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COSSA Washington Update

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SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE MILITARY: UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN TERRAIN, FOCUS OF JOINT COMMITTEE HEARING



Mark Weiss and David Segal

"Know your enemy." Sun Tzu

"Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men." George S. Patton

With those two quotes in mind, the House Science and Technology (S&T) Committee's Subcommittee on Research and Science Education and the House Armed Services (HAS) Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, held a joint hearing on April 24 that examined: "The Role of the Social and Behavioral Sciences in National Security."

For Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA), chairman of the S&T Subcommittee, the hearing presented an opportunity to remind people of his role in defending social and behavioral science grants at the National Science Foundation (NSF) from "specious" attacks in 2007, including one that was "crucial in helping to train our soldiers currently stationed in the Middle East." (see Update, [May 14, 2007](#)).

Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), Chairman of the HAS Subcommittee, viewed the hearing as a chance to learn "of the potential offered by social and behavioral sciences for improving our understanding of our enemies and their local context so that we can increasingly deny terrorist the base of support and the freedom to operate in a given region."

The Ranking Republican on the S&T Subcommittee Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI), aside from reminding everyone of the Patton statement above, noted that “social and behavioral research is of crucial importance to this entire nation and our own security as we move forward in an ever-changing world filled not only with new technological advancements, but also with increasingly complicated human dimensions.”

Much of the hearing focused on the use of what the Army is calling Human Terrain Teams (HTT) in Afghanistan and Iraq. These were noted by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in his speech to the Association of American Universities (see Update, [April 21, 2008](#)). At the hearing Colonel Martin Schweitzer, just back from Afghanistan, explained the HTT as five to eight person teams “comprised of social scientists, anthropological experts, and other trained military personnel.” These teams help military commanders understand the human terrain they are surrounded by and “discern how to use ‘soft power’ as a means of achieving desired effects.” They, according to Schweitzer, are not only “embedded cultural advisors” for Commanders, but they assist “to maneuver formations within tribal communities in such a manner that reduces the threat to all involved parties.” The Colonel noted how these teams have helped “link the people of Afghanistan to their government at an incredibly accelerated rate.” He further suggested the Army is quite grateful for their social scientist helpers quoting one commander as saying, “If you could have one for every company command, they would be a phenomenal asset.”

DOD Deputy Undersecretary for Science and Technology (S&T), Andre van Tilborg, echoed Colonel Schweitzer’s comments. He testified that fighting asymmetrical wars means the military must have “adequate cultural knowledge” and a “deeper understanding of human behavior.” He suggested that DOD is spending about \$150 million on social and behavioral science research, about one percent of S&T appropriations. He indicated that DOD is also undertaking a new initiative in the area of socio-cultural understanding and modeling. Van Tilborg also reviewed the use of social and behavioral research by the military noting its importance during both world wars through its use of human factors research for personnel selection and training, simulation technologies for potential scenarios, decision support tools, and other areas.

David Segal, head of the Center for Research on Military Organization and Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, testified about his long involvement with research for the military on a host of other issues. His Center’s research programs focus on military families, diversity in the military, military operations, and the intersection of the military and society. The family research has examined financial well-being and the impact of geographic mobility. Diversity studies have looked at issues of gender, race, and sexual orientation. The research on military operations have dealt with multinational peacekeeping and insurgencies. The investigations of the civil-military interface have included studies of youth attitudes and behavior regarding the military, how changes in American professions and organizational processes such as outsourcing have affected the military, and the impact of base closings on host civilian communities.

Representing the National Science Foundation (NSF), Mark Weiss, Director of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate’s Division on Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, explained to the committees that basic research in SBE sciences has important implications and applications for society, including the military. Citing the National Academies’ report *Human Behavior in Military Contexts*, which promulgated an agenda for future basic research that could be applied to military situations (see Update, September 24, 2007), Weiss suggested that NSF is providing significant support for all the areas noted in the report. He cited a number of examples involving intercultural competence, teams in complex environments, technology and training, including spatial learning, emotional states, nonverbal communications, and cognitive research on thought, perception, affect, and action in the human brain.

Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) wondered about the possibilities for a research partnership between NSF and DOD. Weiss noted some informal channels and networks including NSF and DOD representation on the newly established Subcommittee on Human Factors of Homeland National Security as part of the National Science and Technology Council structure.

Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX), the Ranking Republican on the HAS Subcommittee, wondered about how rigorous the SBE sciences were? Weiss pointed out that the use of new technologies and new ways of thinking have certainly added rigor in recent years. Segal suggested that it is often difficult to study “complex individuals in complex social systems.” Van Tilborg noted in his written testimony that: “The social sciences are based in theories that are empirically tested, and the questions that the social and behavioral sciences try to answer are in some ways harder and more difficult than the physical sciences.” He argued that they are not “soft sciences.” He also told Thornberry that in regarding applying the social sciences to the military it is often difficult to run controlled experiments.

Where will all this renewed interest in the importance of the SBE sciences to the national security lead? One possibility, according to congressional staff, is increased funding for this research in the DOD budget.

NAS WORKSHOP EXAMINES STRENGTHENING THE NATION'S VITAL STATISTICS' SYSTEM

"Vital statistics are vital," declared U.S. Census Bureau director Steve Murdock appearing at a National Academies' Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) workshop on April 30. He said that like many other facets of social research, our Nation's policy makers simply "take for granted" the important information provided by these vital statistics, even though they use them all the time. From his perspective as the former Texas State Demographer, Murdock noted that at the state level, where much of the data is collected, the data system is often at the mercy of state funding decisions as well as cooperation from local areas, such as counties. Murdock's brief appearance preceded another meeting for him on Capitol Hill dealing with the difficulties in the 2010 Census (see Update, [April 7](#) and [April 21, 2008](#))

The CNSTAT session focused, on what National Center for Health Statistics director Ed Sondik declared, how to develop a "process to strengthen a system" that has recently faced budget woes and other difficulties. Those budget difficulties have forced NCHS to cease publishing data on marriages, divorces, and abortions.

On the other hand, a number of speakers noted that since September 11, 2001 national security considerations have made the accurate collection of these data important. Standardization of birth certificates and drivers' licenses and the prompt issuing of death certificates produce less opportunity for identity theft and fraud. As Mike Stoto of Georgetown University pointed out, infectious disease surveillance and public health also depend on data reporting from this system.

Most of the meeting advanced the idea that using these vital statistics helps researchers and policy makers understand many of the pressing problems of the day. Nancy Krieger of the Harvard School of Public Health demonstrated how geocoding by census tracts of socio-economic data in Boston related to health outcomes allows policy makers to see health disparities by neighborhood and fashion responses accordingly. Krieger suggested that others across the country are replicating her model and methodology in other cities interested in health disparities' problems.

Rick Rogers of the University of Colorado used mortality trend data to illustrate the diminishing of life expectancy differences by gender; nine years in 1975, 5.2 years in 2005. He also showed the decline in smoking, and again the closing of the gender gap. In 1955 53 percent of males smoked and 25 percent females; in 2004 the ratio had declined to 24 to 18 percent. Peter van Dyck of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services discussed the many indicators derived from these vital statistics to provide a picture of both child health and women's health in the U.S.

Another session looked at population data. Stephen Goss of the Social Security Administration (SSA) spoke about how population dynamics affects his agency's cost and revenue projections. Fertility and death rates and how they affect the age structure of the country provide an important indicator that SSA takes into account, he noted. More difficult to ascertain is projecting the future impact of immigration, Goss pointed out, particularly how to factor in the "undocumented" immigrants. Fred Hollman of the Census Bureau focused on how population projections have been affected by the 1997 Office of Management and Budget decision to allow respondents to choose more than one racial category on the Census and other federal surveys.

Stephen Schwartz of the New York City Office of Vital Statistics, argued tongue-in-cheek that the system had "a marketing problem." If it only proclaimed its information as "Sex and death" with "Graphic depictions," Schwartz suggested the system could change its image and attract attention. More seriously, former Census Director Ken Prewitt now at Columbia University, summed up the difficulties arguing that: "We need to conceptualize statistics as part of the nation's scientific infrastructure." Until policymakers can understand that, he contended, supporting the vital data system will continue to be a struggle.

Connie Citro, CNSTAT director, indicated that the National Academies' will publish the proceedings of the workshop in the near future.

