DATE: Tuesday, March 24, 2020

TO: National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research

FROM: The Society of Toxicology (SOT)

RE: Request for Information (RFI) on the FY 2021–2025 National Institutes of Health (NIH)—Wide Strategic Plan Framework

The Society of Toxicology is supportive of the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan and notes several overlaps between the plan and the Society's own, recently developed five-year strategic plan.

Although there has been much progress in advancing diversity in the sciences, there is much more that can be done, and as such, it is appropriate that enhancing and supporting diversity is listed as a cross-cutting theme. Achieving diversity and inclusiveness increases the breadth of ideas and perspectives that can be brought to bear in problem formulation, thereby optimizing creativity.

Health problems facing us today are complex and multifactorial in nature. Optimizing data science and the investment into new technologies and tools offers a unique opportunity for both discovery and solutions to these complex problems. In addition, an emphasis on collaboration and, more importantly, transdisciplinary collaboration wherein multiple disciplines are brought together as early as possible to work on a health challenge, often is highly beneficial in identifying solutions for complex problems. Thus, the Society of Toxicology also is highly supportive of collaboration and data science as cross-cutting themes. However, recognizing that environmental factors are increasingly recognized as significant contributors to disease and public health challenges, the Society of Toxicology urges NIH to consider the specific inclusion of the environmental sciences in Objective 1 (i.e., "Advancing Biomedical, Environmental and Behavioral Sciences"). Doing so would highlight the importance of considering environmental contributions to disease, the existence of environmental science expertise within the National Institutes of Health (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences), and, importantly, the opportunities for collaboration between the biomedical, environmental, and behavioral sciences in achieving the Objective 1 goals.

11190 SUNRISE VALLEY DRIVE, SUITE 300, RESTON, VA 20191
Telephone: 703.438.3115   Fax: 703.438.3113   Email: sothq@toxicology.org
Website: www.toxicology.org