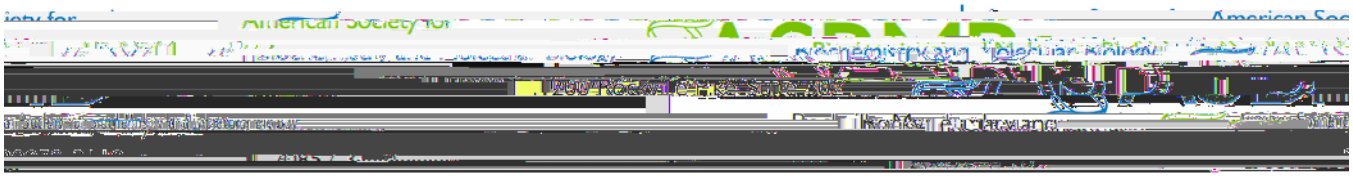

Dear colleagues on the NIH ACD Next Generation Researchers Initiative Working Group:

As the Next Generation Researchers Initiative (NGRI) Working Group of the Public Affairs and Advisory Committee (PAAC) of the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB), we would like to follow up our April 25 letter with comments on the report issued at the 116th meeting of the ACD (June 14-15, 2018). We hope to continue our fruitful dialog with the NIH as you identify and propose policies to ensure the sustainability of the biomedical research enterprise. In particular, we wish to provide feedback regarding proposed policies for the next generation of scientists and for at-risk investigators with the common goal of supporting the future of biomedical research.

However, of the two proposed options for the status clock, we favor the second, as it better acco variability in training paths, including non-traditional paths and paths in different disciplines within biomedical research. The first definition using a 12-15 year window may be too short for investigators in multidisciplinary fields requiring multiple postdoctoral training appointments and, at the same ti may be too long for investigators in fields where shorter postdoctoral fellowships are sufficient. We favor using time from the start of the investigator's first independent position as the anchor date, requiring institutions to certify eligibility for designations as is common practice for scholar awards. This approach is successfully utilized for awards from the Pew Charitable Trust, the Cami and Henry Dreyfus Foundation, the Cottrell Scholars Collaborative, and the National Science Foundation CAREER program to support investigators who are in a similar career stage as NIH ESIs.

ESIs and multi-PI grants

Major theme 1, Slide 16: We agree that shifting the focus to meritorious at-risk investigators is critical. We also agree that the approach to have ESIs maintain their ESI status while receiving support multi-PI grants is helpful to their scientific development and pursuit of an independent research program. However, before changes are made in study section format, we would like to see data indicate that clustering of ESIs and at-risk investigators together during review leads to a fairer review process.

Methods to identify and support ESIs and at-risk investigators

Major theme 2, Slide 17: We agree it is important to develop grant mechanisms to support ESIs risk investigators. We encourage NIH to expand their current efforts. While awards such as the D DP5 are valuable mechanisms for supporting outstanding ESIs, the limited number of awards made b these programs limits impact. We applaud the goals of the more widely used NIGMS MIRA R35 encourage NIH to more broadly implement similar programs.