
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume VIII, Number 20
November 3, 1989

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CONFEREES REDUCE NSF FUNDING; DEADLOCK LEAVES SEQUESTER IN PLACE

Figures reported in the October 20 UPDATE as FY 1990 appropriations for the National Science Foundation (NSF) have undergone and may still undergo substantial revision as Congress continues to stumble down the budget road. The significant increases reported earlier may vanish by the time the budget season ends. In addition, the limited protection from budget reductions afforded the social and behavioral sciences in the House committee report (see UPDATE July 28, 1989) did not survive the conference.

After allocating FY 1990 funds to federal agencies under its jurisdiction, the House-Senate conference committee on the VA-HUD-Independent Agencies bill proceeded to reduce all accounts in the bill by 1.55 percent. The cuts were designed to help pay for a collection of anti-drug measures and to keep the bill within its budget allocation.

As a result, the research and related agencies account at NSF was reduced by \$26.6 million to \$1.688 billion, a 6.2 percent increase over last year. But with the addition of \$37.5 million in FY 1990 funds allocated in the FY 1989 supplemental appropriations bill to rebuild the radio telescope and an extra

COSSA Washington Update is published 20-24 times per year by the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), 1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 836, Washington, DC 20005 (202/842-3525). Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$50.00; institutional subscriptions, \$90.00; overseas airmail, \$90.00. ISSN 0749-4394. COSSA members, affiliates, and contributors are listed on the back cover. Update is written and produced by the Consortium's staff: Howard J. Silver, Stacey E. Beckhardt, Joe Thorndike, and Katrina R. Styles-McDowell. 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.

\$3 million for earthquake research included in the second FY 1990 continuing resolution, the NSF research account increases to \$1.729 billion, a 9.2 percent increase over FY 1989. The science and engineering education appropriation was reduced \$3.3 million to \$206.7 million, still a 20.8 percent increase over last year; and initial funding for the facilities program was reduced \$310,000 to \$19.7 million; the separate account for the inspector general's office is slightly reduced to \$2.5 million.

As mentioned, Congress passed another continuing resolution (CR) on October 25 that will run until November 15. The CR keeps government agencies running at last year's funding levels. Meanwhile, the reconciliation bill remains mired in the muck of capital gains controversy and thus the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings sequester continues. The Bush administration is suggesting that a full-year sequestration would not be unwelcome. Some see this is a bargaining tactic to force the capital gains reduction, but others suggest it may be the administration's truly desired outcome. If sequestration does remain in place, NSF will receive \$1.4 million more in FY 1990 than it received in FY 1989. Research would go up \$7 million, while science education would go down \$2.3 million from FY 1989 levels.

In other appropriations news, President Bush vetoed the Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill on October 21 because of its liberalized abortion language allowing federal funding for abortions in cases of rape or incest. Four days later the House failed to override the veto. When push comes to shove, Congress may have to give in to the President in order to get the bill passed. Finally, the Commerce-Justice-State appropriations bill is back in the House following a dispute with the Senate over payments to Japanese-Americans interned during World War II.<<

BBS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

The status of social and behavioral sciences within the National Science Foundation (NSF) will be the subject of an upcoming meeting of the Advisory Committee for the Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences (BBS) Directorate of the NSF. At the conclusion of its October 23-24 meeting, the advisory committee agreed to the request of Indiana University psychologist Linda Smith that the next meeting of the committee be devoted to an examination of the social and behavioral sciences at NSF.

Smith, one of two social and behavioral scientists on the ten member committee (New York University sociologist Barbara Heyns is the other), specifically requested a discussion of issues raised by Carnegie-Mellon's Herb Simon in his testimony to the House Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee last March (see UPDATE March 17, 1989). Included in Simon's testimony was a proposal to create a separate NSF directorate for the behavioral and social sciences.

Smith also asked for a discussion of the recommendations of

increased funding for behavioral and social sciences advocated in the National Academy of Sciences report: The Behavioral and Social Sciences: Achievements and Opportunities. Assistant Director for BBS Mary Clutter agreed to put these items on the agenda for the next meeting (tentatively scheduled for March 19 and 20, 1990) and appointed Smith as chair of a subcommittee to develop the agenda.

