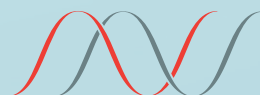




Strategic Plan
2019



SCIENCE

PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE

Advancing basic science—The foundation of our future

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The mission of
Science Philanthropy Alliance
is to increase
philanthropic support
for basic scientific research.

Executive Summary

In 2019, the Science Philanthropy Alliance organization will continue to implement its successful strategy to encourage and support new philanthropic commitments to basic research. The focus will be advising new philanthropists, as well as building the membership and serving members' needs. There will continue to be a shift away from activities focused on research partners. Another advisor is being recruited to add capacity to the advising team. The fellows and consultants will support the advisors and the services and materials offered will be enhanced.

The Alliance staff will continue to serve the growing number (25 as of December, 2018) of members by responding to requests from members for exclusive gatherings on topics of interest. Members will be invited to advisee-driven events.

After experimenting with a suite of metrics in 2018, the staff will focus on a modest, yet meaningful and measurable, set of metrics with which to evaluate success.

Strategy

To achieve its mission, the Science Philanthropy Alliance has focused on advising philanthropists so that they can be effective and satisfied funders to basic science. This strategy has resulted in growth in both the Alliance membership and in the number of philanthropists that the Alliance advises.

The growth of the number of philanthropists and foundations utilizing the Alliance's advising services as well as the growth in Alliance membership has necessitated adjustments to the Alliance's strategy. In 2019, the Alliance will allocate more resources to advising while scaling down activities associated with research partners. Additionally, in response to growing membership (25 members as of October 2018), Alliance staff will enhance systems and processes to ensure increased member support and stewardship in 2019.

Objectives for 2019

1. New and existing philanthropists increase giving to basic science in the U.S. and U.K.
2. Members continue their high level of commitment to the Alliance mission.
3. The Alliance provides research institutions with information and guidance on raising private funding for basic science.

These objectives are essentially the same as they were in 2018 but tactically, the Alliance will focus more resources on the first two objectives, and less on the third.

The "tactics" section that follows outlines the plan for achieving these desired outcomes in 2019 and beyond, and incorporates lessons learned in 2018. Also, 2019 will be the first year that the Alliance will establish some metrics of success, and these are described in the "metrics" section.

An important addition to the tactics described below is a five-year organizational assessment. In late 2018 and the first half of 2019, the Alliance will engage an outside company to conduct an organizational assessment to correlate with the Alliance's fifth year of full operation. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether the Alliance is achieving its mission and goals and how it could more effectively do so.

Objective 1

New and existing philanthropists increase giving to basic science in the U.S. and U.K.

Tactics

To achieve the objective of increased private funding to basic science in the U.S. and U.K., the Alliance will provide customized advising that will accelerate philanthropists' giving to basic science. The Alliance will also encourage advisees to become members of the Alliance, so that they can more consistently and meaningfully connect with their peers.

The following activities will be employed to meet this objective:

Advising. In 2018, the Science Philanthropy Alliance's advising portfolio grew, supported by the hire of an additional advisor (2017) and two fellows (2017 and 2018) who increased the Alliance's capacity to meet with and serve advisees. The Alliance is currently recruiting an additional advisor. In 2019, the Alliance will prioritize and qualify advisees based on giving potential to basic science.

As the advising portfolio has grown, its advising services have evolved to accommodate the demand of advisees. The Alliance's essential and unique offerings are its extensive networks in both the philanthropic and scientific communities, its ability to make introductions and referrals, and the strategic insight offered by the Alliance's advising team. In 2019, the Alliance will provide customized advising and research in response to inquiries. Alliance staff will utilize senior science consultants, who provide referrals, counsel to advisees, scientific expertise, and advice on funding mechanisms and models.

As engagement with advisees deepened in 2018, Alliance staff recognized a need for support in specific fields of interest, such as in ocean science and neurodegenerative diseases. Through organizing workshops and extending invitations to relevant meetings and events, Alliance staff members are building communities of funders interested in supporting basic science in these areas. This strategy has allowed Alliance staff to introduce funders to peers with similar interests. In 2019, Alliance staff will convene additional field-specific, community-building events and activities in response to advisee and member needs. The Alliance will also create specific basic science road maps and options for supporting basic science in both ocean science and neurodegenerative diseases areas to support advisees interested in these areas.

