Consortium of Social Science Associations

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## HOUSE PASSES NSF AUTHORIZATION BILL

On June 5, after an hour of debate, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4664, the Investing in America's Future Act, by a vote of 397-25. The legislation would put the National Science Foundation (NSF) on a track to double its budget in five years, by authorizing 15 percent increases for the next three years.

House Science Committee Chairman Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) hailed the House action, saying: "We turn to NSF to solve some of our most pressing problems; we can't turn from NSF when we decide where to invest Federal funds. It's time to give NSF the money it needs."

In the Science Committee's report that accompanied H.R. 4664, the legislators acknowledged the importance of the priority area in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate. The report declared:

*In addition to the priority areas specifically authorized in the bill, the Committee fully supports the NSF budget proposal for the new priority area in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences included in the FY 2003 budget request. These sciences are poised to take advantage of new tools, larger grants, and multidisciplinary cooperation to explore the social and behavioral aspects of many fundamental human and societal questions, such as: how people learn; how children develop; the ethical, legal, and social implications of technological advances; geographic patterns and processes; and innovation and change in organizations and firms. The Committee encourages NSF to sustain and provide for future growth for this initiative.*

The Senate is expected to take action on the NSF reauthorization this summer. The authorizers hope their actions will spur the appropriators into providing NSF the actual significant increases called for in the legislation.

## HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ASSESSES NIH USE OF INCREASED RESOURCES

In an effort to assess the impact of greatly increasing the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) budget over the last four years, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held the first in a series of hearings designed to examine the use of the increased resources by the agency. "As is always appropriate with large investments of taxpayers' dollars, I believe it is our responsibility to review, with the scientific assistance of experts at the NIH, how these resources are used," observed Subcommittee Chairman Michael Bilirakis (R-FL). "More specifically, how are the various institutes managing these large annual increases? Have we found new cures; if so, are they helping Americans live healthier lives?" the chairman queried.

Emphasizing that the increased investment at NIH affords even more opportunities to confront disease, Ranking Democrat Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced his interest in how NIH responds to medical needs not being addressed by the private sector. Brown also expressed interest in the role the NIH "invariably plays in economics and allocation

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of health care" in the U.S. Ideally, related Brown, NIH "could steer clear of thorny issues like health care costs and access, and focus exclusively on producing and supporting medical research. Unfortunately, the agency's technology transfer policies have a direct bearing on the return consumers receive on their investment in NIH."

On the same day, newly appointed NIH Director Elias Zerhouni participated in his first meeting with the advisory committee to the director. Zerhouni asked the researchers to assist him in making the case that the increased resources provided to the agency would not necessarily immediately translate into new cures. He observed that many in Congress and the Administration expected an immediate translation of research findings into "tangible benefits" for patients. "There is a huge cry out there for accountability and transparency," Zerhouni added. He predicted that this would be a consistent theme the next few years.

## Heart Disease and Stroke

The Subcommittee focused this first examination of the NIH use of the additional resources on the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

CONSORTIUM OF
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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences.

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NHLBI director Claude Lenfant observed that "medical science has made more advances in [cardiovascular diseases] than in any other major disease." But many challenges remain; Americans are far more likely to die of heart disease than any other cause, said Lenfant. Moreover, he related, "the societal burden of living with these diseases is considerable."

According to Lenfant, NHLBI "conducts numerous clinical trials of promising approaches to treat or prevent disease, including trials that examine the value of lifestyle interventions such as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet," which has been shown to lower blood pressure. He also mentioned two other trials focusing on preventing excessive weight gain among teenage African-American girls and on preventing the decline of physical activity that typically occurs among girls during middle school years.

"Research findings must be translated into effective prevention programs," noted Robert O. Bonow, President-elect of the American Heart Association. He also called for more resources to bring research advances to the public.

"Getting research and proven public health interventions 'off the shelf' and into communities is vital for all Americans," echoed Eduardo Sanchez, Texas Commissioner of Health. According to Sanchez, cardiovascular disease prevention is one to the Texas Department of Health's top priorities. Both the human and economic costs of cardiovascular disease are enormous. The good news, said Sanchez, is that we know how to reduce this burden, but we must put this knowledge into action.

