

AAAS Forum on Science & Technology Policy
Research!America President Mary Woolley introduces
Dr. Sally Rockey, National Institutes of Health

April 27, 2012

(Mary introduces herself)

Good morning! I am Mary Woolley, president and CEO of Research!America, the nation's largest nonprofit public education and advocacy alliance working to make research to improve health a higher national priority.

I would like to thank Dr. Stephen Nelson, senior adviser on Science and Technology Policy with the American Association for the Advancement of Science for extending the invitation to be with you here today to introduce the next featured speaker.

As I stand in the company of fellow passionate supporters of science and technology, I am certain you are well aware that the United States

is in danger of losing our leadership position in science and innovation in the next decade.

Yes. Many Americans believe that's a strong possibility as Asian and European countries accelerate their investments in research and development. According to a recent Research!America poll, more than half (58%) of likely U.S. voters do not think the U.S. will be the world leader in science, technology and innovation by the year 2020—only eight years from now! And even more disconcerting is today— only 23% of Americans consider the U.S. first in a subset of science and technology—medical and health research.

As you may know, federal support for research has been stagnant the last several years. Furthermore, proposed budgets for FY2013 either continue to flat-line or cut the budgets of federal health agencies.

Where does this leave research and innovation, with its multiple benefits of improving health, lowering health care costs, creating jobs,

supporting local economies and driving our nation's global competitiveness?

Clearly not in a good place, and certainly not a place where a healthy number of scientists and innovators will be able to continue to do the excellent work that they do! To make matters worse, federal agencies are facing the threat of automatic spending cuts by as much as 10% next January because Congress failed to agree on tax and spending issues last year.

Much is at stake right now: our economic future, U.S. jobs and our global leadership. Perhaps now you understand why our

Research!America Chair, former Congressman John Edward Porter calls this election year "the most important election in my lifetime." We must elevate the importance of research and development and make it a part of the national dialogue.

So I am going to say something that our speaker, by virtue of her position in the Administration, cannot: (about so-called “sequestration”)

This is the time for A-C-T-I-O-N to protect our ability to innovate in an increasingly competitive global environment. I know our passion for science and innovation is shared by our distinguished guest speaker, Dr. Sally Rockey, deputy director of extramural research for the National Institutes of Health, whom you are about to meet.

The Office of Extramural Research, where she serves as director, is the focal point for leadership, policies, scientific integrity and guidelines for extramural research administration within the NIH and in partnership with the biomedical research community. Extramural grants account for approximately 83 percent of NIH's \$30 billion budget—which currently supports more than 300,000 jobs at more than 2,500 universities and research institutions in the U.S. and around the world.

Dr. Rockey has spent the majority of her career in research administration and information technology.

Since assuming her position seven years ago, she has provided the research community a high-level view of research priorities and policies, guidance for best practices in applying for grants, insight into the competitive peer review process, and direction in scientific integrity during countless talks and conferences.

Dr. Rockey also led the transition of applying for grants electronically in 2007... I especially salute her for reminding us how to improve our communication about science through her popular blog, *Rock Talk*.

Prior to joining the NIH, Dr. Rockey served as Chief Information Officer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where she provided strategic direction in the support, infrastructure, and development of the information technology enterprise, and as Deputy Administrator for the

Competitive Research Grants and Award Management Unit of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), overseeing the extramural grants process within the USDA.

Putting her rich experience in research administration and technology to work, she serves on a number of Federal committees related to science, research administration, and electronic government, and collaborates very closely with academic and scientific communities.

A native of Ohio, Dr. Rockey received her PhD in entomology from Ohio State University. Along with her many professional accomplishments, such as receiving the Presidential Rank Award in 2004, Dr. Rockey encourages science education among young children by delivering presentations on insects to local elementary schools, where she is known as the “Bug Doctor.”

Although I’m sure her presentation about bugs is very fascinating, Dr. Rockey will switch gears today—to offer a closer look at operations at

the National Institutes of Health through her NIH update, entitled
“Interesting Times, Challenging Times.” Would you please help me
welcome, Dr. Sally Rockey!!!