Other advising strategies that have led to positive outcomes and will continue in 2019 include:

- Facilitating partnership opportunities that allow new philanthropists to leverage the expertise and infrastructure of existing foundations. Specifically, the Alliance will make introductions and organize events, meetings, and workshops that focus on partnership opportunities and fostering collaborations.
- Identifying science advisors who can provide regular support to new philanthropists and help philanthropists with information-gathering and decision-making.
- Building a community of science funders. Connecting advisees with other science philanthropists, encouraging them to join the Alliance, and hosting events and workshops that allow funders to learn from their peers and accelerate giving to basic science.
- Responding to specific inquiries from advisees, which could range from questions about specific funding mechanisms to introductions to peers.

In 2017 and 2018, with the encouragement of its U.K. members, Wellcome and Winton Philanthropies, the Science Philanthropy Alliance explored how to expand science philanthropy in the U.K. The Alliance hosted a science philanthropy learning session in London in March 2018, featuring highly respected scientists as well as established science funders from the U.S. and U.K. A broad range of current and potential U.K. science philanthropists were invited. Alliance staff learned that philanthropy is less developed in the U.K. than in the U.S., in part due to significant reliance on government funding for science. The Alliance board subsequently decided that, in 2019, the Alliance should continue with a program and portfolio in the U.K., based on referrals and demand.

Referrals. The Science Philanthropy Alliance has a robust list of prospective advisees and anticipates that members will continue to enthusiastically refer potential advisees. In 2019, staff will focus on qualifying these potential advisees to determine whether they are ready for and interested in receiving advice from the Alliance. The focus remains on Giving Pledgers, as well as high-net-worth individuals in key regions such as the Bay Area, New York, London, and Texas. Alliance staff will also continue to participate as presenters or guests at conferences and other gatherings that philanthropists attend to increase the visibility of the Alliance and interact with potential advisees and members.

Events. Events can help identify and cultivate advisees by providing information, building community, and facilitating collaborative opportunities. Events are typically organized by Alliance staff, alone or in partnership with a funder. Occasionally, events are organized by others in the science or philanthropy community; Alliance advisors, fellows, consultants, and/or members are invited to participate. In 2019, the Alliance will convene topic-specific workshops based on advisee interests, as well as regional events for philanthropists who may be interested in investing in basic science.

Communications. To support its advising work, the Science Philanthropy Alliance has developed tools and materials for advisees. In the past, these have included member practice reports on science advisory boards, funding mechanisms, funding areas, and indirect costs, as well as case studies. In 2019, the Alliance will continue to create targeted and highly individual materials for advisees to drive their basic science giving, as well as general materials such as additional case studies and member practice reports, based on advisees' needs and requests. These documents are only shared with members and advisees.

To maintain its position as the pre-eminent resource on science philanthropy, the Alliance will continue to ensure a strong online and digital presence. The Science Philanthropy Alliance website and social media (Twitter and Facebook) platforms are additional communications channels to high-net-worth individuals and foundations looking for information about the Alliance and about science philanthropy. The Alliance will also continue to communicate regularly via email to members and advisees and to produce a quarterly newsletter.

Responding to requests from other regions. In 2018, the Alliance focused on advising philanthropists in the U.S. and U.K., as those are the countries where the Alliance has members, the strongest networks, and the most experience. In 2019, the Alliance will continue with this strategy. When there are requests for assistance from philanthropists from other locations, staff may provide materials or introductions within its network or invitations to events. These activities are not labor-intensive for the staff.

Resources to implement strategy and tactics

Staffing. The Alliance employs nine staff members, including a full-time advisor and two fellows with Ph.D.s in science fields of interest to advisees: life sciences and earth/ocean science. Fellows each serve two years with the Alliance; fellows will turn over on alternate years to ensure two fellows are always on staff. In 2019, the Alliance will add an advisor to meet the increased demand for advising services. In addition, the Alliance will retain two senior science consultants, David Baltimore and Robert Tjian, who will work closely with Alliance staff and advisees. As a result of the reallocation of Alliance resources from research partners to advising and membership, Alliance consultant Robert Birgeneau, who has been focused on the research partner program, will conclude his consultancy with the Alliance at the end of 2018. Because of the interest in ocean science by several advisees, we may add a third consultant with expertise in this area. The Alliance will continue to contract with a prospect researcher who provides important background information on philanthropists and news on philanthropy and basic science funding.

