

merce, Justice, and Science appropriations measure, which funds the National Science Foundation (NSF), NOAA, and NASA, will be taken up by the House shortly. In preparation for more cutbacks on science funding, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA, through membership in the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), recently submitted a letter to Congress recommending an FY 2012 NSF budget of \$7.767 billion, a \$960 million (14%) increase over FY 2011. This budget level is consistent with the FY 2012 budget request and with the America COMPETES Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-358), signed into law on 4 January of this year. It is also compatible with the funding schedule initiated by the previous administration's American Competitiveness Initiative and with the original America COMPETES Act (P.L. 110-69) passed in August 2007. In the letter, CNSF argues that robust federal support for NSF, the cornerstone of America's research enterprise, is absolutely critical to the nation's economic health and global competitiveness.³

While hopes for support for science funding continue to dim in the House, the science community has embarked on a campaign to educate senators about the role that science must play in innovation and economic development and advocate for strong funding for the coming fiscal year. For now, the senate appears to be content to push off consideration of any of the 12 FY 2012 spending bills till after the August recess, which will provide us ample opportunity to engage with our Senators.

Now, more than any time during the past decade, your voices will be crucial to protecting science funding. We will be sending out action alerts during the coming months seeking your support for the science agencies. Please take a moment to engage with your congressional delegation and seek their support.

Agronomic Science Foundation

Striving for Greatness

Have you ever wanted to be great? When I was growing up, I always admired individuals who had a burning desire to achieve greatness. It could have been the stories about Alexander the Great that I was read as a young child or the fact that I grew up watching Nolan Ryan pitch for the Houston Astros, but my whole life, I have always been on the lookout for excellence and tried to imitate the people who have achieved it.



Alexander Barton
Director of Business Development
abarton@sciencesocieties.org
608-273-8095

As the director of business development with the Agronomic Science Foundation, I have been given the precious opportunity to meet some of the greatest scientists the world of agriculture has ever seen. These fine individuals lead by example in many aspects of their lives, and I have found that they have talents beyond just the research that they do. Some excel in athletics, others with art and music, and most are loyal family members who are dedicated to the ones they love.

When I look at my own reflection in a mirror, I often wonder if the life I am living is one of greatness. If it is not, then do I have enough time to make a change? We should all strive to be great when given the opportunity to make a change ourselves because often enough life brings about change that is beyond our control.

This was most evident when I heard the heartbreaking news about an up-and-coming member of CSSA and ASA named James Christopher "Chris" Stiegler who lost his life in an automobile accident this past Christmas Eve with his wife Jenny. It was shocking and really hit me hard considering I was the same age as Chris at the time. Once again, I was reminded how fragile life really is, and if there is any silver lining in this tragedy, it is the fact that their infant baby, Emily Grace, survived.

Over the past few months, I have spoken with people who knew Chris and can say without a doubt that he was a great man. It is apparent to me after listening to the emotional stories from the people who loved him. I found out that Chris was talented in so many areas. He loved being in nature and led a life full of joy, happiness, and love.

From the time he was young man, he excelled at sports and nearly everything else he put his mind to. He was great at solving problems, and he loved others and treated them with respect. Chris followed in his father's footsteps by dedicating his time and energy to the agricultural sciences. He spent almost his entire academic career in CSSA and ASA as a graduate student, and he loved attending the meetings each year to present his research.

Chris was a person who led by example, and the Societies will not be the same without him. As a way to honor the major contributions of Chris, an award has been established within the ASF. The Chris Stiegler Turfgrass Science Graduate Student Travel Award was set up by the C05 Division of CSSA to further encourage future scholars to follow in the footsteps of Chris by presenting their research at the Annual Meetings.

It is obvious to me that this man achieved greatness and left a legacy that will be honored for years to come. Peace be with you Chris...