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BBS TASK FORCE MEETS: SEPARATE DIRECTORATE ISSUE ON THE TABLE

The new National Science Foundation (NSF) advisory committee on the social and behavioral sciences met for the first time on September 10. From the start of the two-day session, most of the panel's social and behavioral scientists made clear that they were there to discuss a separate NSF directorate for the social and behavioral sciences. (For a list of the panel's members, see UPDATE, September 7, 1990.)

In greeting the committee - dubbed the Task Force Looking to the 21st Century - Acting NSF Director Fred Bernthal asked members to examine the need for restructuring NSF's Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences (BBS) directorate. Bernthal asked committee members to keep several thoughts in mind: 1) BBS must have the flexibility to meet new mandates; 2) BBS must meet the infrastructure needs of its disciplines; and 3) the zero-sum budget situation makes funding reallocations difficult.

Bernthal acknowledged the "ups and downs of funding for social science" in the recent past. He suggested, however, that improved support for economics research was important, specifically within the context of global environmental change research. Bernthal also called for increased attention to research in cognition, political science, and anthropology.

Clutter's Thoughts

Mary Clutter, assistant NSF director for BBS, provided the task force with an overview of her directorate's operations. In outlining important issues, Clutter mentioned the recently introduced Walgren-Brown bill but did not discuss the bill's call for a separate behavioral and social science directorate. Clutter seemed to dismiss the legislation, but the question of a separate directorate remains on the task force's agenda.

Steve Anderson of the Cognitive Research Center at Johns Hopkins University inquired about the April 1, 1991 deadline for the task force's final

report. (An interim report is due January 31.) Clutter responded that if any changes are going to be implemented for the FY 1993 budget (her goal), April 1991 is the date when planning for that budget begins.

Clutter concluded her presentation by suggesting "everything is possible, but the task force should focus on the implementable." By 2000, she predicted, NSF will look different, but attempts at radical change will be constrained by current NSF structure.

Division Directors' Reports

Roberta Miller, director of social and economic science (SES) within BBS, noted former NSF director Erich Bloch's view that SES was the "most controversial division at the foundation." In reviewing the history of NSF support for the wide range of the social sciences, Miller stressed the foundation's three-fold importance: 1) NSF is the most important source of funding for the disciplines; 2) the foundation is the only source for large-scale data collections; and 3) NSF is the only source for methodological research. The foundation also facilitates contact with research organizations in other nations, she said.

Miller went on to point out, however, that despite NSF's important role in social science research, the foundation's budgetary support has not been good during the past decade.

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Miller also drew attention to the role of "shadow programs" – cross-disciplinary, cross-directorate research initiatives such as that addressing the human dimensions of global environmental change – in enhancing NSF support for the social sciences. Miller also discussed the future of the large databases that NSF has supported for quite some time – the National Election Studies, the General Social Survey, and the Panel Study on Income Dynamics. Finally, she cited data from the Bowen and Sosa report on projected faculty shortages in the social sciences and humanities. The numbers, she said, suggest that the social sciences face substantial human resource needs.

Risa Palm, vice-chancellor for research and dean of the graduate school at the University of Colorado (and a former COSSA president), asked Miller if she favored a separate directorate for the social sciences. Miller replied that "it would be splendid to have a directorate," but noted the need to separate that issue from the consideration of enhanced NSF resources for social and behavioral science.

Nathaniel Pitts, acting director of the behavioral and neural sciences (BNS) division, described his division's history and structure, calling BNS a "bridge division" between the biological and social sciences. BNS, Pitts noted, receives more proposals than any other division within NSF, yet budgets during the past ten years have not reflected this large demand.

Echoing her earlier question to Miller, Palm queried Pitts about a separate directorate. Pitts said he had a "split brain," and suggested that a re-organization "cannot take all of us" into a separate directorate. As a neuroscientist, Pitts remarked, he

enjoys the theoretical byplay with biology and would be reluctant to place neuroscience in a different directorate.

Presentations were also made by the directors of the biological sciences divisions and the instrumentation and resources division. Task force member Nancy Cantor, a psychologist at the University of Michigan, asked if cross-directorate cooperation on inter-disciplinary research could occur. (Cantor's question is important since one of the arguments against separation has been the need to continue interdisciplinary research among biological, behavioral, and social scientists.) Bruce Ummiger, director of the cellular biosciences division, responded that considerable inter-disciplinary research occurs across directorates, mainly through the cooperation of program officers.