At the October meeting, NSF Director Erich Bloch made a brief appearance before the committee to stress a theme heard in Washington more and more these days: that research universities are experiencing a growing separation between education and research, particularly at the undergraduate level, and that a need exists to reverse this detrimental trend. Bloch also discussed the NSF funding situation (see above story), the impact of the structure of NSF on interdisciplinary research, the need for the science community to get its house in order concerning misconduct and conflict of interest, and the importance of greater public (and congressional) understanding of science and engineering.

The committee also heard a report from Peter Raven, director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, who noted the need for study of the social and economic bases of the current biodiversity crisis, including its causes, consequences, and solutions. Also speaking was Frank Harris, executive officer of BBS, who reported on government-wide efforts to support global change research. As part of those efforts, NSF's Social and Economic Science Division has made ten awards totaling over \$640,000 for investigations, planning conferences, and workshops related to the human dimensions of global environmental change. Finally, John Moore, NSF deputy director, reported on the foundation's strategies for attracting minorities to careers in natural science and engineering. Clutter reported on a similar committee to help attract more women into these areas.<<

HEARINGS FOCUS ON QUALITY OF EDUCATION INFORMATION

Now that the euphoria of the Charlottesville education summit has worn off, how can the United States begin to think about national goals for educational excellence without access to data bases capable of assessing and supporting those goals? That was the main question behind two days of hearings held by the Senate Government Information and Regulation Subcommittee chaired by Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) on October 23 and November 1.

One of the outcomes of the summit was a commitment by the nation's governors to develop by next February a set of national goals for educational achievement. But according to Chester Finn, former assistant secretary of education for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and now chairman of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Governing Board, objectives are useless without a means to measure

achievement. "It little avails us to set objectives," he told the panel, "if we have no means of knowing, whether, when, and how well we are achieving them, whether we are progressing or regressing in relation to them."

The key, according to Ernest Boyer, director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is to develop ways of accurately measuring both student and school performance. While it appears that NAEP will be the vehicle for addressing student performance, Boyer argues that NAEP, which has been administered since the mid-1960s, has not served as a good measure of the nation's report card. It has, he contended, been infrequently administered and non-systematically reported.

In 1990 NAEP will develop, for the first time, state-by-state comparisons of student achievement on eighth grade mathematics. (Because the program is voluntary, however, only 38 states will be included.) While no doubt a step forward, such an improvement may not be enough; the 1987 Alexander-James report, "The Nation's Report Card," argues that NAEP should be administered in three subjects, in three grades, with state-by-state results, every two years. All the witnesses at the hearings acknowledged that we are a long way from that kind of systematic assessment.

While student performance is tough to gauge, assessing school performance will be even more difficult. Boyer advocated development of measures that would evaluate elementary school contributions to pre-school education, school attendance and completion rates, school climate (particularly the presence of drugs and violence), rewards for and morale of teachers, parent participation, and equity of school financing within states.

Emerson Elliott, acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, noted the strides his agency has made in collecting all kinds of education information. Yet despite significant budgetary increases, Gordon Ambach, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, contended that NCES is still under-staffed and -- compared to federal health and labor statistical agencies -- woefully under-funded. Lois-Ellen Datta from the General Accounting Office told the subcommittee that OMB's role in information clearance procedures under the Paperwork Reduction Act has also created difficulties in collecting education information (see UPDATE, October 18, 1989).

Bingaman was searching for a way to improve the federal government's commitment to carrying out the one major function it has always had in education since creation of the Office of Education in 1867: the gathering of information necessary to determine if the country is making progress toward educational excellence. The hearings made clear just how much remains to be done.<<

EDUCATION RESEARCHER CALLS FOR "NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF EDUCATION"

Education reform on the scale proposed last month by President Bush and the nation's governors will require a fundamental restructuring of federal support for educational research, according to Arthur E. Wise, director of the RAND Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession. In an October 26 appearance before the House Education Subcommittee on Select Education, Wise argued that the current organization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) is inadequate to the challenges posed by major education reform. Wise made his comments at a hearing convened to evaluate the proposed topics for the OERI National Research and Development Centers Competition.

"America's leaders are seeking non-incremental change in schools," Wise told the committee, "Incremental change in the educational R&D structure will not do." With OERI organized by function rather than mission, Wise said, there are no compelling research targets. Reauthorization hearings for OERI generally reflect a preoccupation with functions and administration rather than efforts to solve particular problems or reach sought after goals.