Sanchez described a NHLBI-supported study called CATCH [Child and Adolescent Trial for Cardiovascular health] that demonstrated the effectiveness of the research-based interventions to the Subcommittee. It is the largest school-based health promotion study ever conducted in the United States. Texas renamed the program "to reflect what really happens: a 'Coordinated Approach To Child Health,'" he explained.

According to Acting NINDS Director Audrey Penn, her Institute has historically committed more funding to stroke research than to any other single disease or disorder within its mission. The

Institute's stroke programs impact all areas of scientific opportunity and public health priority – from stroke awareness to rehabilitation – and are advancing the state of cutting-edge knowledge about ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat stroke, as well as educate the public and health professionals about it.

Penn noted that "the generous appropriations provided by Congress" have made it possible for NINDS to expand its programs on stroke. She further emphasized that in addition to the investigator-initiated projects that make up the core of the Institute's grant programs, NINDS is constantly looking for understudied areas in stroke research that the Institute could address through the use of targeted initiatives.

According to Penn, NINDS is also seeking to establish prevention/intervention research networks throughout the extramural community, particularly in the Southeastern U.S., commonly referred to as the "Stroke Belt," where stroke mortality rates are approximately 25 percent above the rest of the nation. The goal, said Penn, is to "foster stronger linkages between investigators at minority and majority institutions and community-based organization in order to improve minority recruitment and retention in clinical studies – as one way of addressing health disparities."

## SENATE COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON THE BINGE DRINKING EPIDEMIC AT COLLEGE CAMPUSES

After "observing, listening, and watching what was happening" in the state of Connecticut, where within the last year at least six college students have died in alcohol-related accidents, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Chair of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, held a hearing May 15 to examine alcohol abuse on college campuses. It "has reached a point where [excessive drinking by college students] is far more destructive than most people realize," Lieberman explained.

Many consider drinking a rite of passage for college students, but that is not the issue, related the Chairman. The issue, he asserted, is "drinking in excess, binge drinking, drinking oneself to death." Lieberman acknowledged that there may not be an appropriate legislative response to this problem; the hearing, however, was designed "to educate the Committee and the public and to engender action and reaction from students, colleges, and administrators to save some lives."

Mark S. Goldman of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Research Institute reiterated the need for additional research in this area. He testified that while there is an abundance of small scale, university specific studies and ample anecdotal evidence and case studies, there "is a paucity of research that adheres to the highest levels of methodological rigor. The kind of rigor that is essential if research is to be truly informative for decision makers." Goldman also recently served as Chair of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) National Advisory Council's Task Force on College Drinking, whose report, *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges*, was released by the Institute in April. He told the Committee that for the research community and NIAAA in particular, the Task Force identified a variety of knowledge gaps that offer new and expanded research opportunities. (See *Update*, April 15, 2002).

According to Raynard Kington, NIAAA Acting Director, this is just the beginning of what promises to be a long-term effort by the Institute. "Changing the culture does not come quickly or easily," he said, emphasizing that the Institute will expand its research collaborations with universities. In addition, NIAAA will seek to increase coordination with other Federal agencies and separate partners, including the Department of Education, Governors' spouses, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Lieberman indicated that the Committee will hold at least one additional hearing on the issue.

## COSSA SEMINAR EXAMINES WELFARE REFORM'S IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

On May 17th, the day following House passage of the reauthorization of the 1996 welfare reform act, COSSA held its first congressional briefing of 2002. Although the timing could have been better, COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver noted that the policy process has a long way to go before final enactment of the legislation and the implementation of any changes in the law.

The briefing focused on a multidisciplinary study underway that examines the impact of the 1996 law on low-income communities in Boston, Chicago, and San Antonio. A particular focus of the project is the impact of the reforms on children and families. The study, so far, has involved two waves of interviews and an ethnography of selected families from the surveys. There are four distinct groups in the study: "stayers" – those still on welfare; "leavers" – those who have left the welfare rolls in the past two years; those who got off welfare earlier; and those who were never on the rolls. Information about the study is available at www.jhu.edu/~welfare.

