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Further detriment to SACNAS Conference from government shutdown [1]

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FURTHER DETRIMENT TO SACNAS CONFERENCE FROM GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

SACNAS Students, Speakers, Presenters, Exhibitors Cannot Attend National Conference;
Nobel Laureate Step In To Welcome Conference Attendees

The Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) reiterates its strong opposition to the federal government shutdown. The shutdown has caused significant detriment to participants in SACNAS' annual national

conference which begins today in San Antonio, Texas.

A forty year old nonprofit scientific society, SACNAS (www.sacnas.org [4]), fosters the success of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native American scientists, from college students to professionals, to attain advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in science. Government agencies and representatives from countless departments and institutes are key partners in this effort.

Over a dozen Native American students—undergraduates, post-baccalaureates, and postdoctoral fellows—who were scheduled to present their research, share their experiences, and serve as mentors at the conference, were forced to cancel their attendance, as they are sponsored by federal agencies which themselves are shut down. These include the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and WINS (Washington Internship for Native Students).

Additionally, 27 conference speakers and 38 conference exhibitors were forced to cancel their attendance, also because they are affiliated with shuttered federal agencies. One professional development session at the conference was also cancelled, as the session presenters could not travel to San Antonio due to the government shutdown.

Nobel Laureate Martin Chalfie, PhD, will be filling in as the conference Welcome Keynoter, for NIH Administrator Clif Poodry, PhD, who is unable to travel and address the conference due to the shutdown.

SACNAS had originally anticipated a conference attendance of almost 4000--undergraduate, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, student mentors and representatives of colleges and universities, from almost every racial and ethnic group in the US, including some of the most underserved and underrepresented populations in the sciences.

The inability of government representatives to share their critical information with our students is a great loss, as is the inability of government-affiliated students to attend and benefit from this conference. SACNAS students will not learn about opportunities to carry out research in our national laboratories, at the National Institutes of Health, at the National Science Foundation, and elsewhere. They will not hear about essential fellowships for their education and jobs to serve our country.
Our students want and deserve to learn about opportunities to participate in activities that support the health, welfare, and future of the United States.

While Congressional representatives are elected by districts, in fact, in times like these, they represent us all. We implore all members of Congress to work diligently and in good faith to reach a speedy and responsible solution to this impasse.

Signed by entire SACNAS Board of Directors:

Maggie Werner-Washburne, PhD, President (New Mexico); Ernest Marquez, PhD, Past-President (Maryland); Lee Bitsoi, PhD, Secretary (Massachusetts); Nancy Hurtado-Ziola, PhD, Treasurer (California); Luis Echegoyen, PhD (Texas); Brandon Gaytan, MS (California); Luis Gonzalez, PhD (Kansas); John Herrington, MS (Idaho); Charla Lambert, PhD (New York); Juan Meza, PhD (California); Gabriel Montano, PhD (New Mexico); Jose Vargas-Muniz, BS (North Carolina); Greg Villareal, PhD (Texas); Talithia Williams, PhD (California).

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