The solution, Wise said, is to create a set of mission-oriented institutes, each directed at a major educational goal or problem. Modelled on the National Institutes for Health, the education institutes would help "crystallize thinking about the needs of our schools," he said.

Imminent reauthorization discussion for OERI should focus on reconfiguring the agency along these lines with an eye toward creating five to seven institutes. Increasing the education research budget to 1 percent of the total federal education budget -- bringing research spending to around \$220 million, almost triple the current budget -- would allow funding for five institutes at approximately \$40 million each.

Each institute, Wise went on, should conduct programmatic research and development, but should also set aside 15 percent of its budget to be separately managed in a field-initiated-studies program. The total budget for such a program would be about \$33 million.<<

SENATE COMMITTEE EXAMINES NOMINEES FOR SCIENCE POSTS

The Senate is currently evaluating nominees for two of the four associate director slots at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Dr. J. Thomas Ratchford, nominated to be associate director for Policy and International Affairs, and Dr. James Wyngaarden, tapped to be associate director for Life Sciences, both appeared October 27 before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee.

Panel members spent more time grilling OSTP Director D. Allan Bromley than they did probing the nominees' views and qualifications. Acting Chairman Al Gore, (D-TN), used the occasion afforded by the hearing to question Bromley about his efforts to address the threat of global warming. Principally focusing on the international meeting on global warming to be held in the Hague next week, Gore and Sen. John Kerry, (D-MA), jostled with Bromley over U.S. willingness to act decisively on the issue.

When attention finally turned to the nominees, senators confined themselves to a few simple questions regarding their views on various matters. In response to a question from Sen. Richard Bryan, (D-NV), Wyngaarden noted the need for more information on human sexual behavior if spread of the AIDS virus is to be effectively curtailed. Such information is crucial to the development of effective prevention initiatives, he said.<<

ACADEMY RELEASES PUBLICATION ON RESPONSIBLE SCIENCE RESEARCH.

The National Academy of Sciences has released a new publication intended to reinforce an appreciation among graduate students for the mechanisms the scientific community uses to prevent research errors. Entitled "On Being a Scientist," the report is aimed at students about to begin a research career.

A decrease in contact between senior and junior researchers has weakened the generational transmission of values concerning scientific integrity, Academy President Frank Press notes in his introduction. Moreover, public awareness of science and technology has increased in recent years, thereby heightening the need to identify and uphold the procedures that prevent error and fraud.

The essay examines the nature of scientific research, including the treatment of data, the risk of self-deception, and peer recognition. The publication also describes the "social mechanisms" of science, such as the communal review of scientific results, the allocation of credit, and the credit and responsibility issues involved in communal research.

The publication argues in its conclusion that scientists have a responsibility to interact with the public. "Concern and involvement with the broader uses of scientific knowledge are essential if scientists are to retain the public's trust," the essay states. Non-scientists sometimes perceive science to be a "cold, impersonal search for truth devoid of human values," it continues, and counteracting these attitudes is an important task for researchers.

Copies of "On Being a Scientist" are available from the National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20418.<<

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL

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

Research on the Urban Underclass

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) administers a variety of grant programs for research on the urban underclass. One such program awards postdoctoral grants to scholars whose competence for research on poverty or related topics has been demonstrated by his or her previous work, and who hold a Ph.D. or has equivalent research experience. Members of minority groups and researchers in the early stages of their careers are especially encouraged to apply.

Numerous research topics are eligible for support through the program. Among the illustrations SSRC offers are: (1) the relationship between the persistence and spacial concentration of poverty and the consequences for children's development in different urban settings; (2) the differential ability of institutions, families, and individuals to respond to changes in employment, housing, and racial and ethnic composition within their communities; and (3) comparisons of the dynamics underlying the contemporary growth of concentrated urban poverty with the historical emergence of slums and ghettos in the United States and elsewhere.

Eligible Activities: Among possible activities are: (1) a program of research and training for young scholars conducted in consultation with researchers at their own or another institution where related research is already underway or where special resources are available; and (2) an independent research project conducted in the field or at the researcher's home institution that would permit either a re-analysis of existing data or the collection and analysis of source materials.

Budget: Four grants will be awarded in 1990, each providing a stipend of up to \$30,000 for one year of full-time research and an additional \$7,500 for research-related expenses.

Deadlines: Completed applications must be postmarked no later than January 10, 1990. Awards will be announced April 1, 1990.

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