
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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WILL BUDGET DEAL CONSTRAIN CONGRESS IN 1988?

The second session of the 100th Congress convened on January 25. After listening to the President's State of the Union address, lawmakers began work on the INF Treaty, further funding for the Contras, and other leftover pieces of business such as the Civil Rights Restoration Act and the nomination of Judge Anthony Kennedy to the Supreme Court. With the administration's FY 1989 budget due out on February 18, it will be some weeks yet before the much-maligned budget process begins anew.

The usual leaks about the proposed budget suggest good news for such agencies as the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, NASA, and the Department of Education. In fact, we are hearing so much good news that we are beginning to wonder where cuts and deletions will be made. If the Congress is going to follow the budget deal agreed upon last November, these proposed increases will swiftly fall by the wayside without considerable rearrangement of priorities.

That budget deal set limitations on the total spending for defense programs and non-defense discretionary programs (all items in the budget excluding entitlements, defense and interest on the debt). The increase allowed for non-defense discretionary

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The Consortium represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community.

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programs from FY 1988 to FY 1989 is about \$3 billion or approximately 2%. As one appropriations committee staffer has noted, "non-defense discretionary spending has become a zero-sum game." To increase one program, others must be diminished. Since Congress seems disinclined to establish spending priorities and would rather work with across-the-board reductions, the chances of big increases for programs are slight. Sources suggest there may be two significant exceptions to this: AIDS research funding and programs to help the homeless. For other program increases, in the words of a budget committee staffer, "The revenues are simply not there!"

Two other factors may also impact on this year's budget process. There are already indications that the budget deal's deficit reduction projections may be off. The Congressional Budget Office has already suggested the deficit for FY 1988 will be about \$30 million above the budget deal's assumptions. If this is true, will Congress feel the need to make further cuts to meet the assumed target for FY 1989? The other factor: an election year will make Congress reluctant to reduce funding for programs. Most have argued that non-defense discretionary programs have already been reduced and the only place to get real reductions in funding are in the entitlement programs, and that means social security. The other alternative is to increase revenues. The deal commits Congress to finding \$14 billion in new revenues for FY 1989. To go beyond that figure will require major new tax legislation (such as an oil import fee or a national consumption tax) or raising the heretofore sacrosanct tax rates from the 1986 Tax Reform Act. Highly unlikely in an election year.<<

NSF APPROPRIATIONS CUT: NO S&T CENTERS FUNDING IN FY 1988

Faced with a \$176 million reduction from the FY 1988 budget request, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has decided to postpone funding the new interdisciplinary Science and Technology Centers program until FY 1989. (See Update, November 20, 1987 for a description of the proposed program.) The Foundation proposes to continue reviewing the Center proposals it received by the January 15 deadline throughout 1988 and to present those Centers chosen for funding by the review process to the National Science Board in August 1988. However, no awards will be made until at least October 1988 (the start of FY 1989).

The budget constraints have not stopped NSF from embarking on the proposed internal reorganization discussed recently in these pages (Update, December 11, 1987). The Foundation has proceeded with its reorganization of the Behavioral and Neural Sciences Division and implemented the new Instrumentation and Resources Division within the Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences Directorate. With \$30 million saved in FY 1988 from the proposal for Science and Technology Centers, the rest of the reductions from the Foundation's FY 1988 request will be taken, for the most part, through proportionate reductions across the research directorates.<<

FOREST SERVICE PLAN TO FURTHER INCORPORATE SOCIAL SCIENCES

From traffic jams in national parks to "Smokey the Bear" campaigns, public interest in natural resource management has soared in recent years. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service is among the agencies hoping to meet the needs created by this phenomenon. Fortunately, Forest Service leaders appear to be turning to their social scientists for help.

Every two years, Forest Service social scientists hold a workshop to discuss current challenges the agency faces and ways to meet these challenges. The last such workshop, held in April 1987, resulted in a "social science action plan" whose recommendations have the support of Forest Service leaders, according to Arnold Holden, Chief of the Social Impact Analysis Branch. Based on workshop discussions compiled by Lambert Wenner, Holden's predecessor, the action plan notes, "The social sciences offer special methods, knowledge, and expertise that are useful in planning, decisionmaking, and program implementation." Forest Service personnel are encouraged to further the use of social science data and methods in the agency.

The plan offers a list of goals for FY 1988 and specifies personnel committed to attaining them. It also offers a vision of the Forest Service in 1997, compiled from a "futuring" exercise at the April workshop, and also outlines steps needed to make the vision a reality. Because the plan sets priorities and coordinates activities within the current structure, little or no additional funding or personnel will be needed to accomplish its goals, according to Holden.

