



# Strategic Plan **2023**



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# Foreword from the **Board Chair and President**

**W**hile the foundational vision and guiding principles of the Fannie and John Hertz Foundation may not have changed over the past 60 years, the world around us has.

Globalization, accelerated technological advances, geopolitical tensions, climate crises and dwindling resources — these are just some of the emerging issues that require novel science and technology-based approaches to fulfill our mission and commitment to our nation’s interests.

Luckily, the very nature of the Hertz Foundation means we are more than capable of meeting these challenges and turning them into opportunities.

We have always been forward-thinking, identifying and cultivating the next generation of scientists, leaders, disruptors, and creators who have the potential to transform our world in ways that few others can. At the Hertz Foundation, we have a courtside view into the latest insights and innovations — the very things that will shape our collective future.

The Hertz Foundation’s impact has been broad and enduring, and we must now build on this momentum and chart a path forward that will benefit all of us for generations to come.

So our board of directors set out to create a plan for our future that clearly articulates the organization’s mission and vision, and details strategies to fulfill those imperatives.

This strategic plan is built around the four essential components that will focus and guide planning and decision-making across the organization moving forward: expanding and deepening the Hertz Fellowship experience; strengthening the one-of-a-kind community of Hertz Fellows; enhancing diverse pipelines to fuel innovation; and developing partnerships that amplify our impact and enhance the missions of like-minded organizations in science, technology and philanthropy.

This work would not have been possible without the forethought of our late chairman emeritus, David Galas, who spearheaded the strategic planning effort, and the valuable contributions of stakeholders across the organization and extended Hertz community. We are grateful to the Hertz Fellows, board and council members, donors, volunteers and partners who gave us their time, thoughtfulness and leadership throughout the planning process.

In drafting this roadmap to success, the board aspired to think big and be bold. We are now proud to share it and celebrate it. The next step is to ensure it becomes a living document — one that activates the call for all of us to work together to make our ambitious goals a reality.

Let’s think bigger, together.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen D. Fantone".

Stephen Fantone  
*Chair, Board of Directors*  
*Founder and President, Optikos Corp.*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robbee Kosak".

Robbee Baker Kosak  
*President*

# About the **Strategic Plan**

**T**he Fannie and John Hertz Foundation believes that investment in science and technology fuels our nation's security and economic vitality and leads to life-changing innovation — but it requires bold ideas and relentless drive. Just like the scientific and technical leaders the foundation has supported for decades, we are committed to continually thinking bigger and pursuing goals that will have an outsized and enduring impact.

This strategic plan — the first in the organization's history — lays out an ambitious vision aimed at maximizing our impact on behalf of the nation and the world, and establishes the infrastructure and pathway to get us there. The plan incorporates critical input from both internal and external stakeholders who were engaged through surveys, working groups, consultations and listening sessions. The strategic priorities outlined in the plan are focused yet flexible, intended to meet the needs of the diverse and growing Hertz Fellows community and the challenges of the evolving science and technology landscape.

We invite you to join us in making this plan a reality and help us expand the exceptional legacy of the Hertz Foundation. If you have questions, ideas or just want to learn more, please do not hesitate to contact us at [strategicplan@hertzfoundation.org](mailto:strategicplan@hertzfoundation.org).

## **Strategic Plan Contributors**

We would like to offer our sincerest thanks to the members of the Hertz Foundation Board of Directors, Fellowships and Programs Council and staff, and the broader Hertz community for your thoughtful and purposeful contributions to this strategic plan.

We are **committed** to continually  
**thinking bigger** and pursuing goals that will have  
an outsized and **enduring impact.**

# About the **Fannie and John Hertz Foundation**

**T**ransformative breakthroughs in science and technology undergird our nation's security and economic vitality. Over 60 years ago, John Hertz recognized that, to safeguard our strength and advance our leadership in the world, we needed to dramatically increase investments in our scientific and engineering enterprise. His aspirations — both prescient and relevant today — catalyzed the creation of the Fannie and John Hertz Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting and empowering our nation's most talented science and technology innovators throughout their careers.

Through the Hertz Fellowship — the most prestigious doctoral fellowship program of its kind — exceptional U.S. students in applied science, engineering and mathematics are identified and provided with the resources and lifelong support to accelerate their careers and amplify their research for ultimate impact. Fueled by a moral commitment to our nation, Hertz Fellows are compelled to seek solutions to our most urgent challenges, and they possess the creativity, talent and ambition to make them a reality.

Today, more than 1,240 Hertz Fellows are the leaders, shapers and disruptors of American science and technology. They are catalysts and executors of some of the most significant progress of the past century, from the recent launch of the James Webb Space Telescope to the development of global defense networks, and from advanced medical therapies to computational systems that billions of people use every day.

