

Navigating a New Era for Discovery

SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE
2025 ANNUAL REPORT



SCIENCE
PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE



Table of Contents

FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR	3
YEAR IN REVIEW	5
THE POWER OF SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY	8
LEADING THROUGH CHANGE	9
STORIES OF IMPACT	12
OUR COMMUNITY	15

**This is an abridged version of our full digital annual report.
Explore the full report at 2025.sciphil.org.**

From Our President



Dear Partners,

The scientific ecosystem is in a period of profound transition. Across the United States and globally, shifts in public funding priorities, growing uncertainty for research institutions, and rapid advances in emerging technologies are reshaping the environment for discovery science. For philanthropists committed to advancing scientific progress, this moment presents both significant challenges and important opportunities.

Philanthropy cannot replace federal investment in science. However, philanthropy plays a uniquely important role within the broader research ecosystem. It provides flexible, long-term support for discovery science, enables rapid response to emerging needs, supports bold and interdisciplinary ideas, de-risks new technologies, and helps sustain researchers and institutions through periods of uncertainty. When deployed strategically, philanthropy is a distinct and powerful force, serving as both a catalyst for discovery and a sustainer of long-term scientific progress.

Throughout 2025, the Science Philanthropy Alliance worked closely with our members and advisees to help navigate this changing landscape. We identified emerging funding opportunities, convened funders and scientific leaders to share strategies and insights, and supported philanthropists seeking to respond effectively to new challenges facing the scientific enterprise. At a time when many researchers and institutions are looking for stability and partnership, science philanthropy has demonstrated both agility and staying power. And as the scientific community grapples with what the future of discovery science will look like, our members are leading the way in shaping it.

The Alliance also continued to grow and evolve as an organization in 2025. Early in the year, we reached a major milestone by transitioning from fiscal sponsorship to independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. We welcomed seven new members while increasing both advising activity and engagement across the science philanthropy community. Through our Science Philanthropy Indicators Report, virtual convenings, participation in major cross-sector conferences and forums, and thought leadership, we continued to elevate the visibility and influence of science philanthropy within the broader research ecosystem. We also launched a redesigned website and new member portal to better connect and support our growing community.

This June, I shared my plans to retire as President of the Science Philanthropy Alliance in February 2027. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my career to work alongside this extraordinary community of philanthropists, scientists, advisors, and colleagues dedicated to advancing scientific discovery for the benefit of humanity and the planet.

Since joining the Alliance—first as an External Science Advisor in 2020 and then as President in 2021—I have had the opportunity to help guide the organization through a period of growth, strategic development, and increasing visibility for science philanthropy. I am deeply proud of what this community has built together and optimistic about the Alliance's future and the important role philanthropy will continue to play in supporting ambitious, curiosity-driven science in the years ahead.

Thank you for your partnership, leadership, and commitment to discovery science. It is an honor to continue this work alongside you.

With gratitude,

France A. Córdova, Ph.D.
President

From Our Board Chair



Dear Colleagues,

It is an honor to write to you in 2026, my first year as Board Chair. As I reflect on my first months serving in this role, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the remarkable community that makes the Science Philanthropy Alliance special. Our members have responded to a rapidly changing research landscape with generosity, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to advancing discovery science. Their willingness to learn from one another and work together reinforced the increasingly important role philanthropy plays in strengthening the scientific enterprise.

I want to recognize my predecessor, Harvey Fineberg, whose leadership over the past decade helped shape the Alliance into the strong and vibrant organization it is today. Under Harvey's stewardship, the Alliance experienced a period of remarkable growth, expanded its impact, and successfully transitioned to an independent nonprofit. I am grateful for the legacy of leadership he leaves and honored to build on it as Board Chair.

Hosting the Alliance's Fall Members Meeting at The Kavli Foundation was one of the highlights of 2025. The conversations about quantum science reflected the openness, intellectual curiosity, and collaborative spirit that define this community, and the meeting demonstrated the thoughtfulness and intentionality with which the Alliance creates opportunities for members to exchange ideas and explore new approaches to supporting science.

