

APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The fiscal year 2008 federal appropriations process has been completed. The National Science Foundation (NSF) received a total budget of \$6 billion representing a 2.5% increase (\$148 million) over last year's amount. Unfortunately, funds were not specifically appropriated for the establishment of a new grant program at the NSF permitting the Foundation to award grants to institutions of higher education to establish Professional Science Master's degrees or improve existing programs (the program was authorized by the America COMPETES Act in 2007).

The Conference Committee Report included the following:

"The Appropriations Committees strongly support increases for the math and physical sciences, computer sciences, and engineering directorates in fiscal year 2008 for research and related activities (R&RA). However, the Committees also believe the Foundation should maintain comparable growth in fiscal year 2008, to the extent possible, for the biological sciences and social, behavioral, and economic sciences directorates. Each of the science disciplines is valuable in maintaining U.S. competitiveness. The Committees urge NSF to provide each directorate with funding levels that are consistent with the goals of the America COMPETES Act and look forward to the Foundation's operating plan in addressing these concerns."

It also says: "The Committees are strongly supportive of the following programs and urge the Foundation to provide funding at the requested level for these programs: the Undergraduate/Graduate Student Support account and the Graduate Teaching Fellowships in K12, the NSF Academies for Young Scientists, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the HBCU Undergraduate Program, the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), the Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) and the STEM Talent Expansion program. Further, the Committees support the Foundation's request for the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) and the Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST). The conferees urge the Foundation to broaden Hispanic participation and expect that NSF will begin to address this issue in its operating plan."