### Impact on 'Leavers' and 'Stayers'

Robert Moffitt, an economist from Johns Hopkins University, discussed how welfare leavers and stayers are doing. Examining the leavers, Moffitt reported that 63 percent are employed, but their average income is only about $1,000 a month, less than the poverty line. The poverty rate is 91 percent for less educated leavers. Both Food Stamp and Medicaid participation have declined substantially. Sanctioned leavers, those forced off the rolls for violating various rules (about 20 percent of the sample), have lower incomes and employment rates (only 40 percent) than average. The bottom line, according to Moffit, is that leavers are a very diverse group. Some have done quite well and others not; assistance off the rolls is needed for the latter.

Stayers, those who remain on welfare, Moffitt noted, are a very disadvantaged group. About one-quarter has severe health problems, which limit or prevent work. Many have high levels of depression, domestic violence, and weaker support systems than women not on welfare. However, Moffitt explained, that women who work while still on the rolls do much better. In the tradeoff between income and benefits, the latter do not fall as much as the former rises. Therefore, women achieve most income gains by working while on the rolls; additional income gains from leaving welfare are modest.

Looking at the other two groups, Moffitt reported that the study clearly indicated that those low-income women who have *not* been on TANF have seen the greatest increases in income. Was this due to the booming economy at the end of the 1990s? Follow-up surveys since the downturn could help determine the answer, he indicated.

### Impact on Cognitive and Behavioral Development

In examining the impact on children, Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, a developmental psychologist from Northwestern University, suggested that having a mother on welfare puts children and adolescents at risk, both in their cognitive and behavioral development. The study tested preschoolers aged four and adolescents aged ten to fourteen. For preschoolers, mothers' current or recent welfare participation is linked with poor cognitive achievement and high levels of problem behavior. This is accounted for, according to Chase-Lansdale by the mother's marital, educational, mental, and physical health status, as well as parenting practices.

Focusing on sanctioned families, Chase-Lansdale also reported that young children whose mothers were penalized for not following the rules had lower scores on problem solving tests and they also showed more behavior problems. However, adolescents of both sanctioned and non-sanctioned welfare recipients, as well as those who had recently left the welfare rolls demonstrated similar literacy/reading scores and analytic skills. With regard to behavior, those younger children whose mothers were forced to leave the rolls because of sanctions exhibited significant problems, which can lead to future troubles down the road. Chase-Lansdale suggested these problems for the very young children can be tied to the large stresses associated with leaving welfare, when mothers are trying to balance child care, employment, and parenting responsibilities.

To alleviate some of these stresses, she suggested that states should provide assistance to mothers so that they can avoid sanctions. She also called for the closer monitoring of sanctioned families and the provision of additional supports, such as psychological services, academic enrichment after-school programs, and other family support services.

### Impact on Marriage Promotion

Andrew Cherlin, sociologist and demographer at the Johns Hopkins University, examined children's living arrangements in low-income families and the implications for promoting marriage. The Bush administration has made the promotion of marriage one of its centerpieces of what it wants from the reauthorization of welfare reform.

From the three-city study, Cherlin reported that the percentage of children living with two adults had gone up slightly from interview one (34 percent) to interview two 16 months later (38 percent). This mirrors national data. However, Cherlin pointed out that nearly all the increase found in the three-city study involved the addition of men who were not the biological fathers of the children in the study. In addition, more of the increase occurred through cohabitation than through marriage. The percentage of children living with two biological parents did not increase.

The most interesting thing, Cherlin noted, was the instability of the living arrangements. From the first interview to the second, 42 percent of the mothers who were cohabiting had ended their relationship. Eighteen percent of the mothers who were married at the first interview had separated by the second interview. Overall, in only a 16-month period, 22 percent of children experienced a change in living arrangements.

