



Advancing basic science—The foundation of our future

## Strategic Plan 2018

### Mission

To increase philanthropic support for basic science research.

In 2012, the six founding members of the Alliance established this mission. With ever-increasing constraints on government funding for science around the world, and the continued need to accelerate scientific discovery, this mission remains as important today as it was five years ago.

### Strategy

In 2015, we learned that emerging philanthropists want advice on the most effective ways of supporting basic science. We adopted advising as our strategy because by helping philanthropists support science more effectively, we could ensure that they are satisfied with their giving, and will therefore continue or even increase their support.

This strategy has stimulated a pipeline of funders and prospective philanthropists who come to the Alliance for help. In late 2016, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative announced its \$3 billion commitment to support scientific research. This fall, Eric and Wendy Schmidt announced a \$100 million effort to promote scientific leadership and interdisciplinary research. Some of our advisees have become members, many of whom we continue to advise and support in their philanthropy.

To help refine our strategy, we explored our theory of change and developed a logic model in the fall of 2017. We learned about theories of change and logic models from a series of Alliance member workshops on measurement and evaluation led by the Moore Foundation in 2016 and 2017. We began to use these tools to think about the best ways to achieve our mission. Through the development of our logic model, we articulated specific desired outcomes, identified the activities and outputs needed to achieve these desired outcomes, and developed a framework to measure progress.

During 2018 we will pursue the following outcomes:

1. New and established U.S. and U.K. philanthropists increase giving to basic science
2. Alliance members continue to have high satisfaction with Alliance services and activities, and continue their high level of engagement to support our mission.

In addition to these two primary desired outcomes, we will also pursue a third outcome:

3. Research institutions are more successful in increasing private funding for basic science.

The tactics section below outlines how we propose to achieve these desired outcomes. The metrics section outlines a plan for evaluating our progress towards these desired outcomes. A 2018 budget is included.

It is important to assess the success of fulfilling the mission of the Alliance. We propose to carry out such an assessment at the end of the fifth year of full operation (fall 2019) to determine whether the Alliance will continue to operate for a second five-year period.

## Tactics

### NEW AND ESTABLISHED U.S. AND U.K. PHILANTHROPISTS INCREASE GIVING TO BASIC SCIENCE

To achieve the desired outcome of increased private giving to basic science by U.S. and U.K. philanthropists, we seek to increase the number of potential advisees contacting the Alliance, and to provide customized advising that will move philanthropists further along in their giving process. Following are activities to meet these desired outcomes.

**Advising.** In 2017, we provided advice to high-net-worth individuals on many issues, including support for how to create and manage scientific advisory boards, exploration of specific scientific areas, and models of effective funding mechanisms. In 2018, we will continue to focus on customized advising to philanthropists and their staff members. In addition, we will create tools for advisees' use, including case studies and member practice documents.

**Referrals.** We will continue to rely on word-of-mouth for advisee referrals; our Alliance members and consultants are critical as referral sources. We will continue to focus on Giving Pledgers, Silicon Valley high-net-worth individuals and New York financiers as critical constituencies. We will explore new relationships in Texas and the U.K. We will also continue to generate visibility in the media, and participate in conferences and other gatherings, which many philanthropists and foundations attend, to increase the exposure of the Alliance to these constituencies.

**Events.** Hosting meetings where advisees can learn about science philanthropy and connect with more experienced philanthropists has been successful. After each event, we have surveyed the participants, formally and informally, to learn what content they found most valuable, as well as to gauge their satisfaction with the events' style and organization. We learned that our participants:

- prefer smaller, intimate/intensive sessions where they can speak freely and learn from their peers
- have a great interest in and need for sharing science philanthropy best practices and funding models
- benefit from interacting with other philanthropists and funders, i.e. peer-to-peer learning.

Strong evidence supporting the success of these events is that many attendees have become advisees and/or Alliance members immediately after participating. For example, the 2015 Giving Pledge learning session that was hosted by the Simons Foundation led to significant numbers of advisees and new members.

We are planning two more day-long learning events in 2018 modeled on the Giving Pledge learning session event. We plan to host regional learning sessions about basic science philanthropy in Texas and London. These events will be designed to help philanthropists explore science philanthropy models and methods in exclusive, peers-only settings.

In addition, we will continue to host topic-specific workshops upon request from members or advisees.