As France shares in her letter, she recently announced her intention to retire as President in February 2027, following an extraordinary career of service to science and several transformative years leading the Alliance. On behalf of the Board, I express our deep gratitude for her vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment to advancing science philanthropy. As this report demonstrates, under France's leadership the Alliance has grown in reach, influence, and impact while remaining true to its mission of helping philanthropists support discovery science with confidence and purpose.

The Alliance enters its next chapter from a position of strength, with an engaged membership, an exceptional staff, and a growing recognition that philanthropy is an essential partner in the science ecosystem. I am optimistic about the future and look forward to continuing to build on the strong foundation that France, Harvey, and so many others have helped create.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to discovery science. I look forward to working alongside you as we continue to strengthen science philanthropy and advance the discoveries that will shape our future.

With appreciation,

Cynthia M. Friend
Board Chair

YEAR IN REVIEW

2025 By the Numbers

7

NEW ALLIANCE
MEMBERS

\$515M

NEW FUNDING TO SCIENCE
INFLUENCED

145

ADVISING PROJECTS
COMPLETE

68

SCIENCE FUNDERS
ADVISED



2025 Highlights



GROWING THE SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY COMMUNITY

The Alliance experienced record growth in 2025, welcoming seven new members and expanding our community to 44 member organizations. Demand for the Alliance’s advisory services continued to increase, with nearly 70 science funders—both members and nonmembers—seeking guidance on advancing discovery science. This growth reflects the expanding role of science philanthropy and the Alliance’s position as a trusted resource for funders navigating a rapidly changing landscape.



BRINGING SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY DATA TO LIFE

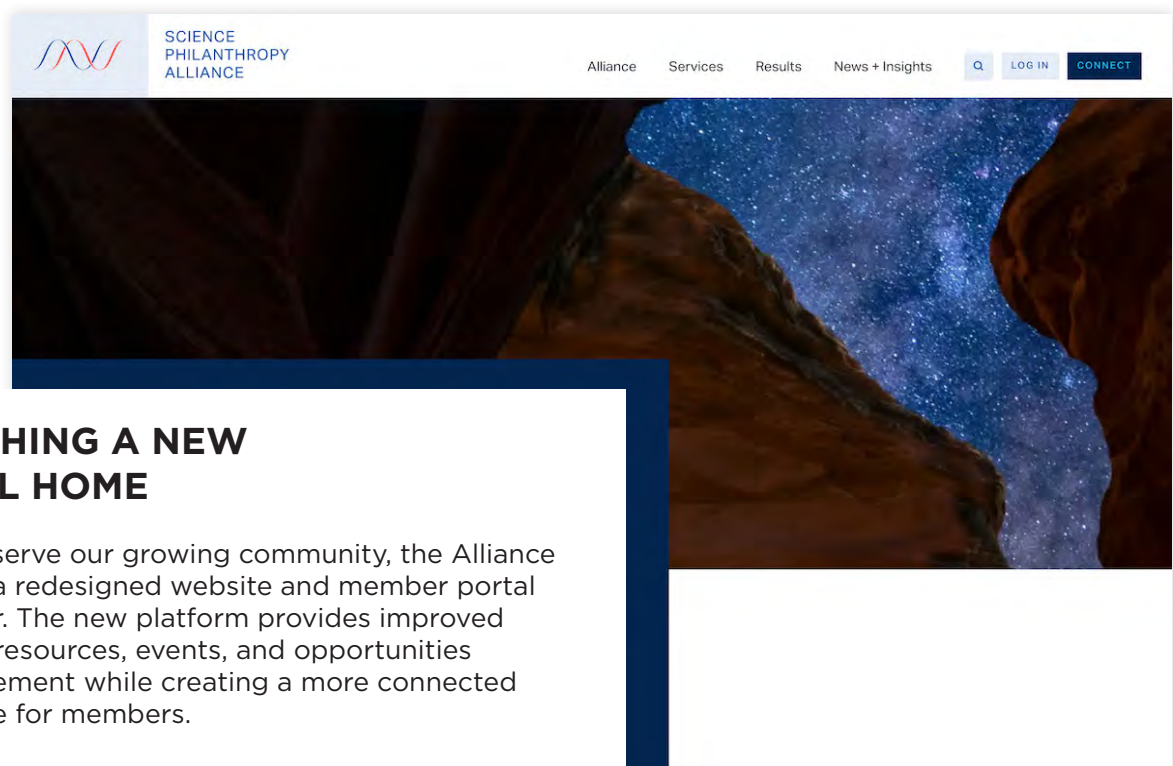
In August, the Alliance launched our interactive digital Science Philanthropy Indicators Report, making data around science funding more accessible and actionable. The platform allows users to explore trends in philanthropic and federal support for basic research, examine funding patterns across disciplines, and better understand the growing role of philanthropy in the scientific enterprise.

2025 Highlights



BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT NONPROFIT

In February 2025, the Science Philanthropy Alliance reached a major organizational milestone, transitioning from fiscal sponsorship to independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. This evolution reflects the Alliance's growth and maturity as an organization and provides a strong foundation for future impact.



LAUNCHING A NEW DIGITAL HOME

To better serve our growing community, the Alliance launched a redesigned website and member portal in October. The new platform provides improved access to resources, events, and opportunities for engagement while creating a more connected experience for members.

The Power of Science Philanthropy

Science philanthropy occupies a unique role within the research ecosystem—and one that is particularly critical during periods of uncertainty and change. At our most recent members meeting, we asked leaders from across our network to reflect on what makes science philanthropy distinctive, why it matters right now, and what drew them to this work. Their responses offer a glimpse into the passion, curiosity, and sense of purpose that motivate our community and guide the Alliance’s work to advance discovery science.



Visit 2025.sciphil.org to watch the videos.

LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

Advising Through a Shifting Landscape

As the research landscape shifted, philanthropists increasingly looked to the Alliance for leadership, strategic guidance, and expert perspective on where philanthropy could respond most effectively.

This work included science landscape analyses, proposal review and scientific diligence, partnership facilitation, and scenario planning designed to help philanthropists respond strategically while remaining aligned with their long-term goals. Through our advising engagements, we identified several key areas where philanthropy could play a uniquely important role.

