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COSSA Washington Update

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HISTORIC ELECTION SENDS OBAMA TO WHITE HOUSE; MORE DEMOCRATS TO CONGRESS

Every four years we are told that the presidential election is "one of the most important in history." This time the hype may have held up. The election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States has made history. Having run a sophisticated, disciplined, 21st Century campaign, Obama and his staff have completed a magnificent journey to victory. Now comes the hard part - governing a country with renewed hope and high expectations, but facing serious economic problems, still engaging in two conflicts abroad, and reeling from another failed presidency.

Obama, unlike most presidential candidates in recent memory, mentioned science and technology (S&T) numerous times during his campaign. His views are made clear in his responses to questions about S&T (see Update, [October 20, 2008](#) and at <http://www.sciencedebate2008.com/www/index.php?id=42>). He clearly views S&T and science education as a key part of America's economic vitality and competitiveness. Like all other policy arenas, the president-elect has received advice from many sectors of the S&T community. COSSA has done its part (go to www.cosssa.org).

As the transition unfolds leading up to the January 20th inauguration and the new Administration, key appointments and pronouncements will give further hints to how the new President and his team will lead the country.

Democrats Increase Margins in House and Senate

New President Obama will have large Democratic majorities in the House and Senate to help enact his agenda. The Senate in the 111th Congress will have at least 55 Democrats, with three contests still undecided (MN, GA, and AK). Sen. Bernard Sanders, an Independent from Vermont, caucuses with the Democrats. The other Independent, Sen. Joseph Lieberman from Connecticut, who caucused with the Democrats in the last Congress, apparently would like to do so in the new one. However, many Democrats are quite unhappy with his support for Republican Presidential candidate Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and would like to remove Lieberman from his chairmanship of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. If they do that, there is a hint that Lieberman may join the Republican caucus. In

addition, with Sens. Obama and Joe Biden (D-DE) moving to the Executive Branch, there will be two new Democratic Senators to replace them.

The newly elected Democratic Senators are the Udall cousins, Tom from New Mexico and Mark from Colorado, Mark Warner of Virginia, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, Kay Hagan of North Carolina, and Jeff Merkley of Oregon. Two new Republican Senators, who held on to Republican seats, are Mike Johanns in Nebraska and Jim Risch in Idaho.

In the House, the Democrats increased their numbers from 235 to at least 254, with five contests still uncalled and two Louisiana seats to be decided in early December runoffs. There are 49 new House members so far. Of these, there are a number of doctors, business people, and a less-than-usual number of lawyers. There is also one new political scientist, Rep.-elect Dina Titus of Nevada. She has a Ph.D. from Florida State University and has taught political science for 30 years at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She also served as the Nevada Senate Minority Leader for the past 15 years.

Committee Shake Ups

The game of musical chairs in the leadership of congressional committees, particularly in the Senate, has begun. The announcement by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) that he will step down as head of the Appropriations Committee will produce one set of shifts and the departure of Sen. Biden as head of the Foreign Relations Committee will lead to others. Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) is in line to replace Byrd as the head of the spending committee. This means that Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) will likely replace Inouye as head of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation panel, which has jurisdiction over the National Science Foundation. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) will take over for Rockefeller as the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Feinstein would give up Rules and Administration, whose new leader, would likely be Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY).

Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT), who was next in line to chair Foreign Relations, has announced that he will stay as head of the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. This leaves former presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) as the most likely Biden successor at Foreign Relations. Kerry's name has surfaced in the rumor mill for Obama's Secretary of State. If that should happen, Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) would move up to head the panel.

If Lieberman is forced to relinquish the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs panel's leadership, Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) would most likely become its new leader, since Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), next in line, would remain head of the Armed Services Committee. In addition, with the Democratic margin over the Republicans growing, the committee ratios, which in the 110th Congress were one vote margins on most committees, would probably expand to two.

In the House, the leadership of committees is less likely to change. However, in an early instance of political scientist William Riker's theory of political coalitions and the dangers of too-large majorities, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) has announced that he will challenge Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) for the chairmanship of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over both energy and health policies. Waxman, who currently heads the Oversight and Government Reform panel, has long been at odds with Dingell, particularly over energy policy.