EDUCATION SECRETARY ANNOUNCES PROPOSED REGULATORY CHANGES TO NCLB

On April 22, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, frustrated by the lack of progress in the congressional reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), announced proposed regulatory changes to the program. The Secretary

stated, "While I will continue working with legislators to renew this law, I also realize that students and families and teachers and schools need help now."

Secretary Spellings proposed changes that would alter the way states calculate their graduation rates. To establish uniformity the Department would have all states use the graduation rate model created by the National Governor's Association (NGA), which shows how many incoming freshman in a given high school graduate. By academic year 2012-13 states would have to use the same formula to calculate how many incoming freshman graduate from high school within four years and how many drop out. Under this new proposal schools and districts would be required to set and meet a graduation rate goal, or define how they would demonstrate continuous and substantial improvement to their graduation rate to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). "Over their lifetimes, dropouts from the class of 2007 alone will cost our nation more than 300 billion dollars in lost wages, lost taxes and lost productivity," said Secretary Spellings. "Increasing graduation rates by just five percent, for male students alone, would save us nearly eight billion dollars each year in crime-related costs."

She also called for building on the Department's growth model pilot program, by outlining the criteria that states must meet in order to incorporate individual student progress into their definition of AYP. States and districts would also be required, in an effort for increased transparency, to report the most recent results from their state National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and mathematics tests on the same public report card that they use to report the results of their own state assessments.

The supplemental education service (SES) program, which provides mentoring to students in failed schools, is one of the more controversial aspects of NCLB. The Secretary is proposing rules to ensure parents are notified in a clear and timely way about both their public school choice and (SES) options. Districts would be required to notify parents of eligible children that they may elect to participate in public school choice, and detail their available options no later than 14 days before the start of the school year. The notice would be required to be clearly distinguishable from other school related information. The SES notices are important, the Secretary noted, because, "Research has shown that effective tutoring programs can reduce the achievement gap by 10 to 15 percent." "The problem is," she continued, "these options will not make a difference if parents don't know they're available."

In other proposed improvements to the SES program, states would have to consider evidence from the service provider that the instruction they would offer and the content they would use are research-based and aligned with the state's academic content and student achievement standards. In addition, the providers would have to show evaluation results demonstrating that their instructional program has improved student achievement. The Department would also require information from the SES supplier about whether they have been removed from another state's approved list.

In what may be seen by many as another bureaucratic layer in an already heavily bureaucratic process, Spellings recommended the creation of a National Technical Advisory Council that would advise the secretary on key technical issues related to state standards, assessments and accountability systems.

For more information on Secretary Spellings proposal go to www.ed.gov

BROADENING PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES: THIRD ANNUAL SBE ALLIANCE CONFERENCE HELD

On April 21 -23, the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Alliances (SBE Alliance) held its third annual conference, *Broadening Participation in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences* (SBE). The City University of New York (CUNY) hosted the meeting.

Begun in 2005 by the NSF Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), the SBE Alliance, in collaboration with the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR), began supporting 23 institutions to develop regional alliances to increase their capacity for training graduate students traditionally underrepresented in SBE disciplines. The alliances are modeled on the existing NSF-supported Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) for

SBES-AGEP INSTITUTIONS

City University of New York
Howard University
Michigan State University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
Pennsylvania State University
Temple University
Texas A&M University
Stanford University
University of California-Berkley
University of California-Los Angeles
University of California- Santa Barbara
University of Chicago
University of Florida
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Maryland- College Park
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill
University of Southern California
University of Wisconsin
University of Texas-Austin
Wayne State University

the biological and physical sciences, and engineering. The annual workshop for the SBE/AGEP alliances convenes principal investigators (PIs) from each of the 23 alliance partners, key faculty, administrators and staff to share knowledge and best practices and discuss future goals and opportunities for the participating institutions.

Patricia White, NSF program officer for sociology and director of the SBE Alliances, explained that they were “conceptualized to recognize and support those who have demonstrated the ability to produce underrepresented minority doctorates in the social, behavioral and economic sciences.” White also pointed out that the “Alliances were to build on existing resources and capabilities, especially, whenever possible, STEM-AGEPs.” She praised the 23 alliance partners for being well recognized and lauded the talent, expertise, and scholarship of the PIs, the co-PIs and alliance staff and their impact on broadening participation.

