

In this Issue:

- New NSC Alliance Member
- Over 50 Leading Organizations Call on Presidential Candidates to Address Major Issues in Science, Engineering
- Presidential Candidates Answer Science Debate Questions
- NSF to Update Strategic Plan
- Representatives Joyce and Pingree Receive USGS Coalition Leadership Award
- Upcoming NSC Alliance Board Meeting

Through the NSC Alliance partnership with the American Institute of Biological Sciences, we are pleased to provide NSC Alliance members with the following public policy update. With proper attribution to NSC Alliance, all material from these reports may be reproduced or forwarded. We encourage you to share this report with colleagues at your institution. Anyone interested in receiving copies of the NSC Alliance Washington Report may subscribe at www.NSCAlliance.org -- it's free!

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding any of the following items, please contact NSC Alliance director of public policy Dr. Robert Gropp at 202-628-1500 x 250 or at rgropp@aibs.org.

New NSC Alliance Member

The Entomological Collections Network is the newest member of NSC Alliance. The group is dedicated to the promotion of entomological science through the preservation, management, use and development of entomological collections and taxonomy. Learn more about the Entomological Collections Network at <http://ecweb.org/>.

Over 50 Leading Organizations Call on Presidential Candidates to Address Major Issues in Science, Engineering

A coalition of fifty-six leading U.S. nonpartisan organizations, representing more than 10 million scientists and engineers, are calling on U.S. Presidential candidates to address a set of twenty major issues in science, engineering, health and the environment, and encouraging journalists and voters to press the candidates on them during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election season. The Natural Science Collections Alliance was part of the effort.

"Taken collectively, these twenty issues have at least as profound an impact on voters' lives as those more frequently covered by journalists, including candidates' views on economic policy, foreign policy, and faith and values," said ScienceDebate.org chair Shawn Otto, organizer of the effort.

The group crowd sourced and refined hundreds of suggestions, then submitted "[the 20 most important, most immediate questions](#)" to the Presidential campaigns of Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, and Gary Johnson, "along with an invitation to the candidates to answer them in writing and to discuss them on television," said Otto. The questions and answers will be widely distributed to the science community, journalists, and the general public to help voters make well-informed decisions at the ballot box this November.

"Science saves lives and improves our quality of life. The federal government provides almost half of the funding for basic research in the United States. This research is the foundation upon which society - from small start-ups to Fortune 500 companies - develops new products that improve human health, secures our food supplies, and solves complex environmental problems," said Robert Gropp, interim co-executive director of the American Institute of Biological Sciences. "Just think of the benefits we have derived from the government's support of the Human Genome Project. Scientists now have a base of knowledge they can use to more strategically and precisely study diseases and explore new treatments. The public deserves to know the candidates' positions on science."

Norm Augustine, U.S. aerospace industry CEO and former Under Secretary of the Army: "The solution to many of the greatest challenges faced by our nation will depend to a large degree upon advancements in the fields of science and engineering. Such challenges include conquering diseases, creating jobs, developing clean energy, providing adequate water supplies, and defending our nation from terrorists and foreign aggressor nations. It is difficult to imagine how any citizen can intelligently cast their ballot without knowing where each candidate stands on the policy issues that will define whether America remains a leader or becomes a follower in the critical fields of science and engineering."

The consortium's list of 20 questions are available online at ScienceDebate.org/20qs.

Presidential Candidates Answer Science Debate Questions

Three of the four major candidates for U.S. president have responded to 20 questions posed by the scientific community. Responses from Hillary Clinton, Jill Stein, and Donald Trump are available online at <http://sciencedebate.org/20answers>. Gary Johnson is expected to respond soon.

Notably, all three candidates said that they would direct new funding to research.

"Federal funding of basic research amounts to less than one percent of annual federal spending, yet it is an investment that pays big dividends," wrote Hillary Clinton. "I believe it is essential that we strengthen our research capacity, by funding talented young investigators, looking for ways to prioritize "high-risk, high-reward" projects that have the potential to transform entire fields, and enhancing partnerships between government, universities, and the private sector."

“[T]he federal government should encourage innovation in the areas of space exploration and investment in research and development across the broad landscape of academia,” stated Donald Trump. “Though there are increasing demands to curtail spending and to balance the federal budget, we must make the commitment to invest in science, engineering, healthcare and other areas that will make the lives of Americans better, safer and more prosperous.”

