

Mr. Russell Vought, Director
Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20503

Mr. Vought:

The undersigned scientific societies strongly urge the Administration to rescind its elimination of federal employee training programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion as specified in the Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies issued September 4th, 2020 and the September 22nd Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping. These executive actions run counter to current efforts by federal agencies, contractors and grantees to foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment and are detrimental to efforts to address discrimination based on race or gender identity

Federal employees, contractors and recipients of federal grants are at the core of the U.S. research and development (R&D) ecosystem, and they play a crucial role in creating a diverse scientific workforce. While there has been progress, the participation of women and racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. scientific and technical workforce does not reflect the diversity of our population.¹ Their underrepresentation negatively impacts the U.S. R&D enterprise by depriving it of diverse perspectives that are shown to boost innovation and productivity.^{2,3} In many scientific fields, this lack of diversity cannot be solely attributed to inequities in education or the workforce pipeline⁴ the scientific, technical, engineering and math (STEM) community must also confront systemic discrimination and racism. For example, it has been shown that, historically, the percentage of federal grants awarded to minority scientists has been lower than their white peers largely due to underlying biases.⁵

Research shows that there are systemic and cultural aspects of the current R&D ecosystem which negatively contribute to an inclusive and productive career environment.^{3,4,6} However, specific actions have been identified to address them, including the implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) trainings using an evidence-based approach.^{4,6,7} Such trainings help employees become more aware of barriers to increased diversity, motivate positive behaviors and attitudes, and improve cognitive skills.^{3,7,8}

The September 4th memorandum and September 22nd Executive Order do a disservice to our community and research itself by wrongfully linking DEI trainings to the notion that anyone is inherently racist or sexist. While evidence-based DEI trainings are not impacted by these actions, wrongfully insinuating that DEI trainings are inherently anti-American sends a message of division, intolerance and subjectivity that is damaging to our R&D community.

We urge you to rescind these executive actions to help create and sustain a more diverse, inclusive, equitable and productive scientific community. A thriving scientific enterprise makes our nation stronger

American Indian Science and Engineering Society
American Institute of Physics
American Meteorological Society
American Physical Society
American Political Science Association

⁶ American Institute of Physics. 2020. The Universe: A Visual History. #Universe @AIP. (https://www.aip.org/history) American Institute of Physics. College Park, MD: American Institute of Physics.

⁷ Pfund, Christine, et. al., Building National Capacity for Research Mentor Training: An Evidence-Based Approach to Training the Trainers. CBE – Life Sciences Education 2015 14:2 [10.1187/cbe.14-10-0184](https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.14-10-0184)

⁸ Chang, M. J., Denson, N., Saenz, V., & Misa, K. (2006). The educational benefits of sustaining cross-racial interaction among undergraduates. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 3(3), 430-455.