Reflecting, White noted that “as the Alliances continue to evolve, the question that emerges is does it make sense to develop a national alliance network. The idea being is there something that the whole can do beyond the sum of it parts.” She pointed out the “large seepage from Ph.D. to tenure faculty in some SBE disciplines.” In others, the issues are graduate school recruitment and retention. “Does it make sense to collaborate with professional associations from a national alliance versus individual institutions or regional alliances? Are there natural partners, existing partners, new partners, emerging partners and are there mechanisms of collaborations that will only work at the national level,” she posited.

EHR Deputy Assistant Director Wanda Ward emphasized that the keys to innovations are creativity, connectivity, integration, and synergy. She also discussed the NSF’s I³ -- Innovation through Institutional Integration program -- 2008 proposal themes. Ward noted that 81 percent of the proposals contain elements relating to more than one thematic area. She cited as an example one proposal on “the integration of mentoring programs at different educational levels for minority and underrepresented students, to create supportive pathways between those levels.” A second proposal would look at “the integration of programs for global research collaboration, with programs for improving Undergraduate STEM education and research experiences, to improve research output and Undergraduate STEM enrichment.” This proposal combines the focus on a globally engaged workforce with a focus on integrating research and education, Ward noted.

Anne Petersen, Deputy Director at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford University and former NSF Deputy Director, emphasized that increasing the participation of underrepresented minorities in science is a “compelling national need.” Despite the release of several reports in recent years, trends have not improved, Petersen argued. She commended EHR on its approaches to the problem including the recent Innovation through Institutional Integration program, noting that “only such a systems approach is likely to effect sustainable change.” CASBS focuses on the professoriate portion of the AGEP program. Given that faculty constitute the highest leveraged component of the system of higher education, Petersen stressed that it is “imperative to focus on how underrepresented minorities successfully win faculty appointments and then tenure.” Pointing to what she calls the “three 3D’s - denial, discrimination, and discouragement,” Petersen stressed that “effective mentoring begins in graduate school but cannot stop there.” Young faculty must have continuous stimulation, encouragement, and promotion, she said. She concluded her remarks by stressing that CASBS is seeking more engagement with the SBE Alliances and urged the “outstanding faculty, especially younger minority faculty to apply for fellowships and other opportunities” at the Center.

NSF’ Social, Behavioral and Economic Directorate

Participants also heard from representatives of the various divisions within the SBE. Kellina Craig-Henderson, program officer in the Social Psychology program in SBE’s Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BCS), explained that the division supports “research to develop and advance scientific knowledge focusing on human cognition, language, social behavior, and culture.” It also supports research on the interactions between human societies and the physical environment. The BCS also provides graduate research support through the Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (SBE), Graduate Research Fellowship (EHR), Developing Global Scientists and Engineers (Office of International Science and Engineering).

Craig-Henderson also discussed the **Science of Broadening Participation (SBP)** program which is based on empirical demonstration and retention by documenting the inequitable distribution of educational and economic opportunities. She explained that the program cuts across all levels of analysis of behavior including the individual, group, and societal. It also provides scientific evidence for what works and what does not work, she added. Examples of SBE-SBP relevant research projects cited by Craig-Henderson include: stereotype threat (social psychology), effects of diversity training (sociology), physiological stress and racism (cross directorate activities), causes and consequences of racial spatial separation (economics), and teacher bias and academic development of African American vernacular English speaking children (linguistics).

Judith Giordan, Program Director for the **Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT)** program in EHR discussed the IGERT experience and broadening participation. An institutional award, Giordan explained that IGERT was "developed to meet the challenges of educating U.S. Ph.D. scientists and engineers who pursue careers in research and education, with the interdisciplinary backgrounds, deep knowledge in chosen disciplines, and technical, professional, and personal skills to become, in their own careers, leaders and creative agents for change." In addition, it is "intended to facilitate diversity in student participation and preparation, and to contribute to a world-class, broadly inclusive, and globally engaged science and engineering workforce," she noted.

IGERT awards are for five years, with approximately \$3 million in funding, and support around 12 trainees per year. Each IGERT doctoral student is provided a \$30,000 per year stipend, \$10,500 towards the cost of their education, and funding for travel and expenses. According to Giordan, the intellectual merit of the award is that it provides for transformative interdisciplinary research themes plus disciplinary depth. It has "catalyzed a cultural change in graduate education for students, faculty, and institutions." IGERT exceeds national doctoral data for underrepresented minorities for every group, she pointed out. Further, it exceeds national data for women in 80 percent of all fields. Giordan concluded her remarks by emphasizing that graduate education can be designed to be more: interdisciplinary, collaborative, global with broader preparation for a variety of careers, and inclusive.

Dan Newlon, program officer in Economics in SBE's Division of Social and Economic Sciences (SES) explained that his division looks at the core programs and the program officers as partners to accomplish the AGEP activities. According to Newlon, the directors of the different programs are each concerned about broadening the participation of underrepresented minorities. Programs within SES include programs in: decision, risk, and management sciences; economics; ethics education in science and engineering; law and social sciences; methodology, measurement, and statistics; innovation and organizational sciences; political science; science, technology, and society; and sociology. Each program is concerned with outreach and could be a potential partner in AGEP activities.

The Program Director for Cross-Directorate Activities in SBE, Fahmida Chowdhury, described the directorate's activities which include administering and coordinating research experiences for undergraduate sites (REU) and the minority postdoctoral research fellowships and follow-up starter grants designed to increase participation and advancement of underrepresented groups. Chowdhury explained that any research topic that falls within the scope of the SBE sciences is appropriate for the minority postdoctoral research fellowships and for the REU sites. Current SBE emphasis is on emerging fields that invite cross-disciplinary work involving systems thinking.

She noted that there is a push within SBE for a multi-directorate initiative included in the FY 2009 budget proposal, Adaptive Systems Technologies, which seeks to develop new technologies based on a better understanding of biological and particularly neurological systems. In the context of SBE that means applying and expanding what we need to know from cognitive and learning sciences. It is strongly related to programs in developmental and learning science; perception, action and cognition; cognitive neuroscience; and linguistics, she explained.

Another new program with significant funding is the Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation (CDI) program. CDI is multi-disciplinary research seeking contributions to more than one area of science or engineering, by innovation in, or innovative use of computational thinking (concepts, methods, models, algorithms, and tools). It is a five-year initiative with a minimum of \$26 million in funding for FY 2008 designed to create revolutionary science and engineering research outcomes. The emphasis is on bold, multidisciplinary activities. All of the NSF directorates are participating in CDI.

Chowdry also noted that the Science of Science and Innovation Policy is another cross-directorate program administered by SBE. An initiative that stemmed from remarks by Presidential Science Adviser John Marburger at the AAAS Policy Forum and reiterated at the COSSA Annual Meeting in 2005, it supports research that develops metrics, datasets and analytical tools in order to assess the impacts of the Nation's science and engineering enterprise.

Participants also heard from Sandra Thomas (Institute on Broadening Participation, University of Michigan), Mark Hugo Lopez (PEW Hispanic Center and the Association for Public Policy Analysis Management) and Mary Margaret Overbey (American Anthropological Association). They each described the activities being pursued by their respective organizations to increase underrepresented minorities' participation in the disciplines that make up their organizational membership. COSSA's Deputy Director for Health Policy Angela Sharpe moderated the panel and provided a brief overview of the February 28, 2008 [Enhancing Diversity in Science](#) retreat (see Update, [March 24, 2008](#) and [April 7, 2008](#)) organized by COSSA.

THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA USE FOCUS OF JOURNAL AND BRIEFING

The Brookings Institution and Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs just released the latest volume of their collaborative journal, *Future of Children*, entitled "Children and Electronic Media." The volume examines whether and how exposure to different media forms is linked with child well-being.

According to the journal's multiple authors America's youth spend more time using media than they do engaging in any other activity other than sleeping. Media technology is now integral to how adolescents and even young kids communicate with their friends and parents. The vast majority of children have access to multiple media outlets. And this technological convergence has enabled kids to access the same information, like TV shows, from different media platforms. Today's children have almost constant access to media often without adult supervision. Studies also show that children are using more than one medium at a time. This media multitasking explains why television viewing has not declined in recent years despite the proliferation of other platforms.

