



COSSA

Washington UPDATE

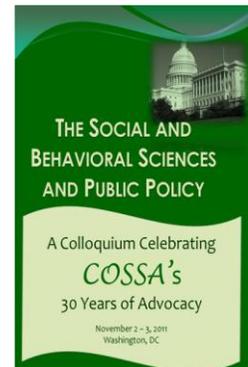


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COSSA HOLDS 30th ANNIVERSARY COLLOQUIUM AND CELEBRATION

On November 2 and 3, the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) held its 30th Anniversary Colloquium and Celebration in Washington, DC. The largest audience in COSSA meeting history heard talks from key federal officials and distinguished social scientists.

The day began with a welcome from COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver in which he explained the organization's origins as an advocacy group - the need to fight severe cuts proposed by the Reagan Administration in 1981 to the social and behavioral science budgets at the National Science Foundation and elsewhere in the federal government. He also noted that in the subsequent 30 years, COSSA has dealt with five presidential administration and sixteen congresses.



Mann: Political Landscape

Tom Mann of the Brookings Institution, who served as the first chair of COSSA's Executive Committee, gave the keynote address examining the political landscape of the last thirty years. He also congratulated COSSA for becoming "a serious Washington player" through its advocacy for the social sciences.

Reflecting on a theme that would be repeated throughout the colloquium, Mann suggested that the past 30 years have seen the enhancement of the social and behavioral sciences (SBS) with increased respect and more interaction with other sciences. Although new assaults on the SBS sciences remain part of the political landscape, they are mainly idiosyncratic in character and less systematic than they were in the late 1970s and early 1980s.



Turning to the overall political picture, Mann noted that the emphasis on shrinking budgets, particularly for domestic spending, will have a much more profound effect on the SBS than specific assaults on those sciences. The budget situation has been exacerbated Mann suggested, by the problems of the U.S. political system, including the utter dysfunction of one branch of our government, notably the U.S. Congress.

Although the seeds for the difficulties with the political system were planted in the 1960s and 1970s, it took a long time for them to flourish. This has led to unprecedented current levels of pessimism in the country and the lowest levels for "trust in government" in the many years that phenomenon has been

measured. The current level of approval for Congress is at eight or nine percent, Mann indicated, expressing surprise that it is that high!

He cited the example of the Debt Ceiling Crisis as unprecedented “hostage taking” and the “worst, irresponsible episode” of policy-making in his over 40 years of watching Washington. “It’s worse than it looks,” Mann suggested. He also told the crowd not to take the Deficit Reduction Committee (or Super Committee or Gang of Twelve as it is also known) too seriously. “We are not about to reach a Kumbaya moment,” Mann declared, since we have a “political war going on in Washington,” with a take-no-prisoners approach. He, as well as observers from abroad, is also aghast at the current nomination contest in the Republican Party.

What has led us to this point in our political system? Mann explained that there is a mismatch between a party system that is ideological, parliamentary, and homogeneous, and a governance system that is based on separation of powers, with established norms that leads to compromises. In addition, in this era, majorities do not rule and extreme partisanship and polarization dominate. In Mann’s view, the Republicans have become an “insurgent, radical, conservative, outlier” party. What also makes this era so difficult, Mann bemoaned, is that facts, evidence and science are sacrificed for the need to challenge the legitimacy of the political opposition.

How does it end someone in the audience asked? Electoral change is one way to alter the situation, Mann indicated, and suggested at the moment the chances of the Republicans controlling the Presidency, House, and Senate after the 2012 contests are 50/50. Perhaps, a more radical one, he pronounced, is institutional alterations, such as changing into a parliamentary system, where party homogeneity is expected, but so is party accountability.

Suresh: Seamless Integration of Sciences the Key

Kicking off the second day of the conference, National Science Foundation director Subra Suresh spoke about the “relevance, importance, and centrality” of the social sciences and the “seamless integration of the social sciences with the natural science and engineering” as the key to the science future.



The importance of the social sciences, Suresh asserted, comes from science’s role in meeting the needs of society and from the new globalized culture and its breakthroughs in telecommunications and transportation. A technologically advanced society needs the social sciences for examining social networks and enlarged human interconnectedness exemplified by the upsurge of cell phone usage in Suresh’s native India and the recent explosion of Facebook and Twitter users. The social sciences are necessary, the Director declared, for examining the real time data networks NSF supports and for explaining the response of people to tornado warnings that NSF-supported Engineering Research Centers are producing.

Suresh noted that we remain in a new “era of observation” with new equipment and tools where the scale can range from large telescopes exploring the universe to MRI machines helping to examine the psychology of the human mind. He suggested that with access through the Internet, these observation tools allow for the era of citizen-science, where some experiments can take place outside of the ordinary laboratory settings.

It is the “era of data, information and communication,” Suresh pronounced. Reiterating what he noted above, Suresh expressed concern that this complicates science. With unfettered, un-peer reviewed research appearing from many sources, separating fact from fiction gets more difficult. Extracting knowledge may become easier through open access, but at the same time it raises issues of cybersecurity, privacy and confidentiality, he remarked.

Focusing on another difficulty - an era of constrained resources - Suresh stated that NSF would remain focused on its core principles. Aside from supporting excellent basic scientific research, that would

include a continuing focus on human capital development, by building the pipeline of students from K-12 to graduate school.

He also declared that it is a “myth that you cannot do new things without new money.” He reported that NSF has announced a number of new initiatives recently, including the NSF Innovation Corps and Science Across Virtual Institutes (see Update, [October 10, 2011](#)), and the Career-Life Balance Initiative.

Citing the adage, “never let a crisis go to waste,” Suresh proclaimed that it was also time to go back to basic things, such as preserving disciplinary support, while simultaneously identifying cross-cutting themes. He particularly liked the report, *Rebuilding the Mosaic*, produced by the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate. Noting that it resulted from a call to the community for suggestions for future research that resulted in over 250 White Papers, he made clear that the recommendations in the report “resonate with NSF strategic thinking.”

Suresh further indicated that in the 21st Century science and engineering must address and understand “the human condition” and that “anyone with talent anywhere in the world can impact science and engineering without traveling.”