With regard to the promotion of marriage initiative, Cherlin pointed out that those welfare mothers who do get married generally do not marry the biological fathers of their children. Interviews with unmarried mothers giving birth to a child suggest these mothers believe they are still romantically involved with the biological father and hope to marry them. However, the reality is that a very small percentage (5 percent in one study) actually marries the father.

### Impact on Health

Ron Angel, sociologist from the University of Texas at Austin, looked at the health insurance status of children and caregivers. He reported that the three-city study found that Medicaid remains a core component of the social welfare safety net. Parents value it highly and go to great lengths to obtain it for their children. Health problems are common among the low-income population and seriously interfere with parents' employment. Employer-based private insurance covers a minority of poor children, even after they leave the cash assistance rolls. The longer families are off the cash assistance rolls, the less likely they are to be covered by health insurance of any kind.

Furthermore, Angel noted, a larger fraction of Mexican-American children lack coverage than children in other groups. Poor dual-parent households are less likely than single-parent households to be covered and relatively few caregivers are covered by Medicaid once their families leave the cash assistance rolls. The more children there are in a household, the more likely it is that some will not be covered by any form of health insurance. In addition, Angel discovered from the ethnographic data that there is a great deal of "churning" during which, depending on the employment and marital status of the caregiver as well as lapses in Medicaid coverage, there are periods when the child is not covered at all.

COSSA will prepare edited transcripts of the session, which included a lively question and answer period. These should be available by the end of the summer. If you would like a copy, please e-mail cossa@cossa.org.

## 'PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH DEPARTMENT CHANGE'

On June 7, the American Sociological Association (ASA) convened a one-day conference of nationally recognized experts in education and diversity to discuss its Minority Opportunities through School Transformation (MOST) program and explore ways to replicate the program's achievement in other academic departments and other institutions. A prepublication edition of a report about the MOST program, *Promoting Diversity and Excellence in Higher Education Through Department Change*, scheduled for release in August, served as the basis for discussion.

According to ASA, the eight-year-old program has significantly increased the number of minority students getting sociology degrees as a result of institutional change. ASA conceived the MOST program with an intention of altering the practices at colleges and universities.

"MOST is unique among diversity-related projects because it focused on the academic department as the instrument of systemic, institutional change," said Felice Levine, former Executive Officer of ASA and key architect of the program. "Departments have the capacity to initiate curriculum changes, recast the academic climate in which majors learn, make deliberate choices about mentoring, and conduct their own recruitment and training," she added.

According to ASA, the 11 departments participating in MOST made significant and lasting change by addressing five key elements of the educational process: curriculum, research, mentoring, climate, and the pipeline.

At the participating institutions the percentage of minority students graduating in sociology increased from 18 to 33 percent over the course of the program. When MOST started, only 25 percent of the institutions' sociology courses dealt with diversity issues. By 2000-01, according to the report, more than 50 percent of the courses dealt with these issues. Similar results were reported with respect to minorities on the faculty: an increase from 22 percent in 1993-94 to almost 30 percent in 2000-01.

ASA hopes to "transport" the MOST program to other institutions and disciplines. While designed for sociology departments, "the program's lessons for those engaged in promoting diversity in higher education are relevant to all departments, to faculties in other fields and disciplines, to college and university administrators, and to the public and private foundation community."

The 11 participating institutions are: Augusta State University; the University of California, Santa Barbara; Grinnell College; the University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Pennsylvania State University; Pitzer College; the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez; Southwestern University; Texas A&M University; the University of Texas, El Paso; and William Patterson University. Best practices identified by the departments' experiences included: important curricular change can occur deliberatively, yet incrementally; student engagement is essential; minority recruitment requires intentional outreach and persistence; multi-year, long-term projects can make lasting changes in the culture and mindset of a department; and department chairs, department committees, and other university administrators must be engaged in the process of reform in order to achieve lasting change.

## COSSA STAFF UNDERGOES CHANGES

COSSA is pleased to announce two changes recently made to its staff.