Not surprisingly, as kids enter their tween and teenage years, many begin to experiment and engage in risky behaviors. Research shows that children aged eight to eighteen spend an average of six to eight and a half hours a day using media, which includes television, videos, movies, radio, print media, computers and video games, and the Internet. These media has significant influence on behavioral choices adolescents make. Media exposure has been linked to risky health behavior in adolescents including excessive caloric intake, physical inactivity, smoking initiation, underage drinking, early sexual activity, and violent behavior.

The most well developed research on media and health behavior shows that there is a strong and causal effect between media violence and aggressive or violent behavior in youth. The research demonstrates that adolescent exposure to media violence is a greater predictor of later violent behavior than alcohol/drug use, abusive parents, poverty, single parent families, or having low IQ. In 2005, 12-20 year-olds made up only 13 percent of the U.S. population however; they were responsible for 28 percent of all single-offender and 41 percent of multiple offender violent crimes. Youth violence costs America in excess of \$158 billion each year both in direct and indirect costs.

Research results also indicate that advertising and product placement for cigarettes and alcohol, as well as exposure to movie characters' smoking and drinking, increase underage drinking and initiation of smoking. In 2003, cigarette companies spent \$15.2 billion in advertising and promotion. Cigarette companies glamorize smoking to millions of kids through its product placement in television shows, movies, video games, music, the Internet, and other advertisements. Every year the alcohol industry spends more than \$1 billion on advertising. Through their ads they sell the images of success, sexuality, and above all fun.

Adolescents are engaging in sexual risk-taking behaviors at an earlier age. Data taken from the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey indicated that 6.2 percent of high school students had engaged in sexual behavior before the age of thirteen, and that 47 percent of ninth to twelfth-grade students had experienced sexual intercourse. Children and adolescents are exposed daily to indirect as well as explicit, sexually charged media. Although there are numerable studies that have demonstrated the influence media has on risky behaviors such as smoking, there have been relatively few studies that have examined the link between media and adolescent sexual initiation. However, the few studies have shown a link between sexual exposure on TV and sexual behavior, these studies suggest that high school students who watch television shows with high sexual content are more likely to be sexually active than those viewing shows with less sexual content.

Freedom of speech sometimes comes into conflict with society's need to protect children from media that is deemed harmful. Policymakers face the challenge to create legislation that not only protects the First Amendment, but also provides parents with effective tools to regulate media content. With technology constantly changing and becoming more personalized, the greatest challenge to creating effective laws and regulation maybe the rapid pace of media technology evolution.

For further information go to: http://www.futureofchildren.org/pubs-info2825/pubs-info_show.htm?doc_id=674322

NOAA SEEKS COMMENTS ON INCORPORATING SCIENTIFIC UNCERTAINTY IN CLIMATE CHANGE DECISIONMAKING

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has made available a draft report from the U.S. Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment program: "Best Practice Approaches for Characterizing, Communicating, and Incorporating, Scientific Uncertainty in Decision Making." It can be found on the Climate Change Science Program Web site at: <http://climtaescience.gov/Library/sap/sap5-2/default.php>.

NOAA is seeking comments from the scientific community. The above link also includes detailed instructions on how to submit comments, which are due on June 8, 2008.

The primary objective of the report, according to its lead author M. Granger Morgan of Carnegie Mellon University, is to "provide a tutorial to the climate analysis and decision making communities on current best practice in describing and analyzing uncertainty in climate-related problems." He further notes, "Recent years have seen considerable progress in the development of improved methods to describe and deal with uncertainty."

For further information contact: Fabien Laurier, Climate Change Science Office, 202/419-3481.

NIH SEEKS IDEAS FOR COMMON FUND/ROADMAP TRANS-NIH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Common Fund/Roadmap is in its fifth year of implementation. Over the five years, three types of programs have been funded:

1. Cross-cutting, critical infrastructure, resources, tools, methodologies, and training programs to enable basic, translational, and/or clinical research.
2. Fundamental research that addresses knowledge gaps which, when filled, will create new paradigms in the understanding of a broad spectrum of human biology, behavior, or disease.
3. Initiatives designed to transform biomedical and behavioral research culture, including programs that encourage team approaches to complex problems as well as policy initiatives that have changed NIH practices.

Accordingly, the NIH is seeking input from the scientific community, health professionals, patient advocates, and the general public regarding innovative and cross-cutting initiatives to be funded through the NIH Common Fund. The agency ask that the initiatives address: 1) specific barriers to basic, translational, or clinical research through development of novel tools, technologies, services, etc., and 2) fill specific knowledge gaps that impede research across a broad spectrum of health science. Initiatives selected are expected to have exceptionally high impact and to transform the way research is conducted.

All ideas should meet the following criteria for new trans-NIH strategic initiatives:

- Is the proposed initiative truly transforming -could it dramatically affect how biomedical and/or behavioral research is conducted over the next decade?
- Will the outcomes from the proposed initiatives synergistically promote and advance the individual missions of the Institutes and Centers to benefit health?
- Does the proposed initiative require participation from NIH as a whole and/or does it address an area (s) of science that does not clearly fall within the mission of any one IC or OD program office?

- Is the proposed initiative something that no other entity is likely or able to do, and is there a public health benefit to having the results of the research in the public domain?

Created by the NIH in 2005 and codified into law by Congress in the 2006 NIH Reform Act, the Common Fund is designed to support cross-cutting, trans-NIH programs that address fundamental knowledge gaps, develop transformative tools and technologies, and/or foster innovative approaches to complex problems. The programs are supported for a limited duration of five to ten years which allows the NIH to regularly test new ways of fostering innovative science. Collection of the ideas for consideration is the initial step in the process of identifying a new cohort of programs for fiscal year 2011. The NIH expects to spend \$30 - \$50 million per year from within the currently projected Roadmap budget for the new five-year initiatives.

Responses will be accepted through June 2, 2008. For more information, see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-RM-08-014.html>

NIH SUPPORT FOR CONFERENCES AND SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS AVAILABLE

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced the availability of funding to support high quality conferences and scientific meetings through its NIH Research Conference Grant Program. The meetings must be relevant to the scientific mission of the NIH and the public health. The NIH defines a conference/scientific meeting as "a gathering, symposium, seminar, scientific meeting, workshop or any other organized, formal meeting where persons assemble to coordinate, exchange, and disseminate information or to explore or clarify a defined subject, problem, or area of knowledge.

Each NIH Institute and Center (IC) has a scientific purview and different program goals and initiatives that evolve over time. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the appropriate institute or center representative to obtain current information about their specific program priorities and policies.

ICs participating in this funding opportunity include:

National Institute on Aging (NIA), Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB), Cancer Institute (NCI), Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), (Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), (Drug Abuse (NIDA), Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), Eye Institute (NEI), General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), f Mental Health (NIMH), Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), Library of Medicine (NLM), National Center for Research Resources (NCRR), Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), Office of Rare Diseases (ORD), Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS).

For more information see: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-149.html>

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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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GOVERNING MEMBERS

American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Economic Association
American Educational Research Association
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Criminology
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association

Association of American Geographers
Association of American Law Schools
Law and Society Association
Linguistic Society of America
Midwest Political Science Association
National Communication Association
Rural Sociological Society
Society for Research in Child Development

MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

American Agricultural Economics Association
American Association for Agricultural Education
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Association of Research Libraries
Council on Social Work Education
Eastern Sociological Society
International Communication Association
Justice Research and Statistics Association
Midwest Sociological Society
National Association of Social Workers
National Council on Family Relations

North American Regional Science Council
North Central Sociological Association
Population Association of America
Social Science History Association
Society for Behavioral Medicine
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
Sociologists for Women in Society
Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Arizona State University
Brown University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
Carnegie-Mellon University
University of Chicago
Clark University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Georgetown University
George Mason University
George Washington University
University of Georgia
Harvard University
Howard University
University of Illinois
Indiana University
University of Iowa
Iowa State University
Johns Hopkins University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
Kansas State University
University of Kentucky
University of Maryland
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse

University of Michigan
Michigan State University
University of Minnesota
Mississippi State University
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
New York University
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
North Carolina State University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
University of Oklahoma
University of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
University of South Carolina
Stanford University
University of Tennessee
State University of New York, Stony Brook
University of Texas, Austin
Texas A & M University
Tulane University
Vanderbilt University
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Washington University in St. Louis
West Virginia University
University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Yale University

CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences
American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
Brookings Institution
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
Institute for Women's Policy Research
National Bureau of Economic Research
National Opinion Research Center
Population Reference Bureau
Social Science Research Council