



## **ROBERT & PATRICIA SWITZER FOUNDATION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026**

*Final Approved 5-11-07*

### **Our Vision**

By 2026, Switzer Fellows will be recognized leaders driving positive environmental change for the benefit of natural and human communities.

### **Our Mission**

The Robert & Patricia Switzer Foundation identifies and nurtures environmental leaders who have the ability and determination to make a significant impact, and supports initiatives that will have direct and measurable results to improve environmental quality. The Foundation accomplishes this by awarding academic fellowships and project grants, sponsoring professional development activities, and fostering a growing network of Switzer Fellows, environmental practitioners, and organizations.

### **Why We Do This – The Donor’s Legacy**

The origins of the Switzer Foundation can be traced back to 1932, when Robert C. Switzer was awarded a scholarship by the Scaife Scholarship Foundation of Oakland, California, which enabled him to attend the College of Chemistry at the University of California. Some years later, Robert and his brother Joseph discovered several naturally fluorescent organic compounds, which eventually led to the creation of their own company, Switzer Brothers, Inc., later to become the Day-Glo® Color Corporation, world leaders in the development and production of daylight fluorescent chemicals. With the sale of the company in 1985, Robert Switzer used a portion of the proceeds to create the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation.

The Switzer Foundation’s focus on environmental improvement was strongly influenced by the donors’ experience running a family business involving complex and often toxic manufacturing processes. Our founding trustees understood the need to maintain natural systems, address pollution problems, and ultimately restore the waters, land, and air around us. The Foundation was a place where the donor’s personal experience with the power of graduate education combined with his belief in environmental protection and sustainable means of production. The Foundation has a deep belief in the power of highly skilled and motivated individuals to solve problems, educate citizens, and advocate for policies that

prevent harm in the future. Of paramount interest to the Foundation is the notion of leaders producing tangible results for environmental improvement with efforts directed at both natural systems and the built environment.

The Foundation was begun to support and recognize environmental problem solvers through fellowship awards to graduate students from New England and California. As the program developed, the trustees initiated the Leadership Grants Program in 1990 with the dual goals of helping place talented Switzer Fellows in responsible positions within the nonprofit and government sectors, and of supporting projects with direct and measurable results to improve environmental quality. The Foundation later added programs to support the mentoring, networking, and professional development of Fellows through annual retreats, Switzer Network services, and a Professional Development Grants Program.

While honoring the accomplishments of the past, this Strategic Framework looks to the future, recognizing that the Foundation will continue to change and adapt as we move forward and respond to the dynamic nature of environmental challenges facing our world. As the trustees head into the Foundation's next twenty years, we see the Switzer Network as the next wave of opportunity for the Foundation. We are excited and energized to tap the tremendous capacity and potential of the Switzer Network, which today stands at more than 380 Fellows strong.

## **Our Values**

The Switzer Foundation operates based on the following values:

- **Belief in Individuals.** We believe that talented and committed individuals from varied backgrounds can make a difference in this world and create positive change.
- **Environmental Stewardship.** The Foundation seeks to protect, improve, and sustain our natural environment for the well-being of people and the planet.
- **Sustainability and Systems Thinking.** We value the concept of sustainability, recognizing the urgency of living within our ecological and physical means, and embrace holistic approaches that consider the complexity and interconnectedness of natural and human systems.
- **Interdisciplinary and Innovative Problem-solving.** We have a profound respect for the value of interdisciplinary and innovative environmental problem-solving.
- **Maximizing Impact.** We seek to maximize positive environmental impact through individual and collective activities and leveraged grant resources.
- **Accountability and Results.** The Foundation has an ongoing commitment to evaluation of program investments and impacts in order to promote excellence, increase effectiveness, and facilitate adaptive management.

## **Our Picture for the Future**

The Switzer Fellowship Network lies at the heart of the Switzer Foundation's programs. The Foundation has fully realized the value inherent in its Fellowship Network, mobilizing the Fellows, and recognizing them as its greatest asset. The Switzer Fellowship Network is an actively engaged cadre of highly talented, committed professionals who work to affect environmental change. The Network is a highly respected resource locally, nationally and internationally for non-profit organizations, government agencies, and other entities. Bolstered by the Foundation's long-term support, Switzer Fellows are using their expertise in natural and social sciences, business, law, and policy fields to sustain, restore, and steward our life support systems and create sustainable communities. Network members provide fundamental support, expertise, and encouragement to each other to sustain themselves for the work ahead.

