building Sciences
OSA-The Optical Society
Research!America
SACNAS
SAGE Publishing
San Jose State University
Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society
Society for Freshwater Science
Society for Personality Assessment
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society of Toxicology
Soil Science Society of America
The Gerontological Society of America
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine