

Esteemed members of the Council:

I am Ernesto Perez-Chanona and I am currently a postdoctoral fellow at the National Cancer Institute. I come as a private citizen today, to pose the question to you, “Are American taxpayers getting enough ‘bang for their buck’ from their current research communities?” While I do not know the answer to that question, I believe that the efficiency of laboratories to finish and publish projects is in decline.

One thing that I found very striking about all of the institutions I have worked at is that the research personnel is largely comprised of foreigners. One reason is because Americans who obtain their Ph.D. in the biomedical sciences are disillusioned by the struggle of the academic track, so they obtain jobs as policy makers, consultants, and patent examiners—positions that are very difficult to obtain by foreigners with a Ph.D. However, the majority of foreign scientists do not have the ambition of becoming independent researchers. Most return home and those who do stay are deterred from taking their career a step further due to struggle with the English language and the assimilation of American culture. There two phenomena 1) Americans leaving the academic track and 2) the high turn-over rate of visiting scientists has resulted in a vast wealth of unpublished data abandoned on the shelves of our labs. **This level of discontinuity of research projects is unprecedented** and has made a clitchy and expensive machine of what should be a 21st century, energy-efficient engine.

While I do not have any empirical data from what I just said, I am here to urge you and my colleagues in science policy to take the time to discuss and look further into this issue.