John Wertman has been appointed the new Associate Director for Public Affairs, replacing Chris Ryan, who has moved to California. Wertman joined the COSSA staff in February of 2001 as Assistant Director for Government Relations. (See *Update*, February 12, 2001). His new duties will include editing *Update* and covering education issues, agricultural issues, and the Census.

William Tatum has been hired to fill the Assistant Director position. He recently earned a Bachelor of Arts in Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, College Park. During his final semester, he held an internship in the Mayor of Baltimore's office, where he worked on the development of the Johns Hopkins University Biotech Park. He will assist COSSA's lobbying efforts, provide research support, and manage the office.

## COSSA CO-SPONSORING BRIEFING ON TERRORISM

The American Political Science Association, the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Sociological Association, and COSSA will co-sponsor a briefing entitled *Reactions to Terrorism: Attitudes and Anxieties* on June 18 from 11:45 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Room 2325 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The event is being held under the guise of the Decade of Behavior, a multidisciplinary initiative stretching from 2000-2010 to focus the talents, energy, and creativity of the social and behavioral sciences on meeting many of society's most significant challenges.

Scheduled speakers are Michael Traugott, Professor and Chair, Department of Communication Studies, and Senior Research Scientist, Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan, who will give a talk entitled *Six Months Later: American Attitudes and Beliefs Changed by 9/11*; Len Lecci and Dale Cohen, Professors, Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, who will address *Anthrax Fears: Determinants of Perceived Health Risks*; and Mansoor Moaddel, Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, Eastern Michigan University, who will focus on *The Impact of 9/11 on Value Orientations of the Islamic Public in Egypt*.

To RSVP, please contact Alison Wilkins of the APA at (202) 336-5934 or awilkins@apa.org.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the sponsoring agency for further information. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

### National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeltal and Skin Diseases

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeltal and Skin Diseases is seeking applications (RFA-AR-02-011) to organize a workshop that will gather behavioral scientists, clinicians, and basic scientists with shared or overlapping interests to discuss the state of science in the area of rheumatic diseases and to suggest a research agenda. The workshop should be designed to: 1) enhance interdisciplinary communication; 2) promote new collaborations; and 3) attract investigators who are new to research in the rheumatic diseases.

A letter of intent is due by October 16 and the application receipt date is November 14. Inquires are encouraged. For more information please contact Deborah N. Ader, Behavioral and Prevention Research Program, at (301) 594-5032 or aderd@mail.nih.gov.

### Mobility Limiting Disorders

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeltal and Skin Diseases, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke are jointly seeking research grant applications that will improve the quality of life for people living with mobility limiting disorders. The program announcement (PA-02-111) is specifically seeking applications that focus on managing the physical symptoms and psychosocial consequences that occur as the result of the primary or secondary condition.

For more information please contact Karin Helmers, Office of Extramural Programs, NINR, at (301) 594-2177 or karin.helmers@nih.gov.

### SAMHSA National Suicide Prevention Technical Resource Center

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released guidance for applicants (GFA No. SM01-012) on a cooperative agreement to establish a national suicide prevention technical resource center.

The Center will facilitate outreach to stakeholders (survivors, clinicians, advocates, scientists, and Federal, State, local, and tribal organizations) through provision of information and technical assistance in suicide prevention program planning and in implementation and identification of best practices. It will also play an important role in advancing a comprehensive and coordinated, innovative national suicide prevention effort, as outlined in the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action*, released in 2001 and available on the web at http://www.mentalhealth.org.

Applications may be submitted by public organizations, such as units of State, county, or local governments; by Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and by domestic private nonprofit organizations such as universities, colleges, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and hospitals. These may include consortiums/partnerships of organizations brought together for purposes of this GFA. Because of the multifaceted demands and requirements of the project, SAMHSA encourages applicants to considering forming strategic alliances with partners who bring the range of specialized talents, experience, and skills needed for development of a state-of-the-art center.

Approximately $2.5 million is available per year for this project, which will last three years. Applications must be received by July 24. For more information please contact Robert DeMartino, Center for Mental Health Services, SAMHSA, at (301) 443-2940 or rdemarti@samhsa.gov.