September 8, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

The Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (CEOSE) advises the National Science Foundation (NSF) on policies and programs to encourage full participation by persons from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups (African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans), persons with disabilities, and women within all levels of America’s science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) enterprise. By Congressional mandate every two years, CEOSE submits a report to the NSF Director, which the Director transmits to Congress.

In the CEOSE 2011-2012 Biennial Report to Congress, CEOSE made only one main recommendation and called for “a bold new initiative”:

NSF implement a bold new initiative, focused on broadening participation of underrepresented groups in STEM that emphasizes institutional transformation and system change; collects and makes accessible longitudinal data; defines clear benchmarks for success; supports the translation, replication and expansion of successful broadening participation efforts; and provides significant financial support to individuals who represent the very broadened participation that we seek.

In the Committee’s latest 2013-2014 report, CEOSE reiterated the need for that bold new initiative and laid out an implementation framework for boldly addressing the ‘grand challenge’ of broadening participation. The five specific components of the framework needed to successfully implement the bold new initiative recommended in the 2011-2012 CEOSE report are:

1. Develop and implement an effective preK-20+ system of STEM pathways.
2. Provide stable and sufficient direct support for individuals.
3. Support the further development of a science of broadening participation grounded in empirical research.
4. Conduct field experiments to understand and mitigate the barriers to broadening participation.
5. Recognize the field specific nature of the broadening participation challenge.

We hope the report prompts ways for us to work together to promote opportunities for growth and diversity in the STEM workforce. The report can be found at the CEOSE website, http://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/activities/ceose/index.jsp.

Best regards,
The CEOSE Advisory Committee