He concluded that NSF has produced enormous economic and social value through its support for almost 200 Nobel Prize winners and many others. As he noted, when Henry Gladstone asked Michael Faraday what good were scientific inventions, Faraday told Gladstone that one day he will tax it.

In response to a question about the seeming lack of respect by policy makers for evidence and science, Suresh urged the crowd to stress the importance and excitement of discovery and to speak in a more forceful “unified voice” for science and its results.

Marrett Reviews Ecology of Social Science Research

Speaking at lunch on day one, NSF Deputy Director Cora Marrett, reviewed the Ecology of Social Science Research. Marrett has also served as NSF Acting Director, and is the only person to ever lead two of NSF’s Directorates - Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) and Education and Human Resources.

Marrett began by quoting Henry Riecken, the first head of NSF’s Office of Social Sciences, who argued that “...the growth of support for social science at NSF was not the direct result of social scientific achievements as such, much as we might wish it otherwise. It was the result of strong external support for the program on the part of respected advisors, a rising budget ... a degree of skill at administrative politics within the agency, and the fact that, in the first decade or so, grantees committed no serious gaffes or egregious offenses...”



She then reviewed the “influence of philanthropy on the emergence of systematic research in the social arena.” Philanthropic organizations usually sought to affect policies and generate reforms, but they have contributed to other areas over the years. From the contributions of the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Fund that helped the Social Science Research Council get off the ground, and the important roles of Carnegie, Ford, and later Russell Sage, as David Featherman and Maris Vinovskis pointed out, philanthropic organizations promoted the development of “reliable tools for the collection of social, political, and economic data for the analysis of social change.” The Foundations in the 1920s and 30s, Marrett asserted, also helped move political science, economics, and sociology away from arm-chair theorizing to empirical investigations.

The importance of the Foundations continued into the 1960s until the Great Society programs led to the significant involvement of the federal government in supporting social science research. Although much of the research involved evaluations of these new programs, many social scientists made strong arguments for funding by suggesting that they could help resolve the pressing social issues of the day.

Meanwhile, Marrett recounted, at the NSF the Office of Social Sciences evolved into two divisions of the new Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences Directorate. Eventually in 1991, then-director Walter Massey, with significant input from COSSA and others in the community, created the SBE.

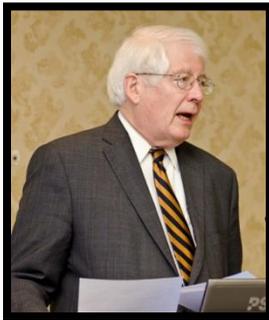
She pointed out that “Leading voices for the social sciences called for NSF to support fundamental or basic research in these fields” and that such an orientation seemed resonant with the commitment of the agency to discoveries at the frontier. However, she noted, “some observers contend that the limited success of social science for policymaking had led researchers to retreat to academic work and policymakers to turn to other sources of information.”

Marrett then turned to the current situation for the social sciences at NSF. Although, she noted, “the growth in the stature of and funding for the SBE directorate has been remarkable,” that funding must be spread across an array of areas, particularly interdisciplinary activities. This creates difficulties in simultaneously supporting the tools, models, and infrastructure fundamental to progress *within* fields.

She concluded her remarks by highlighting the government’s science infrastructure, including the President’s Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST) and the National Science and Technology Council’s inter-agency committees. She acknowledged that the lack of social scientists on these bodies “could affect not only policy but the fate of given disciplines.” At the same time, she acknowledged the current budgetary difficulties facing all sciences, suggesting “we are not alone.”

Marrett saluted the “vibrancy” of the SBE community, its “unwavering commitment to excellence,” and COSSA’s role “in recognizing the importance of networks and relationships.”

Congressman Price Surveys the Current Legislative Scene



Representative David Price, a political scientist by training, has represented the Fourth District of North Carolina since 1986 (with a hiatus in 1995-97). Participating in a panel on the “Challenges for Social/Behavioral Sciences in the Deficit Driven Federal Budget Climate,” Price surveyed the current situation in Congress.

He declared that there are currently “two games in town” with regard to the legislative body. One is the annual appropriations process and the other is the Deficit Reduction or Super Committee. He indicated that in both, Congress is “grinding through” to some conclusions. What those conclusions will be, he is unsure.

Congress again did not complete appropriations work on time for the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1. So, the Senate has moved three bills through the floor in a Minibus (as opposed to an Omnibus, where all twelve spending bills are in the same legislation). The National Science Foundation (NSF), relative to other agencies, appears to have had a “reasonably good outcome” from Price’s perspective. Since the Commerce, Justice, Science bill, of which NSF is a part, is part of the Minibus, there is a high likelihood that the agency will get its FY 2012 budget significantly earlier than the April 2011 completion of the FY 2011 appropriations process.

On the other hand, Price noted that the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill, which includes funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), “has been treated badly.” In the House, the bill was never marked up even in Subcommittee, but simply had spending figures declared by the Subcommittee Chairman Denny Rehberg (R-MT) (see Update, [October 10, 2011](#)). Although NIH fared alright in the House bill, Price noted “compared to what?” NIH’s “win” was dwarfed by the austere outcomes for labor and education programs important to the economic recovery and future economic security. Price added that both NIH and NSF received considerable funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009.

The Congressman asserted that he believes the Super Committee is “off target” with its emphasis on immediate deficit and debt reduction. He argued that improving the current economy should take precedence over long-term concerns. That is why, he explained, he supports the recovery measures embodied in President Obama’s jobs bill. He also indicated that he cannot understand the “political malice” demonstrated by some of his Republican colleagues in the House and their support for “pre-Herbert Hoover economics.” He clearly opposes the obsession with “indiscriminate cutting” that some of them have endorsed.

The long-term fiscal balance is important, Price admitted, but he suggested we know how to get to a balanced budget. It was done in the 1990s, in a bipartisan way under President Bush I in 1990 and without Republican support in 1993 under President Clinton. However, the surplus that resulted was squandered in the first ten years of the 21st Century by two unpaid for wars, tax cuts, and a prescription drug program. Pessimistic, he suggested that an effort similar to the 1990s is “impossible” in the current political climate.

The long-term needs investment in public education, community college training, infrastructure, and the research enterprise, Price argued. He hopes the Super Committee can recommend a balanced revenue and spending plan, but he is not optimistic.