The Foundation provides a suite of incentives and services that motivate and enable Fellows to reflect, learn from others, jointly strategize, and collaborate to implement solutions to critical environmental challenges. The work and achievements of Switzer Fellows result in tangible improvements in environmental quality while they build a strong and equitable environmental movement. Because of our collective success, other foundations and institutions seek out the Switzer Foundation and the Switzer Fellows to partner on environmental initiatives and replicate our leadership model.

## **Our Strategies**

The Foundation awards academic fellowships and project grants, supporting a continuum of environmental leadership from graduate school through professional careers, and nurturing a network of environmental leaders who will be instrumental in driving environmental change. The Foundation also sponsors professional development activities, facilitates communication and information-sharing among Fellows, and fosters a growing network of Switzer Fellows, environmental practitioners and organizations. Looking ahead, the Foundation will continue to offer its core program services, at the same time that it seeks to expand and capitalize on the value and potential inherent in the Switzer Network through a number of new strategies outlined below.

To do this, the Foundation will continue to:

- Award academic fellowships to graduate students enrolled in environmental studies programs in California and New England
- Make project grants through its Leadership Grants Program to support initiatives in the U.S. or internationally that will have direct and measurable results for environmental quality
- Invest in the development of our Switzer Fellows through professional development grants and activities, annual retreats, and support for a growing network of Fellows and environmental practitioners working in the nonprofit, public, and private sectors who provide peer guidance, coaching, and mentoring

To build on the value inherent in the Switzer Network, the Foundation will begin to:

- Create opportunities for collaboration among Fellows intended to develop strategic actions on critical environmental issues
- Foster national and regional networking among Fellows and environmental leaders working in the policy and scientific realms by sponsoring Switzer Fellow panels, sessions, and networking receptions at major environmental and scientific conferences, and other important environmental gatherings
- Partner with other donors, businesses, and peer leadership programs to expand fellowship opportunities and network connections, sponsor joint activities and encourage innovation across sectors
- Work with academic partners, peer leadership institutions, Fellows, and environmental practitioners to recruit and support a diverse fellowship network
- Invite Switzer Fellows to help guide and shape future directions and activities of the Foundation through committees, advisory groups, and board service
- Communicate the value of the work of Switzer Fellows to targeted audiences

### **The Outcomes We Will Achieve**

The Switzer Foundation will make fellowship and grant investments that contribute toward the following types of outcomes:

- Switzer Fellowship is known for its commitment to diversity and excellence
- Switzer Fellows are branded as environmental innovators, leaders, problem-solvers, and change agents working on behalf of the environment
- Switzer Network is widely viewed as catalyst for innovative strategies promoting positive environmental change
- Switzer Network is engaging and developing Switzer Fellows throughout their careers, with Fellows viewing the Network as a lifetime opportunity and commitment
- Switzer Foundation's strong reputation attracts philanthropic partners and spawns philanthropic investment in similar leadership models
- Leadership grants and Network services have increased nonprofits' and Fellows' capacities to solve environmental problems
  - Supporting professional development & training
  - Providing coaching and peer mentoring
  - Facilitating information-sharing and communications
  - Providing a venue for networking, renewal, and collaboration with other leaders
- Research and projects carried out by Switzer Fellows are showing tangible results and leading to significant environmental improvement

## Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation Chronology

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
1985	Robert and Patricia Switzer start the Switzer Foundation.
1986	The first Fellowships of \$10,000 each were awarded in California through Oakland Scottish Rites Scholarship Foundation
1988	New England Fellowships added and administered by New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
1989	California Fellowship Program administered by San Francisco Foundation
1990	Leadership Program launched in New England
1993	Network Program launched
1993	Leadership Program launched in California
1998	Fellowship award amount increased to \$13,000
1999	First Executive Director hired. Leadership Program expands to national scope.
2003	Professional Development Grants Program launched. Mentor Program revised and Career Coaching added
2005	Mission revised
2006	All Foundation programs administered in-house. Strategic Framework/Vision adopted. Fellowship awards increased to \$15,000