The Hertz community is one of our most powerful differentiators. A multigenerational, intellectual network of many of our country's most accomplished science and technology leaders, this respectful and welcoming community provides a unique engine for professional development and collaboration. The community's intimate size allows the foundation to focus on developing signature opportunities to foster partnerships, provide career opportunities and support the innovations of all fellows throughout their careers.

Together with our partners and dedicated donors, the Hertz Foundation is fueling innovation and creating a powerful, solution-oriented network of many of our nation's top scientific minds, working to address complex problems. Every day, we work to create a world where our nation's greatest minds are empowered to solve our most urgent challenges — a world where our nation's well-being, economic strength and leadership are secure, and where every challenge our nation faces is met with bold innovation.

# Strategic Pillars

The Hertz Foundation's role in expanding the national pipeline of highly educated science and technology leaders, accelerating their opportunities, and building an essential ecosystem of the top scientific minds in the country has never been more important.

Threats to national security and democratic ideals are more complex and global than ever, from extremism and energy disruptions to cybersecurity, climate change and pandemics. Most recently, the fight against COVID-19 has reinforced the vital role science plays in combating these challenges and preparing us for those to come. To ensure that our nation's economy and security remain strong, a significant share of future scientific breakthroughs and world-changing innovations must be nurtured by the United States.

We believe that our nation is well positioned to lead and inspire the international community to meet our most urgent challenges — and Hertz Fellows are uniquely prepared to help. Guided by the following strategic pillars, the Hertz Foundation will build on our distinction and impact, enhancing the Hertz Fellowship program and community to best support the next generation of boundary-breaking science and technology leaders for our nation.

## Pillar 1

Enhance the Hertz Fellowship Model

## Pillar 2

Create a One-of-a-Kind Community of Fellows

## Pillar 3

Enhance Diverse Pipelines to Fuel Innovation

## Pillar 4

Develop Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

Together with our **partners and donors**,  
the **Hertz Foundation** is fueling **innovation** and  
creating a powerful **solution-oriented** network...

# Pillar 1

## Enhance the Hertz Fellowship Model

The Hertz Foundation has developed a rigorous and effective fellowship selection process for identifying the nation's most promising scientific and technical talent, particularly those who demonstrate exceptional ability, curiosity and drive to break boundaries, think creatively and across disciplines, and use their work to tackle important problems others can't solve. Whether it's protecting our nation's critical infrastructure or improving human health, Hertz Fellows are devoted to using their science to serve their nation and humankind and continue to secure our place as the world leader in scientific and technological innovation.

Hertz Fellows receive up to five years of funding, which offers flexibility and independence from the traditional constraints of graduate school, to fuel pursuit of research that is vital to our nation. However, the Hertz Fellowship selection committee each year identifies three times as many talented and promising innovators as we can support with our current financial resources. This significantly limits our ability to take risks on all deserving applicants identified during our selection process and provide targeted career development programming, networking and other enrichment opportunities that could accelerate the growth of Hertz Fellows during their doctoral training and throughout their careers.

At this critical juncture, we have an opportunity to extend our impact by refreshing the Hertz Fellowship model, ensuring that we do not leave deserving young talent behind and that we continue to fuel a dynamic Hertz Fellows community.

### Goals

- Build financial resources to fund up to 25 Hertz Fellowships annually
- Offer enhanced career development and skills training
- Establish and enhance experiential learning opportunities
- Identify and sponsor activities that accelerate innovative solutions
- Create an accelerator program and/or sponsor aspiring entrepreneurial teams



The **great thing** about the Hertz Foundation is the thoroughly proven, **well-honed machine** it has developed over decades to select **outstanding** graduate students.

**Nathan Myhrvold**  
1979 Hertz Fellow  
Founder & CEO, Intellectual Ventures

# Pillar 2

## Create a One-of-a-Kind Community of Fellows

The Hertz community exists to provide lifelong connection to and for Hertz Fellows via a robust network of funders, partners, parents and other key members. The community includes more than a thousand peers representing some of our nation’s most accomplished and influential science and technology leaders who have been supported by the Hertz Fellowship over the last 60 years.

Owned and led by Hertz Fellows from the start, the Hertz community has proven to be a force multiplier for game-changing science and technology and leadership development. Its intimate size and representation across a diverse array of fields have created a unique engine for professional development and collaboration throughout their careers. It also provides opportunities for members to volunteer or give back financially to the foundation in order to help build its national brand reputation and grow the fellowship for maximum impact.

