



December 20, 2016

President-Elect Donald J. Trump  
Trump Tower  
725 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

*Transmitted via email to Transition Team Members*

Dear President-Elect Trump:

With nearly 36,000 members across the world, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) advocates for public policies that promote equity in research and the classroom, foster excellence and access to quality opportunities in the workforce, and ensures that women and girls graduating high school and college leave with the skills and knowledge that support success in their professional, academic and personal aspirations. To support a thriving US economy, every student needs to have a strong foundation in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. This foundation will allow them to land and succeed virtually anywhere – from the shop floor to the research lab to the boardroom. It is more evident than ever that high-paying jobs in the STEM fields must be filled substantially by women to meet the country's economic and infrastructure goals. Enabling our students, particularly our women and girls, to compete in the global economy requires a strong federal commitment to improved access to quality teaching and learning in the STEM fields.

Federally-supported programs important to women in science and engineering and young women who end up in these crucial fields are found across the federal agencies. It is crucial that there continues to be staff in these agencies who know the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the STEM fields and how such policies are critical to efforts to close the skills gap in this country.

We would like to thank your campaign for responding to our [policy questionnaire](#) earlier this fall and hope you will accept our staffing and policy recommendations. As you, your transition team, your nominated cabinet members and other advisors proceed with setting federal STEM priorities for the first year of your administration and beyond, SWE offers the following recommendations.

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**We recommend and support the following for the Administration's overall policy agenda:**

- **Whenever possible, we encourage the appointment of advisors, cabinet secretaries and undersecretaries who are women and/or individuals with STEM backgrounds.** We note that you have already appointed women to cabinet-level positions. SWE hopes this trend continues and that all appointees, whether man or woman, will recognize and reward the contributions of women policymakers working to advance equity in federal policies, the economy, academia, the research enterprise and elsewhere.
- **Preserve a strong role for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy in informing presidential priorities and policies and appoint a strong national science advisor who knows about the challenges women face in STEM fields and careers and is committed to the advancement of women, girls and people of color in areas of science where they are historically underrepresented.** As the incoming administration hopes to improve the rank of the United States in the competitive global economy, we believe it is critical that the needs of the science and technology community maintain a close and loud voice within the White House.
- **Continue to host annual aspirational events at the White House,** such as the White House Science Fair, the Summit on Women, the Maker Fair and other events that highlight the accomplishments, contributions and potential of female STEM educators, professionals and students.
- **Preserve the White House Council on Women and Girls.** The structure of the council ensures that each agency consider that issues facing women today "are not just women's issues." Whether this incoming administration decides to restructure the offices, it is our hope that this focus across the federal government will not be lost.
- **Support legislative efforts to reauthorize a number of education policies such that they recognize the importance of including girls and other underrepresented minorities in certain policies and programs.** The 115<sup>th</sup> Congress will begin debating how to revising the America COMPETES Act, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and the Higher Education Act and other pieces of legislation important to SWE and its members. We hope a Trump White House will support policies in these laws that nurture the success of young girls and women in engineering and STEM fields.

**We recommend and support the following legislative and appropriations requests in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress:**

**Higher Education:**

- Enlarge America’s talent pool by greatly improving K-12 STEM education through the recruitment, training, and retention of STEM teachers;
- Expand the STEM pipeline, especially targeting women and minorities, by increasing the number of students who pursue STEM coursework; and
- Make the United States the most appealing setting for study and research to cultivate, recruit, and retain top quality students, scientists, and engineers from within the United States and throughout the world.
- Support Institutional Development programs such as the Minority Science and Engineering Improvement program and the Hispanic-Serving Institution STEM and Articulation program which support new and continuation grants for the improvement of science and engineering education at predominantly minority institutions, particularly benefitting minority women.

**K-12 Education:**

- Support robust funding of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title II Supporting Effective Instruction State grants program at the Department of Education (ED). This program supports STEM-specific professional development and teacher leadership training.
- Support robust funding of the ESSA Title IV Student Support and Academic Enhancement Grants. The new initiative would support state-led efforts to promote hands on STEM learning, STEM specialty schools, integration of informal and formal STEM programs, and improvement in computer science instruction.
- Support robust funding for a STEM Master Teacher Corps, authorized through Section 2245 of ESSA. This program would help cultivate teacher leaders in STEM subjects and promote the sharing of best practices across the teaching professions.

**Title IX:**

- Support adequate, robust funding for the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. As the office responsible for enforcing Title IX compliance at K-12 schools and on the country’s higher education campuses, ensuring OCR is adequately staffed is of utmost importance to the pursuit of gender equity in education.
- Ensure that educational institutions should fulfill their obligations under the law; examine their institutional policies, procedures or practices for gender bias; provide suggestions for areas to examine when evaluating programs for gender bias; and make this information accessible to the public.



- Ensure that federal agencies will fulfill their monitoring and enforcement obligations under the law, equitably awarding grants and research dollars to women and minority researchers, and make all enforcement and grant information available to the public in a timely manner.

#### **Early Childhood Education:**

- Support adequate, robust funding for the Child Care Development and Block Grant program to improve the quality and safety of infant and toddler care and provide adequate assistance to working mothers and young families seeking to stay in STEM fields.

#### **Research Funding:**

- Support adequate funding for the National Science Foundation's Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate. This funding supports discovery and innovation at the frontiers of STEM learning and teaching, supports the testing, assessment, study and evaluation of highly innovative models and approaches to learning, and fosters linkages between STEM education research and practice that improve the effectiveness of programs across the federal government and at the state level.
- Support robust funding for the Increasing the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers (ADVANCE) program.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you and look forward to working with you in the following years. Please feel free to reach out to myself or our Washington, D.C. representative Della Cronin ([dcronin@wpllc.net](mailto:dcronin@wpllc.net)) at any time.

Respectfully

Jessica Rannow  
President  
Society of Women Engineers