Support for the plan is evident in the higher echelons of the Forest Service. Jeff Sirmon, Deputy Chief for Programs and Legislation, said he supports the plan's recommendations and will give it his official approval shortly. He noted in an interview with COSSA that before he approves the plan, he will strengthen its language "to make it more evident that the social sciences have a very permanent place in the agency," adding "We've come a long way in recognizing the value of social scientists and the fact that there are a lot of social science resources" at the Forest Service's disposal.

Central to the plan's recommendations is a desire to integrate social science methods and findings into Forest Service management, and thereby improve the agency's ability to deal with an increasingly interested public, according to Holden, a sociologist. He added that because the 20 or so Forest Service social scientists are a very small percentage of the agency's workforce, the plan was designed to make the most of the social science resources available. He said budgetary constraints have blocked the hiring of additional social scientists, and he doubts the situation will improve in the near future. However, a large number of Forest Service employees have social science backgrounds in a variety of disciplines; here, said Holden, lies an important resource--one that the Forest Service should tap into. Sirmon seconded Holden's observation.

The plan recommends demonstrating "the growing importance of social science to effective formulation and implementation of Forest Service actions." To meet this goal, it recommends the Forest Service identify management issues that social scientists can help resolve and for which they can provide needed data. To accomplish this, the plan recommends, among other things, that the Forest Service: plan and administer a focused survey to identify social issues critical for Forest Service management; review appeals and other records and identify areas where social science would have helped or did help in the past; and develop a strategy to enlist the support of "socially aware" administrators in using social science applications to avoid and solve problems. The plan also recommends that social science knowledge, achievements, and potential applications be shared with a wider circle of key personnel. Related activities would include the revision and distribution of a social science network directory; publication of a semi-annual Forest Service social science newsletter; and joint ventures with the Society of American Foresters to extend and expand university forestry curricula.

The plan also calls for an increase in long-term involvement of agency social scientists and a strengthening of their sense of professionalism. The plan suggests that this goal can be met in part by providing training in social impact analysis and related methodologies. It also recommends more career options and promotional opportunities for social scientists and greater recognition of social science achievements. The deadlines for implementing most of these actions are set for the fall of this year, having been pushed back several months because of the the Wenner-Holden transition.

The action plan describes a Forest Service in 1997 that will routinely use social science information and social scientists in the decisionmaking process. It also envisions selection of Forest Service leaders who have a broad understanding of the social aspects of management and decisionmaking. To accomplish these ends, the plan recommends that the Forest Service classify more jobs and modify current ones as interdisciplinary; increase training in nonprimary disciplines to broaden their base; increase exchanges of expertise between the Forest Service and universities; track emerging issues that social scientists should address; and create interdisciplinary groups to deal with those issues.

Dennis M. Roth, chief historian in the Forest Service Public Affairs Office, spoke positively about both the workshops and the resulting plan. Roth said he and others who attended the workshop came away "enthusiastic" about the continuing role of social science at the Forest Service.<<

Please note: The next issue of Update will be the annual budget analysis issue ("FY 1989 Budgets for Social and Behavioral Science Research"). It will be published on Friday, March 4.<<

PEACE INSTITUTE STREAMLINES APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURES

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has "streamlined" its grant application review procedures in order to facilitate the review process. According to Kenneth Jensen, Director of Grants Program at USIP, the new procedures will enable members of the USIP Board of Directors (who review grant applications) to focus on the most competitive proposals.

As in the past, applications will be assigned to committees of USIP directors for initial review. But under the new process, the committees will divide applications into two categories, "P" (possible award) and "N" (noncompetitive). Provided an application receives at least one "P" rating, it will be reviewed and acted upon in committee and discussed by the full Board. The system will weed out noncompetitive applications at a preliminary stage, thereby providing the Board more time to concentrate on truly competitive proposals. If the past is any indication, roughly one-fifth of the applications the Institute receives could be considered noncompetitive, according to Jensen.

Even proposals unanimously rated "N" in committee can be taken up by the full Board. Any Board member not on the initial review committee may request that an application be discussed, despite its rating; the Board will then reassess any application which initially failed to receive a single "P" rating. In any event, the full Board of Directors must formally vote on all applications, irrespective of their initial ratings or committee recommendation.

Robert Conlan, Executive Director of the National Peace Institute Foundation, characterized the changes as "definite improvements." The old review system was becoming "increasingly unworkable" as reviewers became bogged down in studying many applications that were not competitive, said Conlan, whose organization monitors USIP activities. "The most important thing now is to try to increase the amount of high-quality grant applications," he added.

