



Genetics Society of America

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Genetics Society of America Response to NIH Request for Information Inviting Comments and Suggestions on a Framework for the NIH-wide Strategic Plan

[Request for Information \(NOT-OD-15-118\)](#)

We are pleased to submit this response on behalf of the Genetics Society of America (GSA), a professional scientific society with more than 5,400 members worldwide working to deepen our understanding of the living world by advancing the field of genetics, from the molecular to the population level.

The GSA believes that any NIH-wide strategic plan should have a central focus on promoting foundational knowledge and the development of cross-cutting technologies that will span all 27 Institutes and Centers. Indeed, everything else that NIH does depends on the knowledge base generated through investments in basic research. As such, GSA strongly endorses the first opportunity highlighted in the proposed framework: “Promote Fundamental Science.”

Many transformative discoveries in the history of biomedical research came about not because of a singular focus on developing a treatment or cure for a specific disease, but because of NIH’s history of empowering the research community to think creatively, to initiate and pursue diverse research opportunities, and to seek novel approaches to long-standing challenges. We therefore agree that NIH must retain the freedom to enhance its support for basic science as the most important priority for the agency.

Because humans share much of their basic biology with all living systems, we also believe that robust and expanded support for model organisms—from microbes to plants to mammals—is an essential part of this pursuit of foundational knowledge. One of the most effective ways to advance progress in biomedical research is to understand the fundamental biology of model systems. We therefore urge NIH to balance those parts of its strategic plan focused on human disease with complementary work on a diverse array of model organisms. There is a rich history of the benefits of this dual approach and the opportunity for a future rich in discovery.



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ABOUT GSA: Founded in 1931, the [Genetics Society of America](#) (GSA) is a professional scientific society with more than 5,000 members worldwide working to deepen our understanding of the living world by advancing the field of genetics, from the molecular to the population level. GSA promotes research and fosters communication through a number of GSA-sponsored conferences including regular meetings that focus on particular model organisms. GSA publishes two peer-edited scholarly journals: [GENETICS](#), which has published high quality original research across the breadth of the field since 1916, and [G3: Genes|Genomes|Genetics](#), an open-access journal launched in 2011 to disseminate high quality foundational research in genetics and genomics. The Society also has a deep commitment to education and fostering the next generation of scholars in the field. For more information about GSA, please visit www.genetics-gsa.org. Also follow GSA on Facebook at facebook.com/GeneticsGSA and on Twitter [@GeneticsGSA](https://twitter.com/GeneticsGSA).