

ASCB Speaks Out on Access to Research Results

Since 2010, the White House has been trying to develop a U.S. government-wide policy making the results of federally funded research more accessible to the public. On its first attempt in 2010, the White House asked the ASCB to provide comments based on its experience as a nonprofit scientific publisher. More than a year later, after two unsuccessful attempts to formulate a policy, the White House asked the ASCB to add to its original comments.

In its comments, the ASCB highlighted the importance of wide and prompt dissemination of scientific results to scientific progress. The ASCB statement said, “The sooner findings are shared, the faster they will lead to new scientific insights and breakthroughs.” To back up this belief, since 2001 the ASCB’s basic research journal, *Molecular Biology of the Cell (MBoC)*, has provided free access to all accepted research

articles soon after acceptance and to all finalized articles two months after publication. The ASCB believes that the taxpayers who fund the research are also best served when the results of research are made widely available.

The ASCB countered claims by some publishers that free access to their journals would have serious financial implications. The ASCB feels that the financial history of *MBoC* disproves that claim and that the time sensitivity of scientific information ensures that libraries will continue to subscribe to journals to provide researchers with immediate access. In fact, the rate at which individual articles in *MBoC* are viewed and downloaded is at its peak in the first few months after publication.

To read the 2010 and 2012 comments by the ASCB, go to www.ascb.org/Other-Policy-Issues.html. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

ASCB Members Oppose Threat to NIH Peer-Review Process

When it comes to the federal government, everyone is in favor of reform and transparency, correct? Well, sometimes it’s not that easy.

In January, members of Project 50, the ASCB Public Policy Advocacy Team, joined with others from ASCB, members of the Coalition for the Life Sciences’ Congressional Liaison Committee, and other advocates to point out the real-world problems with a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would change the peer-review process at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) in unimaginable ways.

The bill, the Grant Reform and New Transparency Act, or GRANT Act, was introduced by Rep. James Lankford (R-OK). The GRANT Act would, according to the text of the bill, “provide transparency and require certain standards in the award of Federal grants.”

However, a letter, sponsored by NIH champions Reps. Rush Holt (D-NJ) and David Price (D-NC) and signed by 63 members of Congress, opposes the bill and says that it will “threaten our nation’s scientific research system and will stifle innovation

and economic growth.” One of the greatest concerns is a provision that could require that unpublished data be made publically available on a website administered by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. According to the Holt-Price letter, this provision would “undermine the applicant and their institution’s right to the intellectual property.”

Another provision of the bill would require the public disclosure of the names of peer reviewers.

The GRANT Act was approved by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and awaits further action by the full U.S. House of Representatives. ■

—Kevin M. Wilson

Fast Facts: President Obama Releases FY13 Budget Proposal

- President Obama’s FY13 budget request for the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) is \$30.702 billion, the same as the NIH FY12 budget.
- The budget proposal includes \$7.4 billion for the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), which is \$340 million, or 4.8%, more than the NSF FY12 budget.
- The budget request for the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science is \$4.99 billion, \$118.4, or 2.4%, more than its FY12 budget.

