We, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA), representing 12 graduate schools and over 13,000 students at the University of Pennsylvania, are writing to express our concern about the role of science in the incoming presidential administration. We join our fellow graduate student associations across the nation in signing this statement (http://www.scileadership.com/consensus.html) by a unanimous vote of our General Assembly.

Science-informed leadership in federal departments and agencies requires appointees that support and promote scientific integrity. Scientific integrity includes both the application of current, peer-reviewed research that is broadly accepted by the scientific community to policy decisions and a process of transparent decision-making and independence for federally-employed scientists to pursue research and communicate findings without political interference. We request that the incoming presidential administration and Congress take the following into account when appointing leaders in federal agencies and departments:

- Appointees should demonstrate a track record of science-informed decision-making that is consistent with the best available scientific evidence.
- Appointees should not have conflicts-of-interest (financial or political) with industries or organizations that actively seek to suppress or obfuscate science or scientific opinion.
- Appointees should express a commitment to engaging the scientific community in relevant policy decisions.

We recognize the important role that science plays in society by driving innovation, illuminating problems, and providing evidence-based solutions that help safeguard public health and environmental quality. Science-informed leadership is crucial to making effective policy that addresses our current and future challenges. It is essential that presidential appointees to cabinet-level positions and federal agencies, including the Department of Interior, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, are leaders that promote the inclusion of science in policymaking.

We view this transition period as an opportunity for the federal government and the incoming presidential administration to demonstrate their commitment to evidence-based policy and science-informed leadership that will both help us tackle future challenges and discover tomorrow’s opportunities.