

September 26, 2016

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Subject: Feedback on NSF's Strategic Plan

The US National Science Foundation invited feedback to support the process of updating its strategic plan for the 2017- 2018 revision.

The American Phytopathological Society (APS) represents a diverse cadre of researchers, educators, and field practitioners involved in plant production and protection in the US and around the world. Plant pathology is inherently an international endeavor as plant disease agents are global in their impact. Surveillance of plant disease conditions around the world is foundational to our ability to protect the US agricultural enterprise.

The National Science Foundation has an important role in enabling the fundamental research that leads to practical impacts and has demonstrated this in diverse applications that impact plant protection but were not developed with this application in mind. As such, the directions taken by the NSF in supporting research and education impact the membership of the APS in a myriad of ways.

The APS Public Policy Board (PPB) supports the NSF in its reevaluation of its strategic goals. The NSF Strategic Objective 1 (G1/O1) to “Invest in Fundamental research to ensure significant continuing advances across science, engineering, and education” is shared by the APS PPB. Specifically, the APS PPB acknowledges the need to increase the production of safe food for a growing population and emphasizes that fundamental research will play a key role in food security in both developed and developing nations.

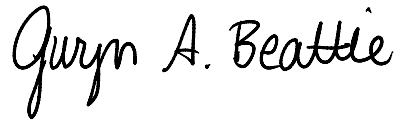
The NSF Strategic Objective 2, “Stimulate Innovation and Address Societal Needs through Research and Education” is especially important to the field of plant pathology. The APS PPB supports the efforts of the NSF to promote diversity in educational opportunities and recognizes that training is essential to ensure a future workforce that accurately reflects society’s diversity.

The APS PPB has endorsed the value of robust science infrastructure and supports Strategic Objective 3, “Provide world-class research infrastructure to enable major scientific advances” and appreciates the emphasis placed by NSF on data and material management plans in current requests for proposals. The APS PPB emphasizes that grants are made to institutions and yet individuals are making commitments for material and data management that may be beyond their individual ability to fulfil. The APS PPB supports robust and open data and material management policies that enable future generations of researchers to “stand on the shoulders” of the researchers of today.

The APS PPB appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments in support of the NSF Strategic Plan and the emphasis of this plan on maintaining world-leading fundamental research, diverse and equitable

educational opportunities, and robust research infrastructure. The NSF goal of “Excelling as a Federal Science Agency” will contribute to efforts in each of the other strategic objectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gwyn A. Beattie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gwyn A Beattie
APS Public Policy Board Chair