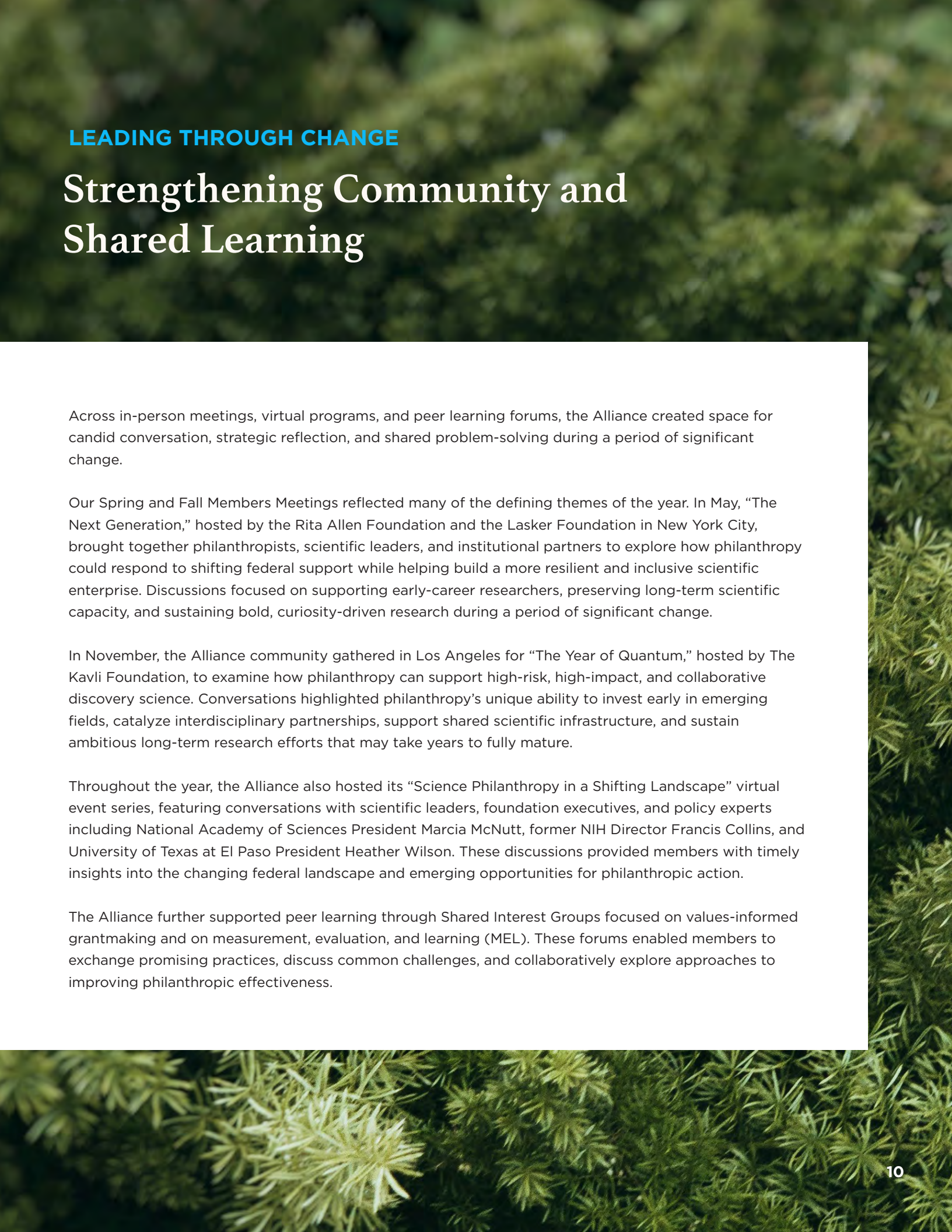
One priority area was protecting scientific infrastructure and ensuring long-term access to critical research data. Scientific progress depends on reliable datasets, research platforms, and shared infrastructure that can be difficult to rebuild once disrupted. The Alliance helped facilitate the NYCE Database Preservation Effort alongside partners including the Simons Foundation, Federation of American Scientists, and Sea Change. This initiative focused on safeguarding critical climate and scientific datasets to ensure long-term accessibility and continuity for researchers and accelerated approximately \$40 million in new philanthropic funding.

Another important area was helping funders identify bridge funding opportunities and rapid-response support for vulnerable research programs affected by federal funding disruptions. In one effort, the Alliance collaborated with partners to help preserve glioblastoma research programs by supporting scientific diligence and new philanthropic funding pathways capable of sustaining research continuity during a period of instability.

The Alliance also worked to strengthen coordination across the science philanthropy community by facilitating strategic connections between funders, scientific leaders, research institutions, and urgent areas of need. These efforts enabled philanthropists to share information, align strategies, and respond more quickly and effectively to emerging challenges across the research ecosystem.

Throughout this period, the Alliance served as a trusted, neutral advisor, helping philanthropists move confidently through uncertainty while preserving flexibility, focus, and long-term impact.

The demand for this kind of guidance was reflected in a year of record growth for the Alliance community. In 2025, we welcomed seven new members and three new supporters, bringing our total membership to 44 organizations committed to advancing discovery science through visionary philanthropy.

The background of the page is a lush, green, out-of-focus image of foliage, likely moss or small plants, creating a textured and natural feel.

LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

Strengthening Community and Shared Learning

Across in-person meetings, virtual programs, and peer learning forums, the Alliance created space for candid conversation, strategic reflection, and shared problem-solving during a period of significant change.

Our Spring and Fall Members Meetings reflected many of the defining themes of the year. In May, “The Next Generation,” hosted by the Rita Allen Foundation and the Lasker Foundation in New York City, brought together philanthropists, scientific leaders, and institutional partners to explore how philanthropy could respond to shifting federal support while helping build a more resilient and inclusive scientific enterprise. Discussions focused on supporting early-career researchers, preserving long-term scientific capacity, and sustaining bold, curiosity-driven research during a period of significant change.