“Presidents are able to affect long term R&D priorities by creating institutions focused on research like the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health that are to some extent insulated from short-term political cycles,” wrote Jill Stein. “We will revisit these institutions--their charge, focus, and operations--to ensure that they're performing as expected.”

An area where there was much less agreement was climate science.

Clinton: “When it comes to climate change, the science is crystal clear. Climate change is an urgent threat and a defining challenge of our time and its impacts are already being felt at home and around the world.

Trump: “There is still much that needs to be investigated in the field of “climate change.” Perhaps the best use of our limited financial resources should be in dealing with making sure that every person in the world has clean water.”

Stein: “Climate change is the greatest existential threat that humanity has ever faced.”

Read the candidates’ entire responses at <http://sciencedebate.org/20answers>.

NSF to Update Strategic Plan

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is updating its strategic plan, a process that occurs every four years. The scientific community is being invited to provide feedback on the vision, core values, goals, and objectives in the current plan. This input will help to shape NSF’s implementation of its mission to “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes.”

The strategic plan has three goals:

1. Transform the frontiers of science and engineering.
2. Stimulate innovation and address societal needs through research and education.
3. Excel as a federal science agency.

A summary of the plan is available [here](#). The full plan is at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2014/nsf14043/nsf14043.pdf>.

Comments should be filed by 27 September 2016 at <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/strategicplan/feedback.jsp>.

Representatives Joyce and Pingree Receive USGS Coalition Leadership Award

Representatives David Joyce (R-OH) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME) are the recipients of the 2016 USGS Coalition Leadership Award. The pair was honored at a Capitol Hill ceremony and public reception on September 13th in Washington, DC.

The Natural Science Collections Alliance is a member of the USGS Coalition.

“The USGS Coalition is pleased to recognize Representatives Joyce and Pingree for their support of the missions of the USGS and its efforts to advance the scientific fields that further our understanding of Earth’s living and non-living systems,” said Elizabeth Duffy, Co-Chair of the USGS Coalition.

“The U.S. Geological Survey has a unique capacity to deploy truly interdisciplinary teams of scientific experts,” said Julie Palakovich Carr, Co-Chair of the USGS Coalition and Public Policy Manager for the American Institute of Biological Sciences. “USGS research impacts the lives of each American every day through reduced risks from natural and human-induced hazards, assessments of water quality and other critical natural resources, improved ecosystem management, and accurate geospatial data and maps.”

Congressman Joyce is serving his second term in the U.S. House of Representatives and represents Ohio’s 14th congressional district, which borders Lake Erie. He serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, which oversees funding for the Department of the Interior. Joyce has been a leading voice in Congress for restoration of the Great Lakes.

“I am honored to be recognized by the USGS Coalition. As the Representative of Northeast Ohio, I have one of the country’s greatest natural resources in my back yard - Lake Erie,” said Representative Joyce. “The Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh water in the world. They need to be protected and preserved for generations to come. I applaud the USGS’ research efforts. Together, not only can we learn about the earth God gave us, but we can work to protect it.”

Representative Pingree is serving her fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Maine’s 1st congressional district. She serves on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Pingree has been a strong advocate for issues related to coastal communities, including ocean acidification.

“The men and women of the USGS play a critical role in helping us understand the land we live on and the resources it contains. They warn us of threats to life and property and protect the environment and ecosystems of our country,” said Representative Pingree. “I’m honored to be recognized for my support of the Survey.”

Upcoming NSC Alliance Board Meeting

The NSC Alliance Board will meet in conjunction with the annual Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections meeting this November in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The meeting will be held beginning at 1:00 p.m. on November 1. Any NSC Alliance member with an interest in the Board meeting or with suggestions for the Board should direct them to Joe Cook (cookjose@unm.edu) or Robert Gropp (rgropp@aibs.org).

The Natural Science Collections Alliance is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit association that serves as an advocate for natural science collections, the institutions that preserve them, and the research and education that extend from them for the benefit of science, society, and stewardship of the environment. NSC Alliance members are part of an international community of museums, botanical gardens, herbariums, universities, and other institutions that house natural science collections and utilize them in research, exhibitions, academic and informal science education, and outreach activities. Website: www.NSCAlliance.org.

The NSC Alliance Washington Report is a publication of the NSC Alliance. For information about membership in the NSC Alliance, please contact spotter@aibs.org.