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PT: Along those lines, fellow astronaut Kathryn Sullivan says in the documentary that Sally may have tried to sabotage one of Sullivan's training exercises by switching off the circuit breakers. What do you think of that?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: I understand Kathryn's uncertainty about what happened. Maybe Sally flipped the switches. But that doesn't strike me as true to who Sally was. I don't know.

PT: What was it like seeing the archival NASA astronaut footage in *SALLY*?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: A lot of that footage is rare and pretty amazing. Seeing Sally's face when she's being dragged through the water in water survival training, that was new. I remember her telling me, "I felt like I was drowning." Members of the press were filming and waiting to ask her questions when she got out of the water.

PT: It's been nearly 50 years since NASA began actively recruiting women and people of color to be astronauts. This year, the Trump administration ended federal diversity, equity, and inclusion [DEI] programs. What do you say to that, and what do you think Sally would say?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: Sally would probably say something similar to what I would say, which is, How moronic. The history of the world and the history of our country are not perfect. Certain people have been second-class citizens—people of color, women, girls. Sally never would have flown to space if NASA hadn't started a DEI-type program. What's wrong with diversity? The world is diverse.

PT: What else can we learn from Sally's life?

O'SHAUGHNESSY: As a person, Sally was one of the most relaxed people I've ever met. She was totally comfortable in her own skin and sure of who she was. I think that's also part of why she didn't need to say, "I'm gay, I'm queer." She lived her life exactly the way she wanted to live it. I think that that is also a major message of the film: Don't let anyone ever tell you what to do with your life or who you should love. And Sally lived that.

Jenessa Duncombe

FYI SCIENCE POLICY BRIEFS

Trump seeks massive cuts to science

Congress is set to consider the steep cuts to science agencies that were proposed in President Trump's budget request for fiscal year 2026, which has drawn outcry from former agency leaders and professional societies. The budget would cut NSF by 56% to \$3.9 billion, NASA's science arm by 46% to roughly \$3.9 billion, and the National Institutes of Health by a third to around \$30 billion. The Department of Energy's Office of Science fared better relative to other science agencies, but it still faces a 14% cut to about \$7.1 billion.

Congress is unlikely to implement cuts of that magnitude and will develop its own spending proposals, which in the Senate will need bipartisan support to clear the 60-vote threshold for advancing legislation. During Trump's first presidency, Congress rejected proposed cuts to science agencies and in some cases provided substantial funding increases. In his second term, however, Trump has challenged Congress's spending prerogatives on multiple fronts. (See, for example, *PHYSICS TODAY*, May 2025, page 22.)

NSF estimates that the cuts in the budget request would result in its total number of competitive grant awards dropping from around 9600 to 2300 and the proposal acceptance rate dropping from 26% to 7%. The cuts would also squeeze the agency's facility operation budget to the point that NSF proposes downsizing actions, such as operating only one of two sites of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory. —MA

NSF adds DEI, Israel boycott restrictions to grant terms

In May, NSF updated its grant conditions to bar recipients from operating certain diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) pro-

grams or participating in boycotts of organizations with ties to Israel. The move follows a similar policy issued by the National Institutes of Health in April. The new conditions state that NSF reserves the right to terminate funding if it deems that recipients "operate any program in violation of federal anti-discriminatory laws or engage in a prohibited boycott."

The new conditions target programs that advance "discriminatory equity ideology," defined by an executive order from President Trump as "an ideology that treats individuals as members of preferred or disfavored groups, rather than as individuals, and minimizes agency, merit, and capability in favor of immoral generalizations." The restriction also applies to programs that "advance or promote DEI" but does not define the scope of that phrase. DEI restrictions implemented by other grant-making agencies have been challenged in court. —CZ

AGU, AMS plan climate collection after NCA upheaval

In response to the Trump administration's dismissal of authors working on the latest National Climate Assessment (NCA), the American Geophysical Union and American Meteorological Society plan to solicit submissions for a special collection of recent research on climate change in the US. In April, the administration said that the scope of the report is being reevaluated, and it cut contractor staff that helped coordinate the report writing. About 400 volunteer experts had been working for almost a year on the latest version, which was scheduled to be published near the end of 2027.

The American Geophysical Union and the American Meteorological Society noted in a May press release that the report is congressionally mandated and that the societies' collection of manuscripts "does not replace the NCA but instead creates a mechanism for this important work to continue." They said that their new collection will include more than 29 peer-reviewed journals on climate, and they invited other scholarly publishing organizations to join the effort. (The American Meteorological Society is a member society of the American Institute of Physics, which publishes *PHYSICS TODAY*.) —CZ **PT**

FYI (<https://aip.org/fyi>), the science policy news service of the American Institute of Physics, focuses on the intersection of policy and the physical sciences.