There are also seven Republican vacancies (and a possible eighth) on the House Appropriations Committee. This means that there will be a significant number of new Ranking members on the panel's subcommittees, which make the first recommendations on agency budgets during each appropriations cycle. This includes the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education panel, where current Ranking Republican Rep. James Walsh (R-NY) has retired.

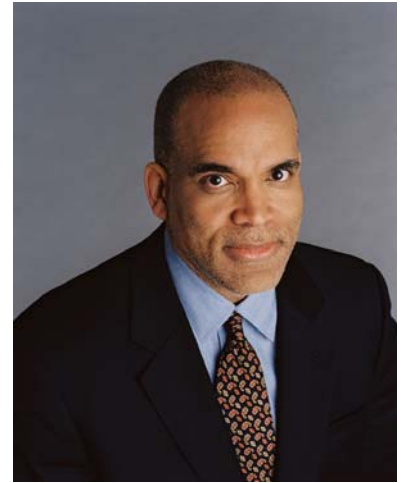
The defeat of Rep. Nick Lampson (D-TX) and the elevation of Mark Udall to the Senate leave open two Subcommittee leadership positions at the Science and Technology Committee. Lampson chaired the Energy and Environment panel, while Udall chaired the Space and Aeronautics panel. At this point, it is unclear how the Committee will rearrange itself to know Lampson and Udall's successors.

The 110th Congress will have its final moment of glory with an expected lame-duck session starting November 17. Its major business is a stimulus package to help the U.S. economy. What will be in the package and whether it will get enacted remain uncertain.

KINGTON APPOINTED ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

On October 24, Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt announced that Raynard S. Kington will serve as Acting Director of the NIH following the departure NIH Director Elias Zerhouni on October 30.

In his announcement, Leavitt noted that since 2003, Kington has been Principal Deputy Director of NIH and worked closely with the Director on the overall leadership, policy direction and coordination of NIH's 27 Institutes and Centers. He has previously served in various other positions in NIH, including director of the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (see Update, [September 11, 2000](#) and [March 17, 2003](#)), and Acting Director of the National Institutes of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. He was also director of the Division of Health Examination Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Kington was also a senior scientist at the Rand Corporation, where he was co-director of the Drew/RAND Center on Health and Aging. In addition, Kington spoke at a COSSA Congressional Seminar on "Aging Well: Health, Wealth and Retirement" in 1996.



Raynard S. Kington

In a memo to the NIH institutes and centers directors and the Office of Director senior staff, Zerhouni noted that Kington "has provided outstanding leadership as NIH's Principal Deputy Director, sharing with me in the overall leadership and coordination of all NIH programs. He has also been the point person at the NIH on some of the toughest issues we have faced as an Agency, carrying out those responsibilities with unflinching skill and integrity. I have valued Dr. Kington's service to me and to the institution very highly, and I am pleased that he has agreed to serve as Acting Director. The NIH will be in excellent hands during this transition."

Kington has an M.D. from the University of Michigan, and an M.B.A. and Ph.D. in health policy and economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI)

In one of his first acts as Acting Director, Kington appointed Lana R. Skirboll as Acting Director, Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI). In a memo to the NIH Institutes and Centers (IC) Directors, the Office of the Director (OD) Senior Staff, and the staff of the Office of Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Initiatives (OPASI), he announced that the NIH was "working to stand up the newly announced" DPCPSI. Kington noted that the Division is composed of four program offices, including the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR), Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), the Office of AIDS Research (OAR), and the Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), as well as the functions under the former OPASI. The former Division of Strategic Coordination in OPASI will be reconstituted as the Office of Strategic Initiatives, while the other OPASI functions will be moved into the Office of the DPCPSI Director.

Former OPASI director, Alan Krensky is transitioning to his laboratory in NCI and will also serve as Senior Advisor to the NIH Deputy Director. Kington acknowledged and thanked Krensky's for his contributions to developing OPASI.