**Communications.** The web and social media platforms are important channels for high-net-worth individuals looking for information about the Alliance. Our website shares our identity and mission and provides useful information to our audiences. We developed Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube channels to share news about science philanthropy, basic science research, and about the Alliance. We also produce a quarterly newsletter to communicate and share useful information with our advisees.

**Connecting advisees with philanthropists, scientists.** Our network, in both the science and the philanthropy worlds, continues to grow. In 2018, we will continue to connect advisees and members with experienced philanthropists and foundations, as well as scientists, depending on their needs. We will also continue to support potential partnerships between new philanthropists and established foundations, as a way for the former to learn about philanthropy models and mechanisms. For example, we are encouraging partnerships between new and established funders through our partnership offerings document, which outlines ways that philanthropists can partner with HHMI, Research Corporation for Science Advancement, and the Rita Allen Foundation. We encourage other Alliance members to tell us about partnership opportunities that we can share with funders.

**Exploring other regions.** In 2018, we will continue to focus on advising philanthropists in the U.S. and U.K., as those are the countries where we have Alliance members, the strongest networks, and the most experience. We will continue to be a resource on basic science philanthropy, selectively, as requested by philanthropists from other regions, including Europe, South America, and Asia.

## **Resources**

**Staffing.** In 2017, we added an advisor, Sue Merrilees, to support higher demand for our advising services, and a 2-year fellow, Jason Tung, to create a pipeline of scientists trained in science philanthropy. We currently employ eight staff members and have begun a search for a second fellow which will increase our staff to nine. We also have three senior science consultants, David Baltimore, Robert Birgeneau, and Robert Tjian, who support our advising work. Marc Kastner will reduce his commitment to 60% time, which will help offset the increased personnel costs.

**Infrastructure and tools.** We continue to invest in technology to support our work, in the Salesforce database software and Salesforce-email integration tools. Tracking our contacts and having accurate philanthropic information is very important to managing relationships. We also contract with an off-site prospect researcher.

## **MEMBERS HAVE HIGH SATISFACTION WITH ALLIANCE SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES, AND CONTINUE HIGH ENGAGEMENT TO SUPPORT ALLIANCE MISSION**

Engaging our current members and recruiting new members is critical to the long-term success of the Alliance's mission. Some of our advisees will make the decision to become members, formally joining the community of basic science philanthropists. In addition, members have embraced the responsibility to be available as mentors and models for our advisees, so we will continue to mine the knowledge of our members to best inform and inspire our advisees. To achieve these outcomes, we will conduct the following activities:

**Member meetings and videoconferences.** For our members, we organize two in-person meetings and two videoconference meetings annually. Feedback on these meetings has continued to be very positive. In 2018, we plan to continue this schedule and to provide meaningful content and discussion, and opportunities for members to interact with each other, at each of these meetings. We will continue to seek feedback from the leaders of each member organization to ensure that we provide programming that they and their staff members find valuable.

**Interactions and communications with board members and associate members.** To support our members' needs and engage them in our mission, we will continue our staff's 1:1 interactions with our board and associate members. Members will be asked to serve as references about the Alliance at the request of prospective new members, and will refer prospective new members and prospective advisees to Alliance staff. Members will also serve as mentors and sources of knowledge to advisees and other members.

Our 1:1 interactions with members will be supplemented by digital communications that provide useful information via our members-only website, email, and e-newsletters. We will work to share the models, mechanisms, and activities that Alliance members use in supporting basic science research.

**Respond to member requests.** In 2018, we will continue to respond to member interests and requests. For instance, in 2017, we provided information to our members about developments related to the funding of basic science, including government funding news. In both 2016 and 2017, we participated in a series of workshops organized by the Moore Foundation on measurement and evaluation of the impact of basic science research funding. We anticipate that those activities will continue. We will continue to facilitate discussions on these topics among members, as well as to educate policymakers and influencers on the role that philanthropy plays in funding basic science.

At members' request, we facilitated a communications meeting in 2017. It was attended by communications professionals and other foundation leaders from 13 of our member organizations, to discuss communications topics selected by attendees.

**Strategic plan and annual report.** As mentioned at the beginning of this document, we developed a logic model to provide a strategic framework for our activities. This articulates our desired outcomes, identifies the activities and outputs needed to achieve them, and provides a framework for us to measure progress. In preparation for 2018, we have integrated the logic model into our strategic plan. We are in the process of developing metrics which we will employ beginning in 2018 to evaluate our progress.

