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Administration Releases FY 2011 Budget Proposal: Research Increased

(The following is a preliminary look at the President's proposed budget. For a more thorough analysis COSSA will publish its annual Budget issue on March 8. Look for it in your email!)

President Obama released his FY 2011 proposed budget on February 1. Despite the announced 'freeze' on non-security related discretionary funding, budgets for agencies supporting social and behavioral science research fared relatively well.

The Administration recommends \$7.424 billion for the **National Science Foundation (NSF)**, an eight percent increase. The Research and Related Activities account number is \$6.018 billion, an 8.2 percent boost. The Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Sciences directorate goes to \$268.8 million, up 5.3 percent. The Education and Human Resources Directorate receives \$892 million, a 2.2 percent raise. All the comparisons are to the FY 2010 appropriation.

Key NSF initiatives proposed for FY 2011 include Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability (SEES), which will "integrate efforts in climate and energy science and engineering to

generate the discoveries and capabilities needed to inform societal actions that lead to environmental and economic sustainability." The SBE sciences have a significant role in this initiative. SBE will continue to take the lead on an enhanced Science of Science and Innovation Policy program to support research and metrics that "can influence the development of decision support tools for those in policy positions affecting science and innovation."

Another initiative seeks to "fully capture the transformative potential of advanced learning technologies across the educational enterprise. Called Cyberlearning Transforming Education (CTE), it is part of a continued emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning and workforce development. This program is a collaboration with the Department of Education. Other STEM programs include a new consolidated program to broaden participation, which realigns and builds on existing programs such as the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation and others. The Administration will continue its support to triple the number of Graduate Research Fellowships.

The President's FY 2011 budget request for the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** is \$32.2 billion, an increase of \$1 billion or 3.2 percent above the FY 2010 funding level. The FY 2011 budget targets increases towards trans-NIH specific programs, including the Basic Behavioral and Social Sciences Opportunity Network (OppNet) launched by the agency in FY 2010 through funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. NIH expects to expand the initiative in FY 2011. Accordingly, \$20 million is provided to further the "understanding of fundamental mechanisms and patterns of behavioral and social functioning relevant to the Nation's health and well being, as they interact with each other, with biology, and the environment."

For the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA), the proposed budget provides \$500 million. CTSA's were developed and implemented to reduce the time it takes for laboratory discoveries to become treatment for patients, to engage communities in clinical research efforts, and to train a new generation of clinical and translational researchers.

The budget request also includes \$3.2 billion for NIH's HIV/AIDS research program. NIH also plans to direct \$382 million, \$22 million above the FY 2010 funding level, to the Administration's National Nanotechnology Initiative.

Another highlight in the FY 2011 budget is the reinvigoration of the biomedical research community. According to the NIH, multiple issues must be addressed, which include enabling young scientists to pursue independent research, and redoubling minority training efforts to realize the goal of generating a scientific workforce that reflects the diversity of the nation. The FY 2011 budget request includes a six percent increase in training stipends, which translates into a request of \$824.4 million for *Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards*.

For the NIH Common Fund, the FY 2011 budget request is \$561.6 million, an increase of \$17.5 million. The mission of the Common Fund is to foster collaboration, coordination, and strategic planning activities across the NIH. New research opportunities that would benefit from Common Fund support are under consideration for FY 2011. To assist these efforts, the NIH Director plans to convene a series of trans-NIH workshops and brainstorming sessions beginning in FY 2010, involving external and internal experts, public and private sector partners, and stakeholders. As in FY 2010, the budget request includes \$5.5 million to support these planning efforts through the Common Fund Strategic Planning Funds.

Included in the request is \$78.7 million, an increase of 72 million or 91 percent more than the FY 2010 funding level for new Common Fund Initiatives. The increase reflects the "churn created by the design of the Common Fund to have revolving program areas." The completion of programs in FY 2010 creates flexibility for the director to develop new programs in FY 2011 that address his priorities. New Common Fund programs could include: global health; opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math education; health economics; science of behavior change; new models for prospective longitudinal cohort studies; and partnerships with HMO Research Networks for enhanced clinical research. Additional areas in need of investment "will be articulated through

a 'think tank' strategic planning meeting taking place in early 2010 involving scientific leaders from many areas of health research."

For the **NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)**, the FY 2011 budget request is \$38.2 million, a \$10.8 million or 39.3 percent increase above the FY 2010 funding level. In FY 2011, the Office will support the NIH Basic Behavioral and Social Sciences Opportunity Network (OppNet), a trans-NIH initiative to expand the agency's funding of basic behavioral and social sciences research (b-BSSR) for \$10 million. In FY 2011, OBSSR will support two new initiatives: the science of adherence and establishing "community health laboratories." OBSSR will continue to fund multi-year programs, including research to reduce or eliminate health disparities; a program to enhance the behavioral and social sciences content of medical school curricula; community-based participatory research programs supporting intervention research methods to disease prevention and health promotion in medically underserved areas; research on social networks and health; and studies using systems science methodologies to address policy resistant problems in public health. The Office will offer its annual summer training institutes (systems science methodology and health; behavioral interventions in randomized clinical trials; social work research methods), and host the fourth annual trans-NIH conference on the science of dissemination and implementation.

