

July 24, 2018

Jon R. Lorsch, Ph.D.  
Director  
The National Institute of General Medical Science  
45 Center Drive MSC 6200  
Bethesda, MD 20892-6200

RE: NOT-GM-18-031

Dear Dr. Lorsch,

I write on behalf of the membership of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in connection with the Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for the Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC) (T34) Program published by your office on May 30, 2018. AASCU is a higher education association of more than 400 public four-year colleges and universities across the United States.

The publication of that notice, indicating a possible redirection of resources away from research-active institutions to research-intensive ones, has caused confusion within the higher education community. This is particularly true among regional comprehensive state universities that are the nation's gateways to educational opportunity. Because of their high quality, lower costs, and geographic proximity to communities across the country, these institutions enroll the most diverse student bodies and produce the greatest socio-economic mobility of any sector in U.S. higher education. In other words, these institutions are ideally suited to assist NIGMS with its efforts to diversify the biomedical research field.

The publication of the Notice referenced above has led to concerns that the NIGMS could inadvertently negatively impact the researcher pipeline through which so many qualified students are directed into the biomedical sciences by restricting eligibility for grant funding in MARC program. To allay these concerns and better understand and assist NIGMS's plans with its historical effort, I would like to request a meeting for AASCU staff and you or your designees at your earliest convenience. This would enable us to clearly communicate your goals with our membership and will hopefully address the concerns we hear from them.

I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mildred García, Ed.D.  
President