Frank Harris, executive officer of BBS, described his directorate's relationship with the rest of the foundation, particularly noting the \$5-6 million of social and behavioral science funding available outside of BBS. Such funding includes programs in arctic social science and cognitive research in the computer and information science directorate.

Following the division directors' reports, the task force was separated into five working groups:

- A. Organization for Cognitive, Behavioral, Economic, and Social Sciences – Risa Palm, chair;
- B. Organization for Biological Sciences – Judy Meyer, Department of Zoology, University of Georgia, chair;
- C. Infrastructure (Education, Equipment, Resources) – Julius Jackson, Department of Microbiology, University of Michigan, chair;
- D. Organization to Facilitate Scientific Change – Marvalee Wake, Department of Integrative Biology, University of California at Berkeley, chair;
- E. Defining a Unique Role for the Directorate – Michael Greenberg, Whitney Marine Laboratory, University of Florida, chair.

Separate Directorate Working Group

With five social and behavioral scientists and three biologists, Palm's group provided a forum for the separate directorate debate. Harold Morowitz (biology and natural philosophy, George Mason University) said the split made no sense to him, since it would leave social and behavioral science politically vulnerable. Richard Berk (sociology,

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University of California at Los Angeles) voiced wariness about discussing a separate directorate without any alternatives other than the present structure.

Greenberg asked where the boundaries for the behavioral sciences component would be drawn, a key stumbling block to separation. Cantor made clear that organizational structure does not preclude intellectual alliances, and Charles Plott (humanities and social science, Cal Tech) was joined by the other social scientists in stressing the internal diversity and uniqueness of the disciplines.

Palm convinced the working group to focus on several main issues: 1) alternative organizational structure with respect to future behavioral and social science research; 2) the role of the behavioral sciences in that alternative structure; 3) the internal diversity of the disciplines in that structure; and 4) reconciling support for cross-disciplinary research with support for "core" disciplinary research in any new structure.

In response to a request from Anderson, Clutter agreed to make a presentation on the current procedures for decision-making within the present BBS structure. Clutter also agreed to Berk's suggestion that the presentation include case studies illustrating how special initiatives within the directorate succeed or fail.

The other working groups also focused on information needs. Among the questions raised were: How does NSF measure the vitality of a discipline or program? (This question arose in the context of "sunsetting" - read, eliminating - programs.) Where is science hurting because of a lack of funds? (This query seemed to be a challenge to social and behavioral scientists to come up with justifications for increased funding.) How would interdisciplinary research be affected by structural changes? How do you develop a structure that can change as science changes?

What next?

The task force will reconvene from November 28 to December 1 to hear Clutter's presentation, take testimony from the scientific community, and meet in executive session. The panel is also expected to determine what it wants to include in the interim report. The task force will then meet again on January 7 to preview the interim report.

BUSH NOMINATES MASSEY TO HEAD NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

President Bush announced September 14 that he plans to nominate Walter E. Massey, a physicist from the University of Chicago, to head the National Science Foundation (NSF). Massey will replace former director Erich Bloch, who left the foundation in August.

Massey, a professor of physics, is also vice president for research at the University of Chicago. He is a former director of the Argonne National Laboratory and a past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). He currently serves on the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology and is vice president of the American Physical Society.

In comments to the *Washington Post*, Massey declined to specify specific goals for NSF but indicated an interest in focusing on the foundation's science and math education programs, both for youngsters and graduate students. During his tenure as AAAS president, Massey devoted considerable attention to science education.

Massey, a 1958 graduate of Morehouse College, received his Ph.D. from Washington University, St. Louis in 1966. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) is not expected to conduct hearings on Massey's confirmation until next year.

CAMPBELL NOMINATION CLEARS SENATE LABOR COMMITTEE

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) approved September 12 the nomination of W. Glenn Campbell to serve on the National Science Board. The nomination now awaits action by the full Senate.

Campbell, a former director of the Hoover Institution, was nominated by President Bush to serve out the unexpired term of White House science advisor D. Allan Bromley. Bromley resigned his spot on the board when he was named to head the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE PROVIDES LARGE INCREASE FOR NSF

A Senate subcommittee has approved a large budget increase for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The boost remains tentative, however, pending a budget agreement between White House and congressional negotiators.