The Administration's FY 2011 request for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, including the funds from the Public Health Service set-aside, is \$6.625 billion, a slight decrease from FY 2010's \$6.751 billion. The National Center for Health Statistics goes to \$161.9 million from \$138.7 million. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) receives a large proposed increase to \$610.9 million from its FY 2010 appropriation of \$397.1 million. The large increase is in the area of Patient Centered Health Research, particularly for studies on the comparative effectiveness of medical practices.

Significant Increases for Mission Department's Research and Statistics Agencies

In the research and statistics agencies of the Departments the Administration is offering significant enhancements. The **National Institute of Justice** increases from a FY 2010 base budget of \$48 million to proposed FY 2011 funding of \$70 million. The **Bureau of Justice Statistics** would get a \$2.5 raise to \$62.5 million. In addition, the Office of Justice Programs is requesting a three percent set-aside of program funding for research and statistics, two percent more than approved by Congress in the FY 2010 budget.

The **Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)** would climb from \$262.5 million in the FY 2010 budget to \$428.8 million under the FY 2011 proposal (see other story for plans for spending the funds). The **Economic Research Service** would increase from \$82.5 million to \$87.2 million. The **National Agricultural Statistical Service** increases slightly from \$161.4 million to \$164.7 million.

The request for the **Office of Policy Development and Research** at the Department of Housing and Urban Development is \$87 million, a large increase from the \$48 million FY 2010 appropriation. The request includes \$55 million "to restore and enhance various national housing surveys that are rich sources of data on the nation's housing stock."

The **Institute of Education Sciences' (IES)** Research, Development and Dissemination account receives a proposed boost to \$260.7 million from \$200.2 million. The 30 percent increase would "enable IES to invest in new grants to support evaluations at the State and district level to evaluate whether reforms undertaken with funds awarded under the Race to the Top program are producing the desired improvements on student achievement and other critical outcomes, research on using data to improve K-12 and postsecondary education and inform education policy, and assessment projects to support the development of reliable and valid measures of kindergarten readiness." Funding for education statistics would rise to \$117 million from \$108.5 million.

Other programs such as Title VI and Fulbright Hays international education and foreign language

programs are level funded under the President's proposal as are the Javits Fellowship, the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need, and the Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Fellowships programs.

This is the year of the decennial count and the peak of the funding cycle for the **Census Bureau**. For FY 2011 the Administration has requested \$1.267 billion for the Bureau, a significant decrease from FY 2010's \$7.3 billion. The key boost for the Bureau proposed for FY 2011 is \$44 million to increase the sample size of the American Community Survey. The **Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)** also receives an enhancement in the proposed budget to \$109.2 million from \$95.7 million in FY 2010. BEA has four applications for the increase: 1) Improve Foreign Direct Investment Statistics; 2) Bring online new measures of GDP-by-industry on a quarterly basis; 3) Publish a new suite of measures, including discretionary income, of household income, expenses, debt, and savings; and 4) Extend the GDP accounts on the economic impact of energy use.

At the **Department of Homeland Security** the proposed budget reduces funding for the Human Factors/Behavioral Science division to \$13.4 million from \$16.1 million in FY 2010. Proposed funding for University Programs also decreases from \$49.4 million to \$40 million.

The budget now gets its annual scrutiny by Congress with the twelve subcommittees in the House and Senate dissecting the increases and decreases and figuring out how to accommodate the President while still protecting programs that are near and dear to the members. In addition, the election year atmosphere makes completing work on the appropriation bills even more difficult than usual.

Bement to Leave NSF; Heads to Purdue to Direct Global Policy Institute

Arden L. Bement, director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) since 2004, has announced that he will become the director of the Global Policy Research Institute (GPRI) at Purdue University starting on June 1.

The GPRI intends to offer faculty and student fellowships; nationally visible workshops, forums and publications; a certificate in public policy for students; participation in an interdisciplinary internship program in public policy; and a master of science in public policy and public administration. Earlier in his career, Bement had served as head of Purdue's School of Nuclear Engineering.

Trained as a metallurgical engineer, Bement was appointed by President George W. Bush to lead NSF in November 2004. He had served as Acting Director of NSF for the previous ten months, while also holding down the position as director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Upon his appointment to head NSF, Bement was not a stranger to the Foundation, having served on the National Science Board from 1989-95. He was part of the Board that voted to approve the establishment of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences directorate in 1991.

During his almost seven year tenure, Bement has led NSF through an increasing focus on interdisciplinary, cross-directorate initiatives and a national commitment to