Responding to the same question asked Tom Mann about what it will take to end the current toxic politics, Price cited polarization in the country and the political strategy of cultivating the base as impediments to improvements in the political atmosphere. He also put some stock in the election and the hope for some new way. He concluded that despite differences between the two parties in the 1990s and Republican control of Congress, action was taken in the interests of the country and “important things got done.”

Appearing on the panel with Rep. Price were: John Laub, Director, National Institute of Justice (NIJ); Wendy Baldwin, President of the Population Reference Bureau; Ruth Lee, Research Councils U.K., U.S. office; and Michael McPherson, President of the Spencer Foundation.

Laub: How NIJ is Coping with Austere Budgets

Laub discussed with the audience the role of NIJ—the research, development, and evaluation center within the Department of Justice (DOJ). He noted that its mission is to advance research that is rigorous and scientifically sound, but also relevant for state and local practitioners.

As he has on other occasions, Laub outlined his vision for NIJ, which includes making the organization a leader in scientifically-based research on crime and justice. Like all agency heads, he would like more resources to fully integrate NIJ’s three “bedrock” sciences: Social Sciences, Forensic Sciences, and Physical Sciences. Developing an innovative, cutting-edge research agenda and improving the diffusion of scientific knowledge to the field are another part of Laub’s vision for the agency. He emphasized what he called translational criminology, applying the knowledge created to the current problems facing the criminal justice system.



With regard to coping with the current austerity situation, Laub reported that it has good, bad, and ugly ramifications. The Bad and the Ugly include the current uncertainty surrounding agency budgets that makes planning impossible; the continuing carving out of certain parts of the NIJ budget which produces less discretion to promote the best science; too much time spent on trivial items like responding to sensationalized newspaper pieces about conference costs (the erroneous \$16 muffin story); and the resulting decrease in staff morale.

The Good is that austerity has led to the establishment of a new Office of Research Partnerships to explore inter-agency arrangements with DOJ cooperation, such as activities with the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. It has allowed some focus on “natural experiments” that are occurring, like the court-forced reduction in California state prison populations.

Lee: the UK Austerity Experience

Lee explained that the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the United Kingdom’s (UK) major supporter of studies in those sciences, has already had to cope with budget restraints and that its new “delivery plan” for the next five years emphasizes “excellence with impact.”



The ESRC budget for 2011-12 is approximately \$203 million pounds, represented a 12 percent cut in real terms to the Program budget and a 23 percent cut in real terms to Administrative costs. Yet, the ESRC remains committed to investing in long-term infrastructure, training the next generation of research leaders, and producing research in areas of major national importance.

The cuts have led, Lee indicated, to “corporate strategic decisions.” These include: making economic and societal impact central to the activities; focusing on three strategic priorities; streamlining existing funding opportunities and focusing resources on longer, larger grants; introducing a demand management strategy; protecting core investments in international data infrastructure; expanding collaborative activities with the private sector and international partners; and contributing to interdisciplinary research programs across all of the UK’s research councils. One of the consequences of the cutbacks is the elimination of the small grants program.

The three strategic priorities that the ESRC will emphasize include: Economic Performance and Strategic Growth, Influencing Behavioral and Informing Interventions, and A Vibrant and Fair Society. The ESRC will continue to fund 21 doctoral training centers.

On the demand management side, the goal, according to Lee, is to reduce the number of grant applications in half by 2014. Fewer grants will get full peer review as a sifting process that will rely more on triage by program officers is instituted. Furthermore, resubmissions will be an invitation-only process. Although there has been some thought given to quotas and sanctions, that step has not been taken.

If budgets continue to decline for U.S. science agencies, the ESRC experience may offer guidance for coping with significant cuts in the near-future.

Baldwin: Challenges to the Social Sciences are a Fact of Life

Baldwin focused on the challenges to social science in times of austerity. She suggested that the social sciences are different from others in times of deficits, since it seems more challenging to get the message across about what we do, why and what the benefit is. However, these challenges are not limited to times of tight funding and should be a part of social science thinking regardless, she said.

She did not believe these times were significantly different from usual, rather she pointed out “challenges are a fact of life.” The three challenges for the social sciences are: they are familiar, which is a blessing and a curse; there is a thirst for metrics that are often not appropriate for social science research; and researchers are not typically trained in how to convey research findings to non-research audiences.



On the familiarity problem she argued to: address it head on, “own” the problem, and be explicit. “Science tells you which conventional wisdom applies under which circumstances,” she declared.

With regard to metrics, she warned against too much reliance on randomized control trials (RCT), suggesting they are usually ill-suited to social science, especially if you are interested in policy change. Things that make RCTs useful - narrow, linear, singular - are not what policy change is all about, she asserted.

Finally, Baldwin expressed great interest in whether social media was going to better allow researchers broadcast their message to the public and help anchor people in evidence. This remains part of the research agenda, she suggested.

McPherson: Leveraging by Foundations and Governments

For McPherson the social sciences have always faced the dilemma of the “urgency of the agenda” with “inadequacy of resources.” Thus, the social sciences are always searching for ways to develop “leveraging” in funding.

This is where the foundations come in. The Federal Government, McPherson suggested, wants foundations to support their agenda; he cited as an example the Department of Education’s role with Spencer on the Investment in Innovation fund.

At the same time, foundations want the Feds to help them pursue their agendas. He indicated that in recent years, some foundations - Lumina and Gates - have moved away from the exploration of alternative ideas, which guided foundations in the past, and into advocacy for changing policies.



There are risks in this, McPherson concluded, in that you can lose the pluralistic, decentralized voices that help move us in the right direction.

COSSA President Ken Prewitt ended the session by declaring that he admires the European science system that focuses on the “human sciences” and assists with the seamless integration NSF Director Suresh spoke of. He agreed with many of the speakers who made clear that “making sense of the human condition” was going to be a major focus of the next 30 years.

Contributions of Social/Behavioral Sciences to Public Policy

A lineup of distinguished social and behavioral scientists appeared on a panel to discuss the contributions of the social and behavioral sciences to public policy. The speakers were: **Charles Schultze**, Senior Fellow Emeritus at the Brookings Institution and former COSSA President; **James Jackson**, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and a former COSSA Board Member; **Al Blumstein**, Professor of Urban Systems and Operations Research at Carnegie Mellon University and a former COSSA President; **Roberta Balstad**, Senior Research Scientist, Senior Fellow, and former President of the Center for International Earth Science Information Network and COSSA’s first Executive Director; and **Norman Anderson**, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President of the American Psychological Association and first director of the National Institute of Health’s Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research.

Schultze: Economics and Economic Well-Being



Schultze focused on the contributions of economics to economic well-being. He suggested that “very often that contribution is a negative one.” This happens, Schultze indicated, because economists use the large body of economic knowledge to help “weed out the large volume of ill-thought-through proposals on economic matters that bubble up in administrations of all hues.” Furthermore, economists are often “engaged in trying to convert fifth-best proposals into second or third best.”

The proposal screeners in the government, Schultze noted, are the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) and an Office of Management and Budget “stocked with economists.” In addition, the Congressional Budget Office and its economists “provide evidence about a proposal” to the legislative body.

Delivering this advice does not come, as former CEA Richard Schmalensee put it, from “offering opinions honed to perfection in years of academic work. Rather it is learning about an issue quickly, inhaling some relevant literature, applying some basic price theory and common sense, and thinking about how to express the core ideas involved in a few sentences to a lay audience.”

Schultze argued that: “Over the past three to four decades the ability of economics, and other social sciences to contribute to public policy has been enormously strengthened not only by the advances in computer technology but also by the huge increase in the quantity, quality and availability of relevant data, through public use micro-data sets, longitudinal panels and other forms of structured data.” The availability of these data has made it “easier for policy makers to demand evidenced-based policy decisions,” he noted.

Schultze reviewed the examples of macroeconomics and the “Tragedy of the Commons,” to illustrate how the economics profession has helped and, in the case of the current situation, hindered public policy responses. Macroeconomists have had success in mitigating the magnitude of the cyclical swings in the American economy, Schultze asserted, and the Federal Reserve Board, led by economists, has played an important role in controlling inflation. Yet the failure to “recognize and warn against the dangerous developments in the financial sector” in recent years, Shultz remarked, led to the recent crisis, its attendant recession, and the slow recovery.

With regard to the “Tragedy of the Commons,” Schultze focused on the damage to the environment caused by emissions of carbon from the use of fossil fuels. These emissions, from the point of view of economists, represent “real costs to society.” Therefore, it is important to “Getting-the-Prices-Right,” so that those creating these pollution costs should pay. He discussed the possibility of a carbon tax on companies that pollute and a cap-and-trade policy. However, strong political opposition to tax increases makes it unlikely that we will see a “Getting-the-Prices Right” policy in the near-term future, Schultze concluded.

Jackson: the Changing Nature of America’s Black Population

Jackson reported on the results of two studies he has directed over the past thirty years. One was the National Survey of Black Americans conducted in 1979-80 and the other the National Survey of American Life in 2003, which was a follow-up to the earlier survey.

Jackson discussed what he described as the “Four Eras of Racial Subjugation” in the U.S. First, there was slavery during which “total control over people from Africa was exercised by private industry abetted by the government for purposes of economic growth and the development of the country.” The second era was DeJure Segregation in which discrimination against Blacks continued based on a set of legal tenants and national and state laws. The third era was DeFacto Segregation, maintaining relative differences between Blacks and others based on social conventions and sometimes violence, especially in the South, as well as a set of unwritten beliefs and behaviors manifested in the North. Finally, Jackson argues, today we are in period of Status Quo Subjugation, where the feeling is that the

civil rights legislation of the 1960s “emancipated” lacks and created a “signal” of equality between the races, but Blacks are still subject to oppressive activities. He called it an era of “Don’t Know, Don’t Tell.”

The surveys, Jackson indicated, were undertaken “to inform public, policy makers, business leaders and academics about the continuing negative circumstances facing African Americans at the beginning of the 21st century,” and “to develop effective strategies and public policies that address the circumstances of the African American population in this new, greatly diversified nation.” Jackson wanted to encourage the development of ongoing demographic, economic, social and policy relevant studies that addressed the nature of the African American population.

He pointed out that there are two concepts of race: biological and social. Jackson argued that biological racial characteristics cannot explain the group differences that occur in the U.S. “Social processes must play a major role,” he declared. Thus, disparities in demographic, economic, and social resources remain as the U.S. is becoming more unequal in the distribution of economic resources and more racially and ethnically diverse. “Blacks remain materially disadvantaged and geographically segregated,” he announced.



Looking back at the Civil Rights Revolution of the 1960s, Jackson suggested it “was primarily about citizenship rights for Blacks.” In the four decades since the Civil Rights Revolution, Jackson acknowledged, there has been a substantial social and political integration of Blacks indicated by more Black-white intermarriage; suburbanization of Blacks and declines in racial residential segregation; and substantial increases in number of Blacks elected to office. Yet, he contended, there has been very little narrowing in: A) Educational Attainment; B) Earnings and Income; and C) Overall economic status. *Blacks overall remain almost as far behind whites as they were in the 1960s* (emphasis Jackson’s).

The other phenomenon occurring, according to Jackson, is the increasing heterogeneity of the “Black” population. We see this, he stated, because of the immigration from Africa and the Caribbean, the self-referencing as multi-racial, and the socio-economic class distinctions that have developed. This has led, Jackson concluded, to the “decline of the Black imagined community.”

What this means, Jackson asserted, is that “in the 21st century we need to focus our empirical studies on Blacks more on the heterogeneity produced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, immigration and other conditioners of life.” Finally, “we must develop effective strategies for this society to make social and political changes for this, and the next, generation of Black Americans -- who after all comprise one of our oldest groups of American citizens,” Jackson declared.

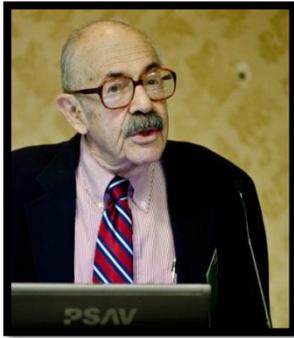
Blumstein: Social Science Research and Crime Control

Blumstein reviewed the contributions of criminology research, which he proclaimed “impressive in light of limited resources.” He indicated that the implementation of the research into policy has been “strongly affected by the political environment,” and the ever-present “tension between science and ideology” with regard to crime.

The public, he noted, is always concerned about crime. Over the past thirty years specific types of crimes, such as those related to drug markets in the 1980s, or sex-related crimes, have led to demands on the political system “to do something.” Although focusing resources on early-age prevention might have more of an effect, Blumstein contended, the usual response has been to increase incarceration.

The research, Blumstein argued, has produced significant results in our understanding of crime trends, usually retrospectively, by examining variables such as demographics, drug markets, and incapacitation effects. He explained that the increased incarceration of the 1990s accounts for only about 25

percent of the current crime drop, adding that crime has gone up during periods when incarceration has gone up as well.



Studies of longitudinal patterns of offending, Blumstein asserted, have taught policy makers a lot about criminal careers - when they start, when and why they desist, the frequency of offending, and trends in the seriousness of the crimes. The studies show that prison “capacity” is wasted after a certain amount of time.

In examining deterrence, crime researchers have discovered that sanctions affect crime, but crime also affects sanctions. There is strong research, he indicated, on certainty vs. severity of sanctions. It is much better to increase certainty through better policing than increasing severity through long prison sentences or policies like three strikes and you’re out.

In recent years, there has been a lot of research on prisoner’s post release. Significant attention has been paid to the concept of “re-entry” and the question of whether prison is criminogenic or rehabilitative. There are findings supporting the former idea, but imposition of drug treatment programs, begun in prison and continued in the community, has helped rehabilitation, he pointed out.

Another concept - celerity - the idea of rapid response, has also been identified as another dimension of deterrence. The HOPE program introduced in Hawaii, which includes weekly drug tests on random days and immediate back-to-jail punishment for failure, is considered the key example of this concept and is now undergoing replication in other places in the country.

Studies of police management practices have identified “hot spots” as accounting for a very disproportionate amount of crime and have led to changes in police tactics. The introduction of computer-assisted analyses such as COMPSTAT in New York City has provided a way for police commissioners to hold their commanders responsible. This further led to hiring analysts, many of them social scientists, to work in police departments.

There have been many longitudinal studies that have provided insights into juvenile delinquency and the risk and protective factors involved, as well as the follow-up and re-analysis of 1930s data to identify factors contributing to desistance.

Blumstein concluded by noting the appointment by current Attorney General (AG) Eric Holder of a Scientific Advisory Board for the Office of Justice Programs. A Board that Blumstein chairs. He sees this as significant in that the charge to the Board from the AG was “to inject perspectives of science into the DNA of the Justice Department.”

Balstad: the Social and Behavioral Sciences and Global Environmental Change

Balstad addressed the group “on the changes that have taken place in the conception of what constitutes scientific research on climate change over the past 30 years; the response of the social and behavioral sciences to these changes; and how the social and behavioral sciences might position themselves to make a significant scientific contribution to this field.”

She reviewed the growing scientific interest in climate change in the 1980s and 1990s with the development of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP) and the US Global Change Program (USGCRP). Following these efforts there was the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was producing summary reports of current scientific understanding of climate change every five years, and whose contribution was recognized with a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

During the early period the research efforts were mainly in the physical and earth sciences and gradually became interdisciplinary as collaboration with biological, biogeochemical, and ecosystem

scientists increased. However, she indicated, “for the first two decades...there was only limited collaboration with social scientists.”

This would change, Balstad explained, “as climate change scientists increasingly recognized the anthropogenic origins of many, if not most, forms of global change, physical and natural scientists increasingly found themselves looking to the social and behavioral sciences.” These scientists needed information on such broad topics as human consumption and preference, legal and regulatory influences on behavior, decision making under uncertainty, agricultural and engineering modifications of the natural landscape, and other topics. This has led the International Council of Science, she reported, to establish a new interdisciplinary program, the Earth System Sustainability Initiative, which they see as the next stage in global environmental and climate change research. “Social science is at the core of this program,” she asserted.

In the U.S. the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has appointed a committee to analyze their use of social science throughout the agency and asked it to identify how the social and behavioral sciences can better contribute to improving the agency’s work, both scientifically and procedurally.

The problem has been, Balstad noted, social scientists have often been reluctant to join this transformation of climate change research where their contributions are now necessary. There was the feeling that the research is dominated by physical and natural scientists with social scientists in subordinate roles. In addition, some social scientists were reluctant to engage in social engineering in the climate change arena by providing climate scientists with research on how to change human behavior. She finally identified the lack of adequate funding for social and behavioral scientists interested in climate change as a barrier.

These barriers have to give way, she insisted, because “we are faced with extraordinary opportunities today for social and behavioral science research on climate and environmental change.” As this issue looms even larger on national and international agendas, the opportunities for social and behavioral science in both interdisciplinary climate research and in sustainable development will expand even more, she noted. “It is not too much to suggest that, like physics in the decades following World War II, and biology in recent decades, the social and behavioral sciences will emerge in future years as the key sciences of our time,” she pronounced.

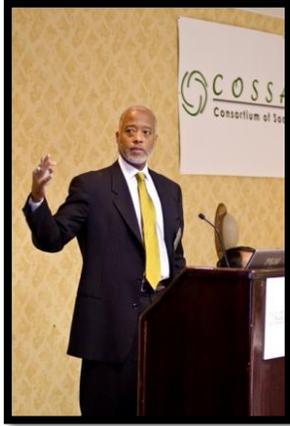


She suggested that interdisciplinary training of social and behavioral scientists working in this area would need enhancements leading to “research scientists whose backgrounds combine the human, physical, and biological sciences to address these issues.”

Finally, she encouraged the audience and COSSA to seek to persuade all federal science agencies, even those that have not previously funded research in the social and behavioral sciences, to increase their support for these sciences as well as increasing financial support for data collection on human behavior and climate impacts.

Anderson: Health and Behavior Research

Anderson began his talk by noting that there has been a lot of research on the relationship between health and behavior during the past 30 years. There has also been a considerable amount of health-related legislation and policy. Determining whether there was a causal relationship between the two, however, is “challenging.”