In a September 13 markup, the Senate Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), approved \$2.364 billion in FY 1991 funding for NSF. The figure represents a 13.5 percent increase above NSF's FY 1990 funding. The House, by contrast, has already passed a 12.2 percent increase for the foundation; the original administration request was for a 14.4 percent hike.

The Senate subcommittee set NSF's research appropriation at \$1.745 billion. (By comparison, the House allocated \$1.732 billion and administration originally requested \$1.809 billion.) The research appropriation figure does not include \$22.3 million appropriated for the women and minorities programs in the Research Initiation and Improvement (RII) division, which were transferred from the research directorate to the new Education and Human Resources Directorate. (see UPDATE, June 1, 1990). The figure also excludes the \$99 million allocated, in a new separate appropriations line, for program development and management.

Like the House, the Senate allocated funding for NSF's facilities modernization program in a separate budget line. The program received \$20.5 million from the Senate committee, a slight increase over the \$20 million appropriated by the House and requested by the administration.

Congress continues to boost NSF education budgets above requested levels. The new education and human resources directorate, (including the women and minorities programs), will receive \$322.4 million, a 46.2 percent increase above FY 1990 funding of the old science and engineering education directorate. The House provided \$285 million for science education, not including the transferred programs. The administration sought \$251.0 million for science education, before the transfer.

Details from the committee report were unavailable pending markup by the full Senate appropriations committee. That markup is stalled while com-

mittee members await the outcome of overall budget negotiations.

SENATE PANEL OKs HUMANITIES ENDOWMENT REAUTHORIZATION

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), voted September 12 to reauthorize the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for five years. The legislation would also reauthorize the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute for Museum Services.

The committee's action is the most recent development in the year-long struggle over federal endowment funding. Critics have been trying to enact restrictions on the NEA's grantmaking process, charging that curbs are needed to prevent the funding of "obscene" or "objectionable" art. NEA supporters contend, however, that restrictions impinge upon the artistic freedom of grant recipients and threaten the integrity of the peer review system.

While NEH has not been the focus of criticism, many observers fear that restrictions on one endowment are likely to be extended to the other.

The Senate reauthorization bill features a compromise crafted principally by the committee's ranking Republican Orrin Hatch (UT). The bill would require NEA grant recipients to return any federal money if they are convicted of violating obscenity or child pornography laws. In addition, convicted artists could be barred from future NEA grants for at least three years. The Senate bill does not require grant recipients to sign an anti-obscenity pledge.

The committee approved the Hatch legislation by a vote of 15-1, with Sen. Daniel Coats (R-IN) rejecting the legislation as insufficiently restrictive. The bill seems likely to meet considerable opposition, but Hatch's conservative credentials may forestall criticism from some potential opponents.

As for the House reauthorization bill, it continues to await action by the full House. The bill, which the Education and Labor Committee approved in June, contains no restrictions on NEA's grantmaking process. The committee's "clean" bill, however, is only a reflection of the stalemate within the panel; a host of restrictive amendments await the legislation on the floor, and it is still unclear when the House will take up the bill.

Meanwhile on the Funding Front . . .

The appropriations process continues to pose a second threat to NEA, as endowment critics seek to attach grant restrictions to funding bills in both houses. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jamie Whitten (D-MS) seems to have thrown his considerable legislative weight behind the move for restrictions, and the Senate committee seems to have a "restriction majority" as well. It remains unclear whether grant restrictions would apply to NEH as well as NEA, but many observers expect curbs to affect both endowments.

WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH REMAINS AT CENTER STAGE

Women's health research continues to garner attention from the Washington scientific community. The last two weeks have produced a series of events, including the establishment of a new office at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a highly visible meeting among congressional leaders and NIH staff, and directive language in the House NIH reauthorization bill.

On September 10, NIH announced the creation of the Office of Research on Women's Health. The decision comes on the heels of an August 24 re-issuance of NIH's policy on the inclusion of women in research (See UPDATE, September 7, 1990). Both NIH actions appear to be a direct response to congressional pressure, which has escalated since the General Accounting Office released a report in June concluding that NIH was lax in its efforts to address women's health concerns. (See UPDATE, June 29, 1990)

The new NIH office, to be housed within the Office of the Director, will be responsible for monitoring and coordinating activities across NIH. The office will have authority to disperse funds for new or expanded initiatives related to women's health. Ruth Kirschstein, co-chair of the Public Health Service (PHS) Coordinating Committee on Women's Health Issues and director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, was the well-received choice for acting director of the new office. Kirschstein will retain her other positions.

The announcement of the new office was made during a meeting on the NIH campus organized by the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, co-chaired by Reps. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME). With many reporters and

members of the public present, the caucus questioned Acting NIH Director William Raub, Assistant Secretary for Health James Mason, and eight high-ranking institute representatives on their current and planned activities to promote women's health research.

Schroeder led the discussion along with Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Rep. Constance Morella (R-MD). Snowe, who was traveling, missed the meeting due to an airline scheduling change.

The tone of the meeting was far more subdued than many observers had anticipated. Applauding the NIH for creating its new office, Schroeder "salute(d) NIH for having listened" to their concerns. She called for a broad-based "summit" on women's health and expressed concern that the issue was entangled in the politics of abortion.

Morella echoed Schroeder's support for NIH's response, stating she was "here in the spirit of cooperation." She did, however, express frustration that, due to political constraints, members of Congress could not have "frank and open" discussions with NIH scientists who have the expertise to guide policy changes. Mikulski took a tougher stance, chiding NIH and PHS for not having done enough. She pushed Mason to develop an "immediate, realizable action plan."

Mason made clear that NIH was not fully responsible for the lack of women in clinical studies. The role of the Food and Drug Administration and the private sector, among others, must be acknowledged and addressed, he said. He emphasized that both he and Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Louis Sullivan are committed to addressing these issues.

Asked by Morella about top priorities related to women's health, Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, named several topics: avoiding unintentional pregnancies, ensuring reproductive health, and halting the spread of AIDS in women. Franklin Williams, director of the National Institute on Aging, pegged physical frailty in women and the special circumstances of under-represented women as top issues.

NIH Reauthorization

Women's health research got another boost on September 18 when the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and the Environ-

ment, chaired by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), approved its version of the NIH reauthorization bill. Like its Senate counterpart (see UPDATE, August 10, 1990), the bill requires the inclusion of women in clinical research. As in the Senate, the measure applies both to NIH and to the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration.

In contrast to the Senate measure, however, the House bill calls for an NIH guideline (instead of an HHS regulation) to achieve the inclusion of women in clinical research. The House measure also allows exceptions when there are scientific reasons to suspect no gender differences exist. Further, the advisory councils, as opposed to newly established "clinical research equity subcommittees," will be charged with reporting on policy compliance.

The House bill mandates an Office of Women's Health Research in the office of the NIH director. The new office is created without the presumption that it will become a center, unlike the Senate bill. The House measure calls for an Institute of Medicine report that specifically addresses needed infrastructure changes, among other issues. However, it also establishes within NICHD an intramural laboratory and clinical research program in obstetrics and gynecology.

Beyond women's health and expiring authorities, the House bill addresses a number of contentious issues.

The bill would prohibit the HHS secretary from withholding research funds "on ethical grounds" without support from a majority of an ethics advisory board, convened following a general announcement and nomination solicitation in the *Federal Register*. Presumably the bill's language would apply to social and behavioral science studies such as the Survey of Health and AIDS Risk Prevalence, which have been held up by HHS.

The bill specifically authorizes the conduct and support of human fetal tissue transplantation research. This action nullifies the existing moratorium on such research imposed by the Reagan administration and upheld by the Bush White House.

The bill codifies the existing Office of Scientific Integrity, strengthens protection for whistleblowers in scientific misconduct cases, and calls for guidelines regarding conflict of interest.

The fate of the House reauthorization measure is unclear. The subcommittee markup clearly was

orchestrated to avoid dissent, but battles are certainly possible on September 25, when the full committee is scheduled to mark up the bill. Opposition to the fetal tissue provisions, prohibitions against withholding funds on ethical grounds, and emphasis on women's health (including contraception and infertility) are anticipated topics of debate.

PANEL QUERIES SOCIAL SCIENTISTS ON EARTHQUAKE INSURANCE

In an effort to assess earthquake insurance and earthquake hazard mitigation, a House panel recently sought out the expertise of several social scientists. Among those testifying at a September 12 hearing of the House Banking Subcommittee on Policy Research and Insurance were Risa Palm, vice chancellor for research and dean of the graduate school at the University of Colorado, and Howard Kunreuther, professor of decision sciences and insurance at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Palm, a former COSSA president, noted a dramatic increase in the number of Californians who have purchased earthquake insurance during the past 20 years. From approximately 5 percent in 1973, coverage has increased in 1990 to 45 percent in Los Angeles County and almost 50 percent in Santa Clara County.