The Hertz Foundation will continue to focus on harnessing and broadening the existing network, enhancing career outcomes, and providing valuable and distinctive opportunities to collaborate with other community members, thereby making our nation stronger and more prepared to take on the next urgent challenge.

### Goals

- Clearly, consistently and authentically communicate the value of the Hertz community
- Enhance Hertz Fellows’ connectivity
- Enrich Hertz Fellows’ careers across all stages
- Deepen Hertz Fellow investment in the Hertz Foundation’s mission
- Increase positive science and technology outcomes for the nation



**I benefitted tremendously** from the Hertz Fellowship. It allowed me to spend time on my **research** and other activities. The fellows are a **wonderful source** of camaraderie and inspiration.

**Monika Schleier-Smith**  
2005 Hertz Fellow  
Associate Professor of Physics, Stanford University



# Pillar 3

## Enhance Diverse Pipelines to Fuel Innovation

Transformational scientific and technological advancements require an open, robust collaboration among the best innovators — regardless of background — who ask challenging questions and develop solutions informed by a variety of perspectives. Indeed, the Hertz Foundation’s commitment to inclusion began with our founders, who instructed the Board of Directors not to discriminate based on gender, religion or background. We are proud that our first female fellowship recipient was named in 1965, within the first two years of the fellowship program, and to offer our Hertz Fellows a generous annual stipend for dependent childcare.

Because systemic barriers still stand in the way of the participation of the breadth of all genders, races and ethnicities in the nation’s STEM workforce, there is significant work to be done to strengthen the pipeline for recruiting, retaining and supporting lifelong career success for diverse STEM doctoral recipients. If the Hertz Foundation and our community of Hertz Fellows are to have the greatest influence as leaders in science and technology, we must ensure that our practices, actions and messages reflect our vision of supporting the most promising innovators, regardless of background. It is important that we evaluate our approach to identifying and supporting Hertz Fellows, as well as the ways in which we communicate our values and purpose. In doing so, we will help provide our fellows with the confidence and competency to lead and mentor diverse teams and further impact the course of innovation in the United States.

### Goals

- Ensure that the Hertz Fellowship is recognized and sought by a broad community of prospective applicants and partners
- Ensure inclusion and success in the Hertz community after fellowship selection
- Optimize the Hertz Fellowship selection process by sharing feedback and lessons learned with partner STEM organizations
- Empower Hertz Fellows to leverage their Hertz Foundation affiliation
- Ensure that our diversity strategies are known among Hertz Fellows and stakeholders



I think to really understand the immune system, we need to do **broader studies**, accounting for more diverse populations, and ensure **new therapies** can be accessed by these same **diverse populations**.

Gita Abhiraman  
2021 Hertz Fellow  
MD/PhD Candidate, Stanford University

# Pillar 4

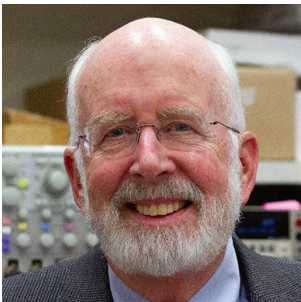
## Develop Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

The Hertz Foundation is a distinctive part of a dynamic environment that includes corporations, start-ups, government agencies, nonprofits, universities and funders — all of which play an essential role in developing the nation’s science and technology talent and capacity. Given our small size and targeted focus, we can extend our impact through strategic collaborations that align with our mission and commitment to our nation’s interests.

Our unique approach to identifying and cultivating leaders and the exceptional network of talent that Hertz Fellows represent adds value to our partners. Partnerships will provide opportunities for them to access that unparalleled expertise and experience to support their organizational success. Likewise, partners provide opportunities for the foundation to expand our national visibility among science, technology and philanthropy leaders and enhance opportunities for Hertz Fellows — from internships and new sources of funding to diversifying the fellowship’s applicant pipeline.

### Goals

- Offer internships, career opportunities, networking events and other programs of value to all fellows and partners
- Expand funding to support our strategic goal of awarding up to 25 Hertz Fellowships annually
- Expand Hertz brand visibility among key stakeholders nationwide



**Together with its partners, the Hertz Foundation is amplifying a decades-long investment in our nation’s future leaders in science and technology.**

**Sam Fuller**  
1970 Hertz Fellow  
Chief Technology Officer Emeritus, Analog Devices, Inc.



the  
**Hertz**  
FOUNDATION

FANNIE AND JOHN HERTZ FOUNDATION

6701 Koll Center Parkway, Suite 250

Pleasanton, CA 94566

925.373.1642 | [info@hertzfoundation.org](mailto:info@hertzfoundation.org)

[hertzfoundation.org](http://hertzfoundation.org)