Skirboll, currently Director of the Office of Science Policy, received her Ph.D. in Pharmacology at Georgetown and did her postdoctoral training at Yale and the Karolinska Institute. She has provided, according to Kington, "national leadership on a myriad of science policy issues [and] played a pivotal role in the launching of the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research."

Amy Patterson, currently the Director of the Office of Biotechnology Activities in OSP, will serve as Acting Director of OSP. Patterson received her M.D. from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and completed her internal medicine residency at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and New York Hospital where she served as Assistant Chief Resident. Following her postdoctoral fellowships at the NIH, Patterson held a position at the Food and Drug Administration.

JERRY A. MENIKOFF APPOINTED OHRP DIRECTOR

Jerry A. Menikoff has been appointed the new director of the Office of Human Subjects Protections (OHRP) replacing Bernard Schwetz. Menikoff served as the director of the Office of Human Subjects Research and a bioethicist at the National Institutes of Health prior to his appointment. He previously served nine years as chair of the human subjects committee and the hospital ethics committee at the University of Kansas Medical Center. He has held academic positions in schools of law at the University of Akron, the University of Chicago, and Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York. He is currently on leave from his position of associate professor of law, ethics, and medicine at the University of Kansas. Menikoff received his M.D. from Washington University in St. Louis and his law and public policy degrees from Harvard.

Ivor Pritchard, who has been serving as OHRP's acting director since Schwetz left in September 2007, will return to his position as senior advisor to the OHRP director.

In other appointment news: Jeffrey Sedgwick was confirmed by the Senate as the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs. Sedgwick had been Acting in that position as well as continuing to lead the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Michael Sinclair is now BJS Acting Director. Steve Smith is the new Acting Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, replacing Steven Dillingham, and Stuart Keraschsky is the new Acting Director of the National Center for Education Statistics, replacing Mark Schneider. Cynthia Clark is the new Administrator of the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

NIGMS, OBSSR HOLD INFORMATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MODELING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

On November 6 and 7, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) held a two-day meeting on modeling social behavior. The goal of the meeting was to stimulate conversation among researchers in the field and to identify trends, opportunities, and obstacles for research.

NIGMS's director Jeremy Berg noted that those participating in the meeting were a "group that has not traditionally talked to each other." Acting OBSSR director, Chris Bachrach explained that this is a "very neglected area at the NIH" and is an area that has been "highlighted as a gap area in a report to Congress." Irene Eckstrand, NIGMS' Division of Genetics and Developmental Biology Center for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, organized the meeting.

Not intended as a comprehensive review of research on modeling social behavior, the meeting consisted of an interesting and representative sample of contemporary work. The purpose of the meeting was "to explore these topics, not in the details of content, but as examples of how concepts emerge, what questions are central, the nature of evidence, how analytic methods and modeling are used, and how the field connects to other disciplines." By looking at specific examples in this way, the agencies hoped that "trends, obstacles, and opportunities will emerge from the discussion." Some of the questions, the meeting was designed to ascertain included:

- How do scientists conceptualize this field?
- What are the central scientific questions?
- What kind of evidence is collected (e.g., biochemical data, behavioral observations, answers to surveys, geospatial information)?
- What are the key findings so far?
- What analytic methods, especially modeling, are used to develop deeper understanding of the biological concepts?
- What disciplines contribute to the field?

Topics covered by the participants included:

Why model social behavior? (Josh Epstein, The Brookings Institution)

Models of social isolation (John Cacioppo, University of Chicago)

Neural basis of social behavior (Steven Phelps, University of Florida)

Neural network models of behavior (Lynn Miller and Stephen Read, University of Southern California)

Patterns of self organization (John Couzin, Princeton University)

Emergent patterns of collective behavior (Robert Goldstone, Indiana University)
Modeling person perception and spread of gossip (Eliot Smith, Indiana University)
Modeling the evolution of cooperation (David Rand, Harvard University)
Generative statistical models for network dynamics (Martina Morris, University of Washington)
Using cell phone networks to study human behavior (Nathan Eagle, Santa Fe Institute)
Knowledge sharing in social networks (Lada Adamic, University Michigan)
Information diffusion on social networks (Sinan Aral, NYU and MIT)
Social insects as a model for behavior (Gene Robinson, University of Illinois)
Social behavior and ecology (Michael Barton, Arizona State University)
Social behavior and evolution (Robert Susman, Washington University)

A full group discussion on **prejudice** was held after brief presentations by Eliot Smith, John Cacioppo and Richard McElreath. A second group discussion looked at **community resilience** after presentations by Richard Hatchet (National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases), Robert Goldstone, Iain Couzin, and George Kaplan (University of Michigan).