The Institute has also announced that its recently-designated "Ethics Officer" must be notified of all instances where directors, officers, or employees recuse themselves from the review process because of a possible conflict of interest. Likewise, anyone within the Institute who believes that he or she may have a potential conflict of interest regarding review of a grant proposal must bring the matter to the attention of the Ethics Officer. Jensen said that "formalizing" the position demonstrates USIP's desire to review grant applications fairly. Conlan, whose organization has in the past been among those expressing concern about potential conflicts of interest, concurs. Institutionalizing the position of ethics officer "will really add to people's confidence that proposals are being looked at objectively," he said.

The position of the USIP Board regarding outside review of applications has also been clarified. Any board member may request peer review, which in the future will always be conducted

by at least two reviewers--one a specialist in the relevant field and a second from another field. Conlan applauded this move, noting that board members tend to be lawyers and diplomats rather than social scientists, and therefore not always in the best position to review an application without outside advice. Conlan said he hopes that in the long run, a formal peer review system for grant applications will be established, enabling the Board to concentrate on matters of policy. In the meantime, the announced changes are a step in the right direction, he said.

The USIP program priorities remain the same, but the Institute has changed its address. All correspondence and applications should now be sent to: 1550 M Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708; the new telephone number is 202/457-1700.<<

ON DECK: CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

If your thirst for national celebration has not been slaked by the recent bicentennials of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the centennial of the Statue of Liberty, and next year's bicentennial of the founding of Congress, you are no doubt already gearing up for the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's journey to the New World in 1492. The United States government certainly is, as the creation in 1984 of the Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission demonstrated.

The Commission is charged with encouraging, planning, coordinating, and conducting the U.S. side of the commemoration of the voyage of 1492. Headquartered in Washington, DC, it includes the secretaries of State and Commerce, the Librarian of Congress, the Archivist of the United States, the chairmen of the National Endowments for the Arts and for the Humanities, and 24 public members. The Commission is funded by a modest Congressional appropriation and is not yet in a position to offer grants as such, but it gives its equivalent of the 'Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval' to projects judged to be contributing to the commemoration of Columbus's voyage of discovery. Projects are evaluated by the Program Committee, chaired by historian William H. McNeill, on the basis of their educational, historic, and cultural value and their contribution to increasing public awareness of the Quincentenary. This imprimatur takes the form of the honorary designation "Official Quincentenary Project."

What does this designation mean? One Official Quincentenary Project is "Indian Agriculture in the Americas in 1492," a three-volume work on indigenous agricultural techniques up to the time of Columbus. For project director William Denevan, a professor of geography at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the Jubilee Commission's identification was both part of a larger need to further public interest in and awareness of the meaning of the Columbian expedition for indigenous peoples, and a possible aid in obtaining further funding for the project.<<

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COSSA provides this information as a service, and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for further information or application materials. A comprehensive listing of federal funding sources is contained in COSSA's Guide to Federal Funding for Social Scientists.

Office of Human Development Services

The Office of Human Development Services (OHDS) announces its FY 1988 Coordinated Discretionary Funds Program. The funding priorities are created by the four OHDS branches; below we focus on research programs authorized under the FY 1988 program.

● Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF)

The ACYF offers research support under two priority areas, child abuse and neglect and child welfare. The programs funded under child abuse and neglect include: Longitudinal Study for Child Abuse and Neglect (up to \$50,000 for 12 months); Impact of Investigations (research to determine if and why high-risk families turn to child protective services agencies; up to \$150,000 per year to 3 years); and Field-Initiated Research for Child Abuse and Neglect (policy-oriented child abuse and neglect research; \$150,000 per year to a maximum of 3 years). The child welfare research programs are: Longitudinal Cohort Study for Child Welfare (up to \$50,000 for 12 months); Synthesis of Child Welfare Evaluation Research Studies (up to \$40,000 for 12 months); and Research Study of Intensive Family Services (up to \$250,000 per year to 3 years).

● Administration on Aging (AoA)

The AoA is seeking proposals for the following priority research areas: Field-Initiated Research on Community Based Systems of Care (funding for 3 to 5 projects for up to 2 years at a maximum of \$200,000 per year); and Research on Native American Aging (up to 3 one-year projects will be funded at a maximum of \$100,000 per project).

Restrictions on Awards: All of the budgets cited above are subject to a 5% minimum nonfederal-funds match.

Application Materials: Available from the OHDS or in the Federal Register, December 30, 1987 (vol.52 no.250), pp.49298-49306.

Deadlines: All programs under the OHDS FY 1988 Coordinated Discretionary Funds Program have a March 18 deadline.

Contact: DHHS/OHDS Office of Policy, Planning, and Legislation
Division of Research and Demonstration
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