The starting points for examining this relationship, Anderson explained, were the tables illustrating the “leading” and “actual” causes of death in the U.S. The “leading” causes are the diseases of the heart, brain, lungs, and the other organs of the body we usually connect with mortality. The notion of the “actual” causes focuses on behavioral and environmental factors such as smoking, poor diet and physical inactivity, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual activities, toxic agents, and motor vehicle fatalities. He more closely examined the contributions of behavioral and social research on tobacco, motor vehicle accidents, and prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

The research on tobacco use has included: Etiology of tobacco use (e.g., interpersonal, familial, and environmental influences); Nicotine dependence (e.g., social, environmental, behavioral, and biological factors); and Smoking prevention and cessation (includes research at the individual, community, and policy levels).

Public policies have focused on: Product Regulation Policies; Limitations on Product Marketing; Support for Effective Counter-Marketing and Public Education Campaigns; Clean Indoor Air Laws and Restrictions; Initiatives to Increase Demand for, Access to, and Use of Proven Cessation Treatments; and Tax and Price Increases. The last one comes from economic research that has demonstrated that increasing the price of cigarettes has led to declines in consumption, particularly among young adults and kids.

Motor vehicle accidents remain the leading cause of injury-related death and death among persons aged one to 24 years of age. The research has studied: Agent factors (vehicle safety); Host factors (driver/passenger characteristics and actions); and Environmental factors (road and highway design and conditions). These have included: driver’s perception and cognition; social psychology of driving; driver state of mind; driver education and training; public information campaigns; traffic law enforcement; driver improvement and rehabilitation; and road and vehicle design.

The research has led to: with regard to the vehicle - head rests, steering wheels, safety belts, more resistant windshields; with regard to the driver/passenger - driver’s licensing; drunk and distracted driving laws; use of safety belts and child restraints; and with regard to road and highway factors - delineation of curves, use of breakaway sign and utility poles, improved illumination, addition of barriers separating oncoming traffic lanes, and guardrails.

Speaking of HIV/AIDS prevention, Anderson suggested that theory-based strategies that used providing information, shaping of attitudes, norms, self-efficacy, motivation, and building behavioral skills produced changes in behavior that resulted in decreases in infections and deaths. Those behavior changes included: reductions in unprotected sex, increased condom use, decreased infections, reduced number of partners, reduced frequency of injections, reduced overall drug use, reduced drug/sex trading, and increased drug treatment.

Anderson concluded that: “Our scientific contributions to public policy have been significant yet...strong scientific evidence is often a *necessary, but rarely sufficient*, condition to produce evidence-informed public policies” (his emphasis). He stressed, therefore, the importance of the continuing education of policy makers by social and behavioral scientists about the important contributions and the need for research funding.

Looking Ahead: New Tools, New Areas for Research

After spending the morning of the first day looking back over the past thirty years, the afternoon featured a panel that explored new tools and new areas for research in the social and behavioral sciences. Speakers were: **Robert Groves**, director of the U.S. Census Bureau; **Myron Gutmann**, Assistant Director for the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate and a former COSSA President; and **Robert Kaplan**, Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR).

Groves: Data Futures for the Observational Social Sciences

Groves made five observations that he said are driving the future for measuring human and societal activities:

- The difficulties of measuring the busy, diverse, and independent American society and economy are increasing every year;
- The demands by American business, state, local, and community leaders for timely statistics on their populations are continually increasing;
- New technologies are being invented almost daily that can be used to make it more convenient for the American public to participate in these efforts to inform us about the status of the country;
- New digital data resources are being created both from Federal-state-local government programs, private sector transactions, and internet-related activities; and
- Near-term Federal government budgets are likely to be flat or declining.

Thus, he contended “current practices are unsustainable.”



The sample survey, which Groves postulated was “the most important invention of the social sciences in the 20th Century,” is in trouble. There are falling participation rates, threatened sampling frames, and increasing reliance on nonresponse adjustments, all of which have led to substantially increased costs.

At the same time, the digitalization of data throughout the world continues to grow, particularly for administrative data. In addition, improved record matching and continuous time process data have also become a larger part of the package. Furthermore, the growth of organic data such as Google searches, “scraped” data from websites, tweets, closed-circuit TV images, retail scanner and credit card information, all provide new sources for study. These organic data examine behaviors, often in real-time, but they are lean in variables, and incomplete on coverage of the usual populations.

So what does the future hold? Groves suggested that the U.S. might “approach a blended data world by building on top of existing surveys.” This would involve multiple modes of data collection and acquisition such as: Internet behaviors; administrative records; Internet self-reporting; telephone, face-to-face, paper surveys; real-time mode switch to “fill-in” missing data; and real-time estimation.

The attributes for this vision, he indicated, were: 24-hour cycles on mode-switch, imputation, and estimation; empirical stopping rules for continued self-report efforts; and statistical modeling to combine survey data with external, relevant other digital data, which would all lead to reduced costs and increased timeliness.

In approaching this data future, the social sciences, Groves concluded, have to figure out answers to the following: Will “organic data” replace the designed data of surveys, given their low cost? Will new

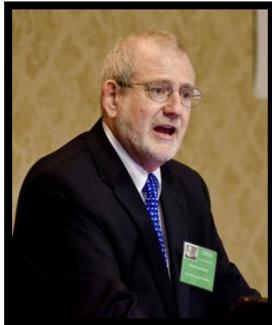
blends of organic data and designed data emerge? Will survey researchers blend or will IT masters add “designed data” to organic data? Whither “designed data”?

Gutmann: Rebuilding the Mosaic

Gutmann discussed the new *Rebuilding the Mosaic* report (see part A of Update, [November 7, 2011](#)) just released by NSF. The report, Gutmann noted, pronounces that “Research in the SBE sciences is increasingly collaborative, multi- or interdisciplinary, data intensive, and frequently problem-oriented.”

SBE scientists are, according to Gutmann, highly engaged with fundamental problems, fascinated by big and deceptively simple questions, eager to undertake interdisciplinary research and training and less focused on disciplinary science for its own sake.

Not only do these scientists examine basic questions such as what is consciousness and how do we make choices, Gutmann remarked, but they help address contemporary problems such as giving Americans healthy lives, making the most of new technology, building responsive and adaptable governance structures, and producing economic growth and jobs.