There were a number of suggested next steps. The video cast of the meeting will be available for viewing in approximately 1-2 weeks at <http://videocast.nih.gov>. Podcasts of the event will also be available for download.

COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL STATISTICS EXAMINES IMMIGRATION DATA

On October 31, the National Academies' Committee on National Statistics featured a session on "Immigration Flows: What Do We Know? How Can We Learn More?" Committee member Doug Massey, Professor of Demography at Princeton, chaired the session and noted how the once "hot" issue of immigration had fallen off the presidential campaign radar screen.

The panelists included: Michael Hoefler of the Office of Immigration Statistics at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); Alexa Kennedy-Puthoff of the Population Division at the U.S. Census Bureau, and Jeffrey Passel of the Pew Hispanic Center. All three presentations demonstrated the difficulties of estimating the immigration flows, both legal and illegal, into this country. Furthermore, knowledge of the emigration flows, those who leave the country, is even more difficult to discern.

The DHS relies on administrative data, while the Census Bureau uses responses from the American Community Survey (ACS), and Passel draws on the Current Population Survey (CPS) to calculate immigration statistics. Hoefler used the data to look at lawful flows by year of entry and by prior immigration status. One of the difficulties of examining "flow" data, Hoefler noted, is that some people enter, leave, re-enter, and then a few years later may decide to apply for permanent status. The coming and going may be through legal or illegal means.

He estimated that legal immigration was about 600,000 in the 1980s. Following a 1986 legalization program, the number jumped to 1.8 million by 1991, and since 2004 it has settled between one and 1.2 million people. About 200,000 people adjust from illegal to legal status each year, he suggested.

DHS, Hoefler said, measures the number of illegal residents by estimating the legally resident population and adding the estimated temporary resident population (students, workers on temporary visas). They then subtract the foreign-born population numbers collected by the ACS from the permanent legal resident population. Using this method, Hoefler estimates that in January 2007 there were nearly 12 million illegal immigrants living in the U.S.

The Census Bureau, Kennedy-Puthoff noted, relies on questions from the ACS, particularly the Residence One Year Ago inquiry to produce its immigration data. However, the ACS is a sample survey and adjustments must be made. In addition, there is only year of data from the national sample, so far. As the ACS continues, the measures, Kennedy-Puthoff assured us, will improve.

Passel's use of the March 2008 CPS finds similar numbers for illegal immigrants as the DHS data. He did, however, discover a slowdown in the growth of immigrants from Mexico and Central America since 2004. Those coming from the Caribbean have maintained their earlier levels of in-migration.

In discussing the presentations, Massey noted how all three sources of immigrant data create difficulties. He particularly complained about the lack of exit data, indicating that the government has not collected such numbers since 1958. He also suggested that the residual methods used to collect the number of illegal immigrants tries to define a measurement from "moving parts." Given these difficulties, Massey noted how he has become a producer of data during his research on the Mexican Migration Project, the Latin American Migration project, and the New Immigrant Survey.

He also announced that he and his Princeton colleague Marta Tienda have begun a project to look at the geographic diversification of America's immigrants. Until recently, most of America's newcomers have settled in six states, now that has changed so that there are significant immigrant populations across many more states.

Given that immigration reform remains on the national agenda, having accurate data on this population would be helpful, but clearly remains a challenge.