In November, the Alliance community gathered in Los Angeles for “The Year of Quantum,” hosted by The Kavli Foundation, to examine how philanthropy can support high-risk, high-impact, and collaborative discovery science. Conversations highlighted philanthropy’s unique ability to invest early in emerging fields, catalyze interdisciplinary partnerships, support shared scientific infrastructure, and sustain ambitious long-term research efforts that may take years to fully mature.

Throughout the year, the Alliance also hosted its “Science Philanthropy in a Shifting Landscape” virtual event series, featuring conversations with scientific leaders, foundation executives, and policy experts including National Academy of Sciences President Marcia McNutt, former NIH Director Francis Collins, and University of Texas at El Paso President Heather Wilson. These discussions provided members with timely insights into the changing federal landscape and emerging opportunities for philanthropic action.

The Alliance further supported peer learning through Shared Interest Groups focused on values-informed grantmaking and on measurement, evaluation, and learning (MEL). These forums enabled members to exchange promising practices, discuss common challenges, and collaboratively explore approaches to improving philanthropic effectiveness.



LEADING THROUGH CHANGE

Shaping the Future of Science Philanthropy

As uncertainty reshaped the research landscape, funders turned to the Alliance not only for guidance on how to respond in the moment, but also for perspective on how the scientific enterprise itself may need to evolve in the years ahead. While many efforts focused on addressing immediate disruptions, the Alliance also helped advance broader conversations about how philanthropy, government, universities, and industry can work together to build a more resilient, adaptive, and sustainable future for discovery science.

Throughout the year, the Alliance continued to position science philanthropy as an increasingly important contributor within the research ecosystem through thought leadership, public engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. President France Córdova contributed to the Vision for American Science and Technology (VAST) initiative, a cross-sector effort bringing together leaders from philanthropy, academia, industry, and government to advance a strategic framework for strengthening U.S. scientific leadership, investing in scientific infrastructure and talent, and expanding collaboration across sectors. The Alliance also participated in the Joint Associations Group effort to develop the FAIR (Financial Accountability in Research) model, a proposed framework designed to improve the transparency, efficiency, and long-term sustainability of federal research funding systems.

The Alliance played an active role in the Funders Action Collaborative Tracks for Science (FACTS), a cross-foundation initiative launched in 2025 to help coordinate philanthropic responses to the growing challenges facing the U.S. scientific enterprise. FACTS brought together more than 70 funders and philanthropic advisors to share information, evaluate emerging needs, coordinate due diligence, and identify opportunities for collective action across areas including scientific workforce support, data preservation, science financing, public engagement, and policy analysis.

The Alliance further advanced this work through publications, commentary, and data-driven analysis highlighting philanthropy's growing role in supporting discovery science. In 2025, we launched the interactive digital edition of the Science Philanthropy Indicators Report, which examines long-term trends in federal and philanthropic support for basic research. The interactive report, which received over 6,000 visits in 2025, provides a detailed, data-driven view of how private giving is shaping the U.S. scientific landscape and allows users to explore trends across fields, institutions, and funding areas. Alliance leadership and staff also contributed articles and commentary to outlets including Stanford Social Innovation Review, Forbes, Issues in Science & Technology, and The Chronicle of Higher Education.

STORIES OF IMPACT

Strengthening the Future of Biomedical Research with The Pew Charitable Trusts

In 2025, the Science Philanthropy Alliance partnered with The Pew Charitable Trusts to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences, one of the nation's longest-running and most influential programs supporting early-career biomedical researchers. Conducted in collaboration with Elite Research, the multi-phase project examined how the biomedical research landscape has evolved over the past four decades and explored how philanthropic funding models can continue to support scientific innovation in a period of growing uncertainty and competition.

The assessment combined landscape analysis, data review, expert interviews, surveys, and extensive engagement with current and former Pew Scholars, advisory committee members, and program leadership. Together, the work examined fundamental questions facing the scientific enterprise today, including how to sustain curiosity-driven science, support early-career investigators, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and strengthen long-term research capacity in an increasingly complex funding environment.

The final report reaffirmed the enduring importance of flexible, people-centered philanthropic funding models that invest in researchers rather than narrowly defined projects. Findings showed that programs like Pew's are uniquely positioned to support bold, high-risk ideas that often struggle to attract traditional funding while also helping scientists build independent labs, establish collaborations, and pursue transformative discoveries. The assessment also highlighted the growing importance of scientific community-building, mentorship, and cross-disciplinary networks in sustaining long-term scientific creativity and resilience.