In looking ahead for SBE, Gutmann suggested the expansion of interdisciplinary programs accompanied by the establishment of a new standing interdisciplinary review panel. This would also result in a “regular review of existing programs” that could “challenge existing communities” and “promote opportunities for new communities.”

He identified four cross-cutting candidate topics: (1) population change; (2) disparities - health, civic engagement, income and wealth; (3) communication, language, brain, behavior; and (4) new technology, social media, and social networks. He assured the audience that this list “is a beginning, not an end.”

The Report also commits SBE to more training support, including interdisciplinary education at all career stages, more diversity in the SBE workforce, and more data training. In addition, it emphasized that the SBE needs to address the issue of infrastructure. It is time, Gutmann and the report argue, for a new generation of data and other infrastructure. These might involve a new household panel, more coupled human-environmental data, embedded geospatial information, linguistic data, and digitized cultural heritage collections.

He challenged the audience to “dream big about science,” to “build community support for new data and infrastructure,” and to “help us see and execute on opportunities across directorates, agencies, and national boundaries.”

Kaplan: NIH Behavioral and Social Research and Exposomes

Kaplan began by outlining NIH’s structure and organization before proclaiming that OBSSR “covers a lot of turf.” The Office’s mission is to: stimulate BSSR throughout NIH’s 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs); serve as NIH’s lead for BSSR within and outside the federal government; develop and implement a trans-NIH plan to increase the scope and support of BSSR; develop initiatives (research and training) designed to foster BSSR; and fund research *through* the NIH ICs, not directly, making collaboration of paramount importance to OBSSR’s mission. In FY 2010, NIH reports it spent \$3.53 billion of non-stimulus funds on behavioral and social sciences research.

He discussed the OppNet, NIH’s cross-institute opportunity fund for basic research in the behavioral and social sciences. All ICs are contributing funding that reached \$12 million in FY 2010, \$10 million in FY 2011 and may get to \$20 million eventually.



Kaplan then went on to focus on the theme of “accelerating discovery through new technology.” This included using devices to “bring the lab to the people.” As a result, Kevin Patrick of the University of California, San Diego, is now examining what he calls the “exposome,” (as opposed to the genome). In the exposome environmental factors such as diet, physical activity, environmental exposures, and psychosocial stress and addictive substances combine with genetic variants to determine whether disease occurs or health is promoted.

The data problem rears its head here too. Kaplan quoted Christopher Paul Wild who has said: “There is a desperate need to develop methods with the same precision for an individual’s environmental exposure (and behaviors) as we have for the individual’s genome.” Kaplan suggested that notepad devices and Mobile phones might come in handy to help satisfy Wild. In addition, implantable biosensors operated remotely by a PDA could continuously measure metabolism and discover any abnormalities. Cell phones have also been helpful in measuring dietary intake. With new apps one can calculate calorie and nutrition values in real time.

Measuring physical activity in parks through the use of merged GPS and activity data is another opportunity to explore the exposome, according to Kaplan. It also allows researchers to examine whether small neighborhood parks are more helpful for promoting activity than large regional parks.

What will be required in the future, Kaplan asserted, will involve moving well beyond the “electronic medical record” as we know it. New research designs will need development; Randomized Control Trials will not be able to keep up, he declared. New levels of data fusion and synthesis that are multilevel, multidimensional, and spatial/temporal are also required. In addition, researchers will need to explore new approaches to handling privacy of health-related information, health data security, and health technology design and experience.

Finally, Kaplan asserted that we have to do a better job of helping patients make medical decisions. Patient surveys have revealed that most do not have sufficient factual information, leading them to make decisions in the “face of avoidable ignorance.” The need to develop patient decision aids is imperative. A Cochrane Collaboration review indicated that they provide greater knowledge, more accurate risk perceptions, lower decision conflict, greater participation in decision-making, fewer people remaining undecided, and fewer patients choosing major surgery.

The Concurrent Sessions

Changing Demographics and Immigration Policy

Linda Jacobsen, Vice President of Domestic Programs at the Population Reference Bureau, moderated the panel on Changing Demographics and Immigration Policy. Adding to the informative discussion were **Richard Alba**, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center; **William Frey**, Senior Fellow at Brookings and Research Professor at the University of Michigan Population Studies Center; and **Michael Olivas**, William B. Bates Distinguished Chair of Law and Director of the Institute of Higher Education Law & Governance at the University of Houston.

Jacobsen began the discussion with a basic sketch of foreign born populations in the United States noting facts such as while 92 percent of Latino children living in the US were born here, only about half of the total U.S. Latino population was born here. About 25 percent of children live in an immigrant family (a family in which at least one



parent is foreign born). Before giving the floor to the panelists, Jacobsen noted that immigration is contributing to the substantial rise in diversity across the United States.

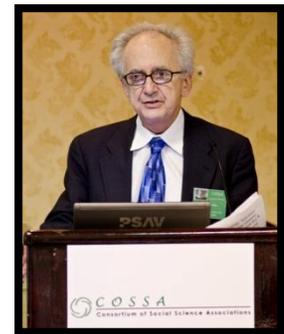


Frey examined the 2010 Census data to make his points. He noted that we've reached a pivotal decade for race relations in the U.S.—the white population is aging and we are seeing a bottom up change in diversity. By 2050, the U.S. will be 46 percent white and 26 percent of Americans will be over the age of 65—we are becoming an older and more diverse population. Fifty-five percent of population gains from 2000-2010 were from Hispanic families; there was actually a negative change in the number of white babies being born. The median age for the white population is 41, while it is 27 for the Hispanic population and 20 for people who designate themselves as more than one race. Overall, we can see from these numbers that our child population is getting decidedly more diverse, which will change our labor force in the upcoming years. Frey noted that diversity tends to begin in large

metropolitan areas and then trickle outward. Thanks to this growth, minorities should soon have a much bigger impact on national elections, according to Frey.

Alba drove home the point that diversity is increasing in not just the U.S., but throughout the Western World, noting that he expects substantial changes towards a more diverse and active population over the next quarter century. Well-educated and highly trained baby boomers will soon exit the labor force, and someone will have to replace this strongly native group. In some countries of Europe there will be an absolute shrinkage in the majority population. The challenge we face lies in integrating children of immigrants in ways similar to the children of natives. The education system is critical to this process, but as it stands now we see huge gaps in the education offered to the native population versus the one supplied to immigrant populations.

