



# Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

— *Quality Life Through Research* —

## Member Societies

The American Physiological Society  
American Society for Biochemistry and  
Molecular Biology  
American Society for Pharmacology and  
Experimental Therapeutics  
American Society for Investigative  
Pathology  
American Society for Nutrition  
The American Association of  
Immunologists  
American Association of Anatomists  
The Protein Society  
Society for Developmental Biology  
American Peptide Society  
Association of Biomolecular Resource  
Facilities  
The American Society for Bone and  
Mineral Research  
American Society for Clinical  
Investigation  
Society for the Study of Reproduction  
Teratology Society  
The Endocrine Society  
The American Society of Human  
Genetics  
Environmental Mutagen Society  
International Society for  
Computational Biology  
American College of Sports Medicine  
Biomedical Engineering Society  
Genetics Society of America  
American Federation for Medical  
Research

March 2, 2010

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
Building 1, One Center Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20892-0160

Dear Dr. Collins:

On behalf of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), I am writing to express sincere appreciation for the recent increases in the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) stipend level, as well as the President's request for an additional 6% increase in 2011. FASEB also supports the many policy and programmatic changes NIH has made to improve the training and research environments for postdoctoral fellows and early stage investigators.

The NRSA program has been an essential component of our nation's research investment and a vital source of support for trainees in the biomedical and behavioral sciences. It is regrettable, therefore, that stipends for postdoctoral researchers supported on NRSA training grants and fellowships have failed to keep pace with the cost of living since the program's inception in 1975. FASEB is concerned that even with the requested boost in stipends, compensation for postdoctoral scholars is not commensurate with their education, experience, and contribution to the biomedical research enterprise. FASEB recommends raising stipends for entry level (year 0) postdoctoral researchers supported through the NRSA program to \$43,000 as soon as feasible. This number reflects the approximate level at which the year 0 stipend would be set had it been adjusted annually for cost of living since the inception of the program. We also recommend providing postdocs with annual cost of living increases thereafter. FASEB has been an ardent supporter of NIH, and we will continue to advocate for increased funding for the agency so that it has the resources to meet this goal. We urge you to make increases in stipends a priority in future budget requests, as well.

Many institutions benchmark pay for all postdoctoral fellows in the biomedical sciences to the NRSA level. However, there is no mechanism to allow investigators to budget for increased pay for these researchers when NRSA stipends are raised unexpectedly. FASEB encourages NIH to develop a mechanism—separate from those intended to supplement research costs—by which investigators could request supplemental funding to increase compensation for postdoctoral fellows supported on research grants if NRSA stipends are raised beyond the cost of living. This would be a step toward ensuring that postdoctoral fellows supported on research grants receive fair compensation, encourage parity in postdoctoral salaries within institutions, and allow investigators to absorb additional training costs without drawing on funds budgeted for research equipment and supplies.

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### President

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Thank you for considering FASEB's comments on this important issue.

Sincerely,

*Mark O. Lively*

Mark O. Lively, Ph.D.  
FASEB President