Beyond the recommendations themselves, the project reflected the Alliance's broader role in helping philanthropic organizations evaluate how their strategies can adapt to changing scientific and institutional realities. By combining scientific expertise, field-wide analysis, and philanthropic advising, the Alliance helped support a forward-looking conversation about how philanthropy can continue to strengthen discovery science and invest in the next generation of scientific leaders.



STORIES OF IMPACT

Building a National Network for Theoretical Physics with the Leinweber Foundation

The Science Philanthropy Alliance began working with the Leinweber Foundation in 2022 as the Foundation explored opportunities to make a significant contribution to fundamental science. Guided by founder Larry Leinweber's lifelong fascination with theoretical physics, that exploration evolved into an ambitious vision focused not only on supporting individual research programs, but on strengthening the broader ecosystem for theoretical physics in the United States.

Over several years, the Alliance assisted Larry and the Leinweber Foundation as it explored opportunities across the field, facilitating introductions to leading funders, researchers, and institutions, planning visits to major theoretical physics centers, and helping the Leinweber Foundation better understand the evolving needs of the research community. The conversations with scientists and university leaders highlighted that while individual institutions excelled in different areas, there was a significant opportunity to strengthen collaboration, support early-career researchers, and create longer-term, flexible funding structures capable of sustaining bold, curiosity-driven science.

That process ultimately led to the largest philanthropic investment ever made in theoretical physics research. In May and June 2025, the Leinweber Foundation announced gifts exceeding \$100 million establishing Leinweber Institutes and Forums for Theoretical Physics at the University of Michigan, UC Berkeley, the University of Chicago, MIT, Stanford, and the Institute for Advanced Study. Since then, the network has grown to include Caltech, Harvard, and Princeton, and the Leinweber Foundation's support for theoretical physics now exceeds \$165 million.

One of the most distinctive features of the Leinweber Foundation's investment strategy is its focus on building a network committed to broader collaboration, rather than making a series of standalone gifts. Each institute supports independent, curiosity-driven research while also participating in a broader national network dedicated to idea exchange, shared convenings, and cross-institutional collaboration. Together, the institutes are designed not only to advance theoretical physics research at individual institutions, but also to strengthen and expand the long-term future of the field itself.



STORIES OF IMPACT

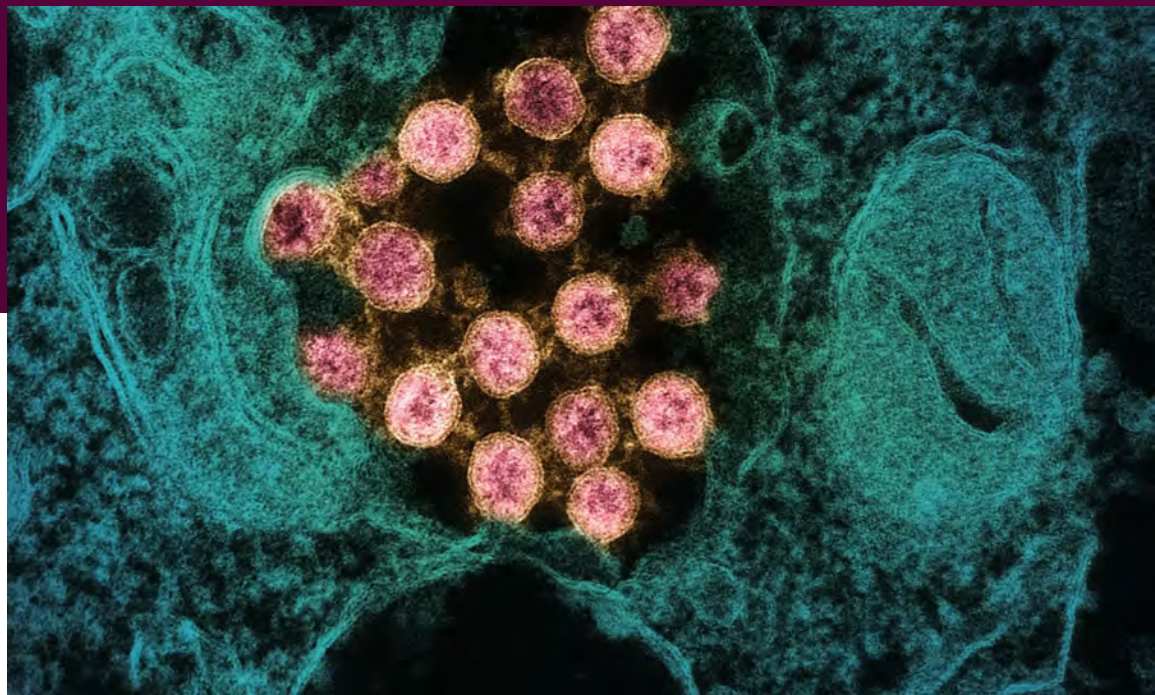
Investing in Bold Scientific Questions with the “What If...” Awards

