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## New FASEB president starts term

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The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) today (June 30) outlined its agenda for the upcoming year as its new president, Robert D. Wells, took office. Wells, director of the Center for Genome Research at the Institute of Biosciences and Technology at Texas A&M University, took over for Washington University immunologist Steven Teitelbaum, who will remain active for FASEB as "past president." Wells has been serving as FASEB's president-elect for the past year.

Among FASEB's objectives, Wells told us, is making advocacy for the National Science Foundation (NSF) more of a priority. FASEB wants a doubling of the NSF budget in the next 5 years and a budget increase in fiscal year (FY) 2004 consistent with that doubling. Although President Bush signed an [authorization bill](#) late last year that put the NSF on track for a funding increase from the FY 2002 level of \$4.79 billion to \$9.84 billion in FY 2007, the current increase sought in the president's FY 2004 budget is only about 9%.

Wells himself has been a long-time recipient of both NSF and National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants for his research on the role of triplet DNA base repeats in hereditary disease.

Increasing the NIH budget will continue to be a major priority. FASEB has been pushing for an increase of 10%, rather than the 2 to 4% currently [allocated for FY 2004](#). "If we go through one or two or three years of no increase, we're back to where we started," says Wells.

Wells, who served as president of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from 2000 to 2002, first became interested in science research advocacy in the 1980s. While a professor at the University of Alabama, he saw a large training grant for disease research go unfunded because of a reallocation of NIH resources. He responded by helping to organize a grassroots protest; he also took his case to Washington, where he started to gain insight into the political and science advocacy process.

The new FASEB president said he plans to further the [umbrella organization's](#) agenda by strengthening its partnerships with as many as 15 societies and advocacy groups. He noted, for example, that FASEB will cooperate with the American Chemical Society (ACS) in the fight for an NSF budget increase and will work with the ACS to ensure that the massive amounts of money allocated for bioterrorism research are well spent. FASEB also plans to work with the Society for Neuroscience to advocate in favor of stem cell research.

Wells added that he will continue to focus FASEB's attention on issues including the peer review system, [animal](#) research, [stem cell](#) research, and "manpower issues," such as the impact of [visa regulations](#).

A new FASEB president-elect, Paul Kincade, also begins his term today. Kincade heads the immunobiology and cancer program at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, where he is also the chair of biomedical research.

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