To ensure that members are informed about the Alliance's strategy, tactical plan, and progress towards our mission in accordance with our logic model, we will continue to disseminate an annual strategic plan and annual report.

### ***Resources***

We will continue to dedicate staff and budget resources to host members' meetings and to provide services to members.

## **RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN INCREASING PRIVATE FUNDING FOR BASIC SCIENCE**

Research institutions (including but not limited to our research partners) look to us for advice on how to increase philanthropy for basic science at their institutions, and we want to help them where and when we can. Our desired outcomes are for research institutions to prioritize fundraising for basic science and for them to be more successful in increasing funding for basic science at their institutions.

**Annual conference.** By hosting an annual research partners' conference, we hope to encourage the sharing of best practices in basic science fundraising. The conference gives research institution leaders an opportunity to meet in person with leaders of our member organizations and facilitates a community of fundraising professionals and science research administrators to learn from their peers. In addition, these gatherings strengthen our ties with the community of

research institutions, giving us access to these institutions which helps facilitate information and introductions as desired by our members and advisees, and helping us to stay abreast of the very latest in basic science research.

Our research partners' conference attendance increased by 20 percent from 94 in 2016 to 112 in 2017. The survey and feedback from research partners following the conference indicated that the attendees find it a valuable opportunity to interact with both our members and their peers. We received positive feedback from our members who find the research partners conference an efficient way to touch base with many institutions over a short period of time. We have scheduled the next conference for July 2018 at the University of Chicago and believe it will provide more opportunities for small group interaction and peer-to-peer learning.

**Annual survey.** The annual Science Philanthropy Alliance survey on Private Funding to Basic Science is also an important tool to support success in fundraising for basic science. Because it encourages research institutions to track basic science giving over time, and provides data on their peers, it helps them focus on basic science in their development efforts.

**Content development.** In 2017, we began to develop content that may be helpful to research partners and other research institutions, including online tips and stories about what philanthropists want. In 2018, this content will be shared through our web and social media channels, as well as emails and an e-newsletter. Since our research partners' conference includes only a small number of the numerous outstanding research institutions and scientists worldwide, we are dedicated to sharing the knowledge gained through the presentations at the conference via blogs posted on our website and circulated in our e-newsletter.

**Website fund descriptions.** Beginning in 2015, research partners were required to submit fund descriptions for basic science, which were then posted on our website. A 2017 survey indicated that these fund descriptions have not attracted new funding to the research partners. We are now exploring alternative ways to support research partners' basic science development efforts.

### **Resources**

For the activities described above, Alliance staff and budget resources are required. We also rely on the help of the staff of our member organizations and support from research partners and other partners such as the Association of American Universities (AAU) and Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI).

*\*Note on research partnership program: We continue to get requests from many organizations worldwide about becoming research partners. Moving forward, we have decided, with board approval, to add research partners only upon the request of board members. We encourage non-research partner institutions to consult our website for content that we have created specifically to help them. The Alliance also offers ad hoc advising on prospective funder strategies to research partners and other research institutions on a limited basis.*

## Metrics

In 2018, for the first time, we will measure specific metrics based on our newly-developed logic model (see page 5 section on strategic plan and annual report). To measure our progress towards our desired outcomes listed above, the Alliance will provide the following metrics in its annual report, starting in 2018. Below we list the metrics to be applied for each desired outcome:

### **U.S. AND U.K. PHILANTHROPISTS INCREASE GIVING TO BASIC SCIENCE**

New advisees added in 2018 compared to 2017  
Number of new prospective advisees and referral sources  
Advising tools developed  
Events and feedback  
Net new giving to basic science by advisees and members\*  
Number of new members that used to be advisees

*\*Note: The original goal set by the Alliance was to increase philanthropic support for basic science research by \$1B per year net new at the end of five years. Beginning in 2016, we revised the goal to increase the support level, on average, by \$200M per year.*

### **MEMBERS HAVE HIGH SATISFACTION WITH ALLIANCE SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES**

Retention of members  
Member meeting attendance and feedback  
List of projects taken on in response to members' request  
Growth of total membership  
Number of membership conversations with potential new members  
Members' referral of potential members and potential advisees

### **RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN INCREASING PRIVATE FUNDING FOR BASIC SCIENCE**

Participation in the Alliance's Private Funding of Basic Science survey conducted by the Council for Aid to Education (CAE)  
Measurement of total private giving to basic science via annual survey  
Research partner event attendance and feedback  
Content developed for research institutions

These metrics will be included in the 2018 annual report.