In 2025, the Science Philanthropy Alliance helped launch the “What If...” Awards for Creative Medical Research, a new philanthropic initiative designed to support bold, interdisciplinary ideas in biomedical and health science that might otherwise struggle to receive traditional funding. Facilitated by the Alliance on behalf of an anonymous funder, the program was created around a simple but ambitious premise: transformative discoveries often begin with speculative questions that fall outside siloed funding structures.

Working closely with the funder, the Alliance helped design an application and review process intentionally structured to encourage creativity, interdisciplinary thinking, and scientific risk-taking. Unlike many traditional grant programs, proposals required no preliminary data, allowing researchers to pursue ideas at their earliest and most imaginative stages. The process also emphasized accessibility and flexibility, culminating in a live virtual pitch session where finalists presented their ideas directly to reviewers.

The inaugural cohort awarded funding to four research teams from institutions across Chicago pursuing questions in areas including brain cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, artificial intelligence in clinical care, and antimicrobial resistance. Each project received \$500,000 in total support through a combination of philanthropic funding and matching commitments from participating institutions.

The “What If...” Awards program illustrates the unique position of philanthropy to support high-risk, curiosity-driven ideas before they become mainstream fields of inquiry. By creating space for imagination and experimentation, the initiative aims to help unlock discoveries that could shape the future of medicine and human health.



Our Community

We are deeply grateful to our members and supporters, staff, board of directors, and external science advisors, who make our work possible. This dedicated and visionary community fuels our mission, guides our efforts, and strengthens our ability to advance scientific discovery through philanthropy.

ALLIANCE MEMBERS

**Allen Family
Philanthropies**

**RITA ALLEN
FOUNDATION**

Fondation
Azrieli
Foundation

bi[o]hub

**Sergey Brin
Family Foundation**

 **The Brinson Foundation**

**Brown Science
Foundation**

**BURROUGHS
WELLCOME
FUND**

 **CIRCLE OF SERVICE
FOUNDATION**
Supporting great organizations to enhance community
opportunity and well-being

 **Shurl and Kay
Curci Foundation**

 **Dallo Philanthropies**

 **Dana
Foundation**

DCH
FOUNDATION

DD
DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

 **Fund for Science
and Technology**

Gates Foundation

 **HEISING-SIMONS
FOUNDATION**

 **LYDA HILL
PHILANTHROPIES**

 **THE
KAVLI
FOUNDATION**

**W. M. KECK
FOUNDATION**

 **LASKER
FOUNDATION**

 **LEINWEBER
FOUNDATION**

 **LEON LEVY FOUNDATION**

 **MANTON
FOUNDATION**

**GORDON AND BETTY
MOORE
FOUNDATION**

 **Mussallem
CHD Alliance**

 **NOMIS
FOUNDATION**
Creating the Spark

the David &
Lucile **Packard**
FOUNDATION

Pew

 **PREBYS
FOUNDATION**

 **RESEARCH
CORPORATION
for SCIENCE
ADVANCEMENT**

rwjf **robert wood johnson
foundation**

 **SALL FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

 **Schmidt Sciences**

 **Shanahan
Family
Foundation**

 **SIEGEL
FAMILY
ENDOWMENT**

SIM NS
FOUNDATION

 **ALFRED P. SLOAN
FOUNDATION**

 **JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION**

 **TEMPLETON**
World Charity Foundation

WALDER
FOUNDATION

 **wellcome**

 **WINN FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

**WoodNext
Foundation**

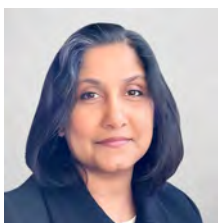
Anonymous (3)