The most important factor in deciding to purchase insurance, Palm said, is a homeowner's perception of potential earthquake damage. Demographic and economic characteristics, by contrast, were not consistently related to the propensity to buy insurance. Palm pointed out, however, that those homeowners who did not purchase insurance usually cited cost as the primary reason they decided to forego coverage.

Palm, who based her conclusions on surveys of 3,500 California homeowners, contended that governmental efforts to inform citizens of earthquake risks have not effectively educated the public. To increase the number of policyholders, she said, government officials should focus on clearer and more personalized risk messages and personalized offers of insurance. In addition, she said, a reduction in premium rates would help increase earthquake coverage. "On the basis of these survey findings," she told the committee, "subsidized earthquake insurance should result in substantial increases in earthquake insurance subscription."

Kunreuther, who directs the Wharton Risk and Decision Processes Center, outlined a sequential decision process surrounding the purchase of earthquake insurance. Like Palm, he identified individual hazard perception as a first step toward purchasing insurance. Whether or not an individual knows a friend, relative, or neighbor with insurance is also an important influence in the decision process, Kunreuther noted, and cost is the final consideration.

In contrast to Palm, however, Kunreuther concluded that government subsidization of earthquake insurance is unlikely to increase the number of policyholders. Mandatory insurance would help solve the problem, he said, but would require some type of government reinsurance program since insurance companies could not support such coverage by themselves.

Kunreuther, who serves as COSSA liaison for the Institute of Management Sciences, noted that mandatory insurance could also be used to induce homeowners to adopt earthquake mitigation measures in the design and structure of their houses.

COSSA URBAN POVERTY SEMINAR EXAMINES FAMILY STRUCTURE AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

Urban poverty is a persistent problem for American policymakers, frustrating attempts to alleviate its severity and reduce its prevalence. In an effort to highlight social science research on poverty, COSSA and the Population Resource Center have organized a series of congressional seminars, the most recent of which examined "Urban Poverty: The Role of Family Structure and Youth-at-Risk." The session was co-hosted by the Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition.

Speakers at the September 14 seminar were led off by James P. Smith, director of the RAND Corporation's Labor and Population Studies Program. The key question, Smith said, is whether poverty trends among black families can be explained by racial factors or by other influences.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Smith said, America's long-term decline in poverty rates leveled off. But in comparing black wage earners to white wage earners, he contended, the two-decade period emerges as a relatively favorable time for blacks. But during the same twenty-year stretch, Smith said, the United States experienced a marked decline in eco-

nomie well-being for *all* wage earners. The persistence of urban poverty among black families, therefore, is more a function of general economic trends than racial factors.

Ronald Ferguson, associate professor of public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, evaluated the process by which black youths make decisions. Ferguson argued that negative societal messages produce skewed choices among poverty-affected youths.

Society, Ferguson contended, sends discouraging messages to black children. In evaluating these messages, children revise their perceptions of themselves, other people, and various institutions such as schools. When young blacks are subsequently called upon to make decisions, these distorted perceptions produce decisions considered "unconventional" or counterproductive by general society. Such choices lead to problems for black youth.

Ronald B. Mincy, a research associate at the Urban Institute, offered a proposal to address youth's distorted decision process. Mincy outlined a model for mentoring programs that would provide young blacks with positive messages.

Mincy's mentoring model focuses on young black men of middle school age. Existing policies and programs largely target black females, Mincy said, while black men are left without a "policy agenda." Such an agenda is necessary if programs are to effectively combat urban poverty, he said.

In order to reduce poverty, Mincy continued, young people need to enjoy faster and higher growth in wages and job availability. Also, he contended, family incomes must be raised, either through preservation of the two-parent household or through more effective child support.

Mincy's mentoring program would pair black children with role models, but would emphasize and build upon children's existing peer groups. Mentors would provide children with positive messages concerning academic achievement, teen pregnancy, and families.

EMORY UNIVERSITY JOINS COSSA

COSSA is pleased to announce that Emory University has joined the Consortium as a Contributing institution. We look forward to working with our Georgia allies in the years ahead.

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