ASM Statement on

Biden-Harris Administration Decision to Elevate OSTP Director to a Cabinet-level Position

OSTP Move and Appointments of Lander and Collins Demonstrate Prioritization of Science

January 20, 2021

The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) applauds President Biden’s decision to elevate the director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to a Cabinet-level position in his Administration. As we continue to grapple with a deadly pandemic and face daunting challenges such as global climate change, this move will restore science to its rightful place in the development and implementation of policies that affect human health and the world around us.

The elevation of the OSTP director, along with the appointment of world-class scientists to key administration positions, demonstrates the President’s and Vice President’s unwavering commitments to leading with science and ensuring that policy decisions are evidence-based and data driven. President Biden’s choices to fill critical scientific and public health leadership positions are a clear reflection of his respect for basic, clinical and translational science, and its importance in our society.

Eric Lander, PhD is an outstanding choice to serve as director of OSTP. As the first life scientist to serve in this important role and a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, Dr. Lander brings an extraordinary level of expertise and scientific gravitas to the position.

ASM also looks forward to continuing our work with Francis Collins, MD, PhD in his position as the director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). For more than a decade Dr. Collins has been a visionary leader who has steered the agency through times of both turbulence and consequential accomplishments, most recently the interagency development of vaccines, therapeutics, and testing strategies for SARS-CoV-2.

Together, Lander and Collins along with all of the new appointees to scientific positions are part of a highly accomplished science and public health team who will serve our nation as we continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and confront major scientific challenges of our time. ASM and its members look forward to working with these esteemed individuals and their colleagues in the months, and we stand ready to assist them in their work.