Infrastructure and tools. Accurately tracking the relationships with advisees, members' staff, and scientists is critical to implementing our strategy. The Alliance will invest in technology and other resources to support the advising work, including the Salesforce database software, Salesforce-email integration tools, Tableau, and OneDrive.

Objective 2

Members continue their high level of commitment to the Alliance mission

Tactics

The engagement and active participation of Alliance members is the most important element of the Alliance's success. Engaging current members and recruiting new members is critical to the stability of the business model and the long-term success of the Alliance's mission. In addition to providing financial support to underwrite the organization's operations, Alliance members have embraced their responsibility to help grow the community of basic science research funders. Alliance members serve as the leading source of referrals, act as peer advisors, and share their philanthropic models with advisees.

Since 2015, Alliance membership has burgeoned from 6 to 25. Membership growth necessitates a more systematic approach to member support and stewardship.

The Alliance's plan to recruit and support members in 2019 and beyond include the below activities. "Members" refers to members, associate members, and benefactors.

Members-only activities. The Alliance organizes quarterly member meetings: two in-person and two videoconference meetings. Feedback on these meetings is very positive. For example, the format of having scientists present during the videoconferences has been well-received. Alliance staff have learned through conversations with members that the careful selection of presenters and topics for discussion helps Alliance members address challenges they are facing and explore new practices in science philanthropy. In 2019, the Alliance will strive for excellence in the events that it organizes for members. Starting in 2019, the Alliance will follow up each members' meeting with a summary and list of resources presented during the meeting.

Other events. In addition to members-only meetings and videoconferences, the Alliance will invite members to events of interest including those that are hosted by research partners and/or basic science institutions in the Alliance network.

Personalized engagement of members. In 2019, the Alliance will:

- More actively engage members in its advising work with advisees and potential advisees. Mentorship by established foundations has been an effective way of supporting new philanthropists and actively engaging members in the Alliance's mission. Alliance staff will assign members as mentors to advisees as appropriate.
- Respond to member requests and suggestions.
- Seek ways to provide additional value to members.

Although united in the mission of increasing private funding for basic science, each member is at a unique point in its organizational evolution. Thus, the Alliance staff will work with each member's staff to determine how they would like to engage with the Alliance, including the following:

- Interacting with advisees
- Exploring partnerships
- Exploring ways to address areas of challenge, such as evaluation, communications, and diversity and inclusion
- Helping to build cohorts in specific fields of science.

To achieve these goals, the Alliance will create systems and processes for member support and stewardship. Staff will conduct regular, meaningful interactions with each member. These 1:1 interactions with members will be supplemented by digital communications that provide useful information via the members-only website, email, and e-newsletters.

Member recruitment. Members are a critical part of the Alliance ecosystem—they act as peers and mentors to new philanthropists, share their experiences with other members, and provide financial support for the Alliance’s mission. Although most of the largest funders of basic science in America are members of the Alliance, there may be others who would find it valuable to join the Alliance. The growth in membership will most likely continue to be from Alliance advisees who become members, i.e., organizations who are new to basic science funding.

In 2019, the Alliance will identify and recruit new members and benefactors. As part of the recruiting process, Alliance staff will submit membership and project proposals to potential members. The Alliance will also continue to recruit benefactors; these are major science funders that are too established for associate membership but prefer not to be full members. Benefactors can provide grants for specific purposes, such as Alliance fellowships, or for general mission support.

Sharing progress on mission. The Alliance believes in being as transparent and inclusive as possible in its activities given the confidential nature of its advising services. Sharing the Science Philanthropy Alliance’s plans, reporting on its progress, and soliciting input on both can add to member satisfaction. The Alliance will continue to distribute its strategic plan and annual report to its membership and continue to provide updates on activities via its quarterly member meetings, newsletters, and emails, as appropriate. The Alliance will also share the results of its five-year evaluation with members.

