
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

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FASEB OPPOSES LIMITING HEALTH BENEFITS TO NRSA TRAINEES

Bethesda, MD – The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) strongly opposes any change to the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA) tuition funding policy that would diminish the benefits and compensation for individuals funded through NRSA training awards. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is considering capping the tuition and health benefits allowances provided under the NRSA program. Options for imposing this cap include applying a ceiling to the level of funding allocated via the current tuition formula, providing a fixed tuition allowance to grantee institutions, or maintaining the current funding formula. Because tuition and health insurance are allocated through the same fund, limiting the tuition allocation by capping or fixing the allowance has the potential to constrain the ability of institutions to provide adequate benefits and compensation to their trainees.

“It is highly regrettable that the funding situation has forced NIH to propose these alternatives,” said FASEB President Bruce Bistran, MD, Ph.D. “However, FASEB’s primary concern has been and continues to be the welfare of trainees in the biological sciences.” Previously, FASEB has supported higher stipends and increased employment benefits, including health insurance, for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. “FASEB strongly believes that the health and well-being of our nation’s emerging scientists demands maintaining the level of tuition and health insurance benefits” provided to trainees under the current NRSA tuition funding formula, according to Bistran. “If NIH were to separate health insurance costs from the “tuition” category in a way that assured that health insurance benefits would not be compromised, our principal concern would be addressed,” he stated. To this end, FASEB supports placing tuition and healthcare in separate categories to avoid the commingling of these funds.

The FASEB statement may be found on our website www.faseb.org or accessed directly [here](#).

FASEB is composed of 23 societies with more than 65,000 members, making it the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States. FASEB’s mission is to enhance the ability of biomedical and life scientists to improve—through their research—the health, well-being and productivity of all people. FASEB serves the interests of these scientists in those areas related to public policy, facilitates coalition activities among Member Societies and disseminates information on biological research through scientific conferences and publications.