According to Alba, the U.S. is really not doing as well as other countries in integrating new immigrant groups. This seems strange because a short look back in U.S. history will show that we have managed to integrate immigrant groups before. The crucial period to this process was the 25 years after World War II—by 1970 Italian children had caught up in education which was a huge feat. This resulted in social integration with the mainstream white population and an increase in marriage across lines of race and religion. One thing to note about this period was that the astounding prosperity after WWII meant that many people could move up in the world without threatening the privileges of those at the top—college attendance rose by a factor of five. The decline in the majority will leave room for some similar growth and upward movement. However, there has been a great increase in wealth inequality, meaning that young people will have much further to climb. There is also much greater inequality in the education system—schools serving minority students are frequently inferior to those serving the majority.



Olivas took to the podium to first discuss international students. At any given time we have 1.4 million international students in the US—most on F1 visas for traditional college study. These students must be admitted to their studies program and submit timely paperwork. Sometimes students are deported for minor transgressions, an issue Olivas finds incredibly detrimental to the system. Olivas also noted that we have a longstanding practice of restricting high profile people from coming in—seeming to indicate that we have forgotten lessons from WWII when the European brain drain brought brilliant minds into the U.S. In fact our policies may result in a brain drain from the U.S., according to Olivas, as scientists will move their work to more tolerant regimes.

Olivas shifted focus to discuss children who would be eligible for the Dream Act, which would allow permanent residency for those who graduate from high school. He also argued for increases in faculty visas in high-end science and technology fields. According to Olivas it is clear that we need a robust immigration system; we are losing opportunities and other countries are providing alternative opportunities.

The SBE Sciences in STEM Education



Felice Levine, Executive Director of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), led the breakout session panel discussion on The Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) in STEM Education. Levine began the discussion by declaring “we are at a crossroad of opportunity” with the increased national focus on STEM education.

That increased focus, however, has not translated into gains for the SBE sciences. Steve Breckler, Executive Director for Science at the American Psychological Association (APA), argued there were many reasons why we should care about the social and behavioral sciences being excluded from STEM education. He cited the consequences of the marginalization of the SBE sciences:

- Failure to nurture a fully science literate public;
- Failure to bring the full forces of all our resources to bear on the world’s problems and crisis;
- Funding opportunities for social and behavioral science research will be lost; and
- Over the long-term the lost prestige will cause fewer students to enter SBE fields.

Breckler also asserted that he believes harm has been done by the National Research Council (NRC) and the President’s Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (CPCAST), whose reports did not include the SBE fields as part of STEM education.



One of the major hurdles the SBE fields face in their inclusion in STEM is that they often are not taken seriously as a “real” science. Shirley Malcom, Head, Education and Human Resources at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), stated code words are often used such as “hard” and “soft” sciences. Malcom said these code words are really meant to say our science is mathematically based and yours is not. According to Malcolm, SBE fields are considered soft because they are believed less rigorous and easier than other sciences. But she countered SBE sciences “are just more tenuous and receptive to change since we are the science of human beings.”



Despite lack of inclusion in STEM, some progress is underway to figure out how to include SBE in K-12 science education. The National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Education are currently working on a nine-month feasibility study to determine whether a framework for the social and behavioral sciences, similar to the SBE-less Framework for Science, could work. As Robert Hauser, Executive Director of the NRC’s Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE), pointed out many of the things that comprise the science framework could apply to the social and behavioral sciences and the process used to create the SBE framework is similar to the process followed by those who created the

science framework.

As part of this process, Hauser announced that the National Academies’ Board on Science Education is holding a planning session “Teaching the Behavioral, Social and Economic Sciences in K-12: Possible

Options and Next Steps,” on November 17-18. More information can be found at http://www7.nationalacademies.org/bose/Behavioral_Social_Sciences_BSS_Homepage.html.



According to Hauser, part of the problem of including SBE in K-12 is the lack of curriculum, teachers prepared to teach SBE subjects, and the overall decline of instruction time as a result of the increased focus on math and reading. He cited that science instruction has been declining in pre-high school grades mainly due to No Child Left Behind. He pointed out that with only so many minutes in the day, the larger question is how to integrate behavioral and social sciences into the existing curriculum.

And while there are discussions among various groups about how to integrate SBE into the school day, during the Q & A session Sally Hillsman, Executive Officer of the American Sociological Association, asked the panel what evidence do we have that state governments even are interested in including SBE in their K-12 curriculum? Malcom replied “I can guarantee you they don’t want them. Some of it is there is no time in the day, but it goes much deeper than that.” So it remains to be seen that if a framework is adopted, how many states will actually sign up.



“Changing the system will take a long time if we do this and then that and then this, in the mean time there are children in schools right now,” said Malcom. She called for more experimentation and the quick implementation of changes we know will work to better educate our students. “Our timelines don’t really track with the urgency in this country. I have a sense of a lost generation,” said Malcom.

Materials handed out during the session are available at:

Behavioral And Social Sciences In Stem (Science, Technology, Engineering And Mathematics) Education A Workshop Summary (July 2010) http://obsr.od.nih.gov/pdf/STEM_workshop_final_032511.pdf

Psychology as a Core Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Discipline Report of the American Psychological Association 2009 Presidential Task Force On the Future of Psychology as a STEM Discipline (June 2010) <http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/stem-discipline.aspx> .

A Report to the National Science Foundation: Education and Training in the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences: A Plan of Action (May 2004) <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED484209.pdf> .

Presentation of Founders Awards



The 30th Anniversary celebration included the presentation of four COSSA Founders Awards to: **Ken Prewitt**, who in 1981 as the President of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) spearheaded the response to the Reagan Administration’s proposed severe cuts for social and behavioral research, and who is COSSA’s current President; **Tom Mann**, who in 1981 was the Executive Director of the American Political Science Association and who became the first Chairman of the COSSA Executive Committee; **Roberta Balstad**, COSSA’s first Executive Director, who





came to the organization from her post as head of the SSRC Washington office; and **John Hammer**, who in 1981 was the Executive Secretary of the Linguistic Society of America and who subsequently joined the COSSA staff.