Our Community

ALLIANCE STAFF



France Córdova, Ph.D.
President



Sreeja Asokan, Ph.D.
Research Analyst



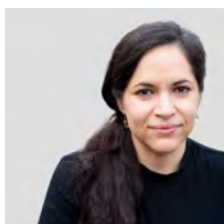
Emily Bolton
Chief Operating Officer



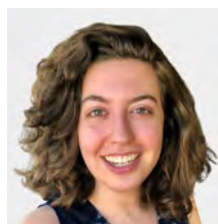
Elenoa Fuka
*Assistant Director of
Operations*



Daren Ginete, Ph.D.
Advisor



Miriam Laytner
Research Analyst



Nora Linzer
Civic Science Fellow



Kate Lowry, Ph.D.
Strategy Director



Ben McAndrew
*Program Coordinator and
Data Analyst*



Kate McCarrel
*Strategy and Events
Manager*



Sue Merrilees
*Senior Director,
Philanthropic Advising*



Bishakha Mona, Ph.D.
Advisor



Dustin Sposato
Communications Manager



Mary Thurson
*Program Manager,
Office of the President*



Elizabeth Weiss
*Senior Director,
Philanthropic Advising*

* Andrew Golnar and Kumba Sennaar were valued members of the Alliance team in 2025.

Our Community

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



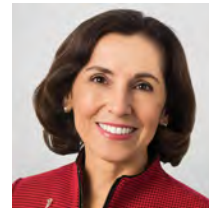
Naomi Azrieli, O.C., DPhil
Chair, Azrieli Foundation



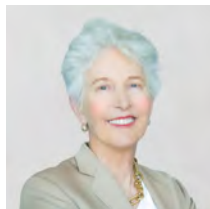
Stacie Bloom
President & CEO, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation



Elizabeth Good Christopherson
President and CEO, Rita Allen Foundation



France Córdova, Ph.D.
President



Cynthia Friend, Ph.D.
President, Kavli Foundation



Eric D. Isaacs, Ph.D.
President and CEO, Research Corporation for Science Advancement



Aileen Lee
President, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation



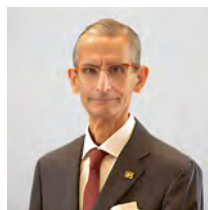
Larry D. Leinweber
Founder & President, Leinweber Foundation



Lara Littlefield
Executive Director, Allen Family Philanthropies



Caroline Montojo, Ph.D.
President, Dana Foundation



Louis J. Muglia, M.D., Ph.D.
President and CEO, Burroughs Wellcome Fund



Claire Pomeroy, M.D., M.B.A.
President, Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation



David Spergel, Ph.D.
President, Simons Foundation

* Harvey Fineberg (Board Chair), Adam Falk, and Daniel Linzer were valued Board Members in 2025.

EXTERNAL SCIENCE ADVISORS



Thomas R. Cech, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry, University of Colorado Boulder



Fleming Crim, Ph.D.
John E. Willard and Hildale Professor of Chemistry Emeritus, University of Wisconsin - Madison



Marc Kastner, Ph.D.
Donner Professor of Physics Emeritus, MIT; Adjunct Professor of Physics, Stanford University



Margaret Leinen, Ph.D.
Director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Vice Chancellor for Marine Science, University of California, San Diego



Shirley M. Tilghman, Ph.D.
President Emerita and Professor of Molecular Biology and Public Affairs, Princeton University

* Daniel Linzer was a valued External Science Advisor until June 2026.



**This is an abridged version of our full digital annual report.
Explore the full report at 2025.sciphil.org.**