2009 NIH DIRECTOR'S PIONEER/NEW INNOVATOR AWARDS: PRE-APPLICATIONS WANTED

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking proposals for its 2009 NIH Director's Pioneer Awards and New Innovator Awards. Both programs are part of the [NIH Roadmap for Medical Research](#) and are designed to support exceptionally creative scientists who take highly innovative, potentially high-impact approaches to major challenges in biomedical or behavioral research. The agency recently released an announcement calling for Pre-Applications for the 2009 NIH Director's Pioneer Award Program ([PAR-09-012](#)). All of the 27 NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs) are participating in the solicitation.

Pioneer Award

The Pioneer Award is designed to complement the NIH's traditional, investigator-initiated grant programs. The notice emphasizes that the term "pioneering" is used to describe highly innovative approaches that have the potential to produce an unusually high impact on a broad area of biomedical or behavioral research. The term "award" is used to mean a grant for conduction research, rather than a reward for past achievements. To be considered pioneering, the proposed research must reflect ideas that are substantially different from those already being pursued by the individual or elsewhere. Biomedical and behavioral research is defined broadly in the announcement encompassing scientific investigations in the biological, behavioral, clinical, social, physical, chemical, computational, engineering, and mathematical sciences. Research proposed may be in any scientific area relevant to the NIH's mission but need not be in a conventional biomedical or behavioral discipline. Recipients of the Pioneer Award will be required to commit a major portion (at least 51 percent) of their research effort to activities support by the Award.

NIH expects to commit approximately \$5 million per year for five years for at least five - ten awards. Awards will be made up to \$500,000 in direct costs each year for five years, plus Facilities and Administrative costs, which will be determined at the time of award.

The announcement utilizes the X02 mechanism for submission of pre-applications which are a necessary first step in applying for a 2009 Pioneer Award. The pre-applications will be evaluated by a group of external reviewers. Applicants whose projects are judged to be the most outstanding will be notified of the opportunity to submit full applications under the Request-for-Applications announcement RFA-RM-09-001, under which all awards will be made. Only one pre-application is allowed.

Pre-applications may be submitted on or after November 17, 2008 and are due by December 17, 2008. On October 17, 2008 NIH posted a Frequently Asked Questions page at: <http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/clinicalresearch/overview-dynamioutcomes.aspx>

For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-09-011.html>.

New Innovator Awards

In 2007, the agency created the NIH Director's New Innovator Awards Program (<http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/newinnovator/>) to support a small number of new investigators of exceptional creativity who propose bold and highly innovative new research approaches that have the potential to produce a major impact on broad, important problems in biomedical and behavioral research. As with the Pioneer Award, the research proposed need not be in a conventional biomedical or behavioral discipline but must be relevant to the mission of NIH. The New Innovator Awards complement ongoing efforts

by NIH and its Institutes and Centers to fund new investigators through investigator-initiated (R01) grants, which continue to be the major source of NIH support for new investigators.

For the New Innovator Awards, the NIH expects to commit approximately \$55.7 million for five years. It is anticipated that up to 24 awards will be made in 2009. Awards will be for up to \$300,000 in direct costs each year for five years, plus applicable Facilities and Administrative costs, determined at the time of the award.

Eligible individuals must meet the definition of "new investigator," defined as those project directors/principal investigators who have never been awarded an R01 or equivalent NIH grant or been the leader of a P01 or center grant peer-reviewed project. Investigators may submit or have an R01 or equivalent grant application pending concurrently with their New Innovator Award pre-application or application. If the pending grant, however, is awarded in FY 2009 with a start date of September 30 or earlier, the application is no longer eligible to receive the Award.

Accordingly, the NIH has issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) to solicit pre-applications for the NIH Director's New Innovator Award. Pre-applications are required in order to apply for a 2009 New Innovator Award. Pre-applications will be evaluated by a group of external reviewers. Those investigators whose submissions are judged to be the most outstanding will be notified of the opportunity to submit full (DP2) applications under [RFA-RM-09-003](#). All awards will be made under [RFA-RM-09-003](#). No awards will be made under this announcement. For additional information, consult the FAQs at <http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/newinnovator/faq.aspx>.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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National Opinion Research Center
Population Reference Bureau
Social Science Research Council

