

22 September 2026

The National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP), the National Society of Hispanic Physicists (NSHP), and the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) are deeply concerned by the U.S. Department of Justice's determination that elements of three National Science Foundation (NSF) programs—the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (IUSE-HSI), Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP), and Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP)—are unconstitutional. We are also concerned about the implications for the implementation of the “severable race- or sex-based elements” of other NSF programs, including Advanced Technological Education (ATE) and ADVANCE [1]. IUSE-HSI, LSAMP, and AGEP are critical to removing these unnecessary barriers and creating environments where physics/astronomy learners and astronomers/physicists can focus on science.

These programs address well-documented barriers in the STEM education and careers ecosystem and strengthen the nation's scientific workforce. IUSE-HSI supports improvements in undergraduate STEM education and institutional capacity at Hispanic-Serving Institutions; LSAMP has helped expand pathways from undergraduate STEM education into graduate study; and AGEP strengthens pathways from graduate education into the STEM professoriate. Together, they represent complementary investments across the STEM trajectory.

The need for these investments remains clear. Black and Hispanic/Latine people remain substantially underrepresented in physics and astronomy relative to their representation in the U.S. population, particularly at the doctoral, faculty, and leadership levels [2-4]. Decades of research have documented barriers, including inadequate access to mentoring and research opportunities and unwelcoming or hostile environments, that can discourage talented students and scientists from pursuing or advancing in STEM [5-6].

Equal opportunity and broad participation are not competing goals. These programs seek to ensure that institutions remove avoidable barriers so that talented people are not prevented from contributing to science. High quality mentoring, supportive research opportunities, improved teaching practices, flourishing institutional climates, and increased pathways into STEM careers benefit students, institutions, the U.S., and the scientific enterprise broadly. When capable students and scientists are prevented from making scientific contributions, the nation loses researchers, discoveries, educators, and scientific leaders.

We are also concerned about the potential impact on ATE and ADVANCE. We urge NSF to implement any required changes narrowly and transparently while preserving, to the fullest extent permitted by law, the evidence-based activities and scientific objectives of these programs. ATE and ADVANCE seek to ensure that institutions remove avoidable barriers, but focus on two-year colleges (ATE) and gender, race, and ethnicity (ADVANCE).

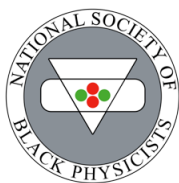
NSBP, NSHP, and AAPT call on Congress to protect federal investments in broadening participation and STEM workforce development and to ensure that NSF can continue addressing documented barriers to participation and advancement in science. We also encourage members of the physics and astronomy community to contact their representatives and senators and express their support for these programs.

As professional societies dedicated to supporting Black and Hispanic/Latine physicists and astronomers and building thriving physics and astronomy communities for all, we remain committed to ensuring that talented people from every background have the opportunity to contribute to and strengthen the U.S. scientific enterprise.

Thomas Searles

President

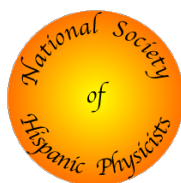
*On behalf of the
NSBP Executive Board*



Mario Borunda

President

*On behalf of the
NSHP Executive Board*



Debbie Andres

President

*On behalf of the
AAPT Board of Directors*



References

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