Customized grant reports. In addition to disseminating the Alliance’s strategic plan and annual report, the Alliance will track activities conducted in response to specific member requests and report on Alliance’s activities in response to these requests. These reports will be included, where appropriate, in grant reports to the relevant member.

Resources to implement strategy and tactics

The Alliance will dedicate staff and budget resources to managing the Alliance’s membership program, organizing members’ meetings and events, providing services to members, and reporting on the Alliance’s plans and progress.

Objective 3

The Alliance provides research institutions with information and guidance on raising private funding for basic science

Tactics

In 2018, the Science Philanthropy Alliance board directed Alliance staff to focus more resources and staff time on advising and member support. As a result, some of the activities to support research institutions will be scaled down in 2019.

Research partners' conference. The Alliance's past research partners' conferences were well-attended but resource-intensive, taking up significant leadership staff time and financial commitments. Further, it was difficult to measure whether the conferences were effective in increasing private funding for basic science. However, Alliance staff heard from the research partners that they find value in meeting their peers and Alliance members. Therefore, the Alliance will henceforth hold the conference biannually. The next conference will be in 2020; there will be no conference in 2019. The staff time and resources saved will be redeployed towards advising activities.

Survey. The Science Philanthropy Alliance has also decided not to conduct its survey on private funding to basic science in 2019. While the survey, conducted for the past three years, has been useful in gauging the scale of private giving to universities for basic science, there were uncertainties in the results since the response rate was only about 50% and institutions found it difficult to identify and track gifts to basic research. Additionally, beginning in 2018, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is conducting a research activities survey that includes nonprofits and foundations, and will continue its higher education survey. With these surveys, the NSF hopes to get a good estimate of basic science expenditures at both universities and nonprofit research institutions and to identify the sources of funding for these expenditures. Results are expected to be available in spring 2019. Given these plans, the amount of work that the Alliance survey requires of respondents, and the survey's methodological challenges, the Alliance will not conduct the 2019 survey, but will assess the NSF survey data and share the results with research institutions and its members.

Content development. The Alliance will continue to provide content on how to increase private giving to basic science at research institutions. This content will include articles on what philanthropists want, how to more effectively work with philanthropists, and news about science philanthropy. The Alliance will share this content with the scientific research community through meetings and conference speaking opportunities, its website and social media channels, and an e-newsletter.

Presentations. While the Alliance will not host a research partners' conference in 2019, Alliance staff will continue to seek opportunities to present at conferences attended by senior science academic leaders and senior development staff.

Advising. The Alliance will also continue to provide ad hoc advising on prospective funder strategies to research partners and other research institutions as requested, on a limited basis.

Resources to implement strategy and tactics

With the above changes, the Alliance will no longer pay for the VSE survey and the costs of hosting research partner conferences will be reduced significantly.

**Note on the Alliance research partners' program: In 2019, as in 2018, the Alliance will add research partners only upon the request of board members. The Alliance will encourage non-research partner institutions to consult the Alliance website for useful content.*

Metrics

In 2018, for the first time, the Alliance tracked specific activities based on its newly-developed logic model.

In 2019, the Alliance will track the following activities which support the achievement of its three objectives. These activities are being tracked to ensure that the tactics are executed as outlined in this strategic plan. It is difficult to measure the impact that the tactics have on funders' decisions since the Alliance advisees do not always report back on their funding, or the many inputs they received that contributed to their funding decisions.

Objective 1

New and existing philanthropists increase giving to basic science in the U.S. and U.K.

- A. New commitments to basic science that were influenced by the Alliance
- B. New projects requested by advisees and potential advisees (e.g., assistance with science advisors, partnerships, strategic planning, workshops, etc.)
- C. Introductions and connections for advisees to scientists and philanthropists (including members)

Objective 2

Members continue their high level of commitment to the Alliance mission

- A. Growth and retention of members
- B. Member engagement (e.g., potential advisee referrals, advisee mentoring, etc.)
- C. Projects conducted in response to member requests (e.g., oceans events for funders, communicators' meeting)

Objective 3

The Alliance provides research institutions with information and guidance on raising private funding for basic science

- A. Content developed for research institutions and shared via various channels (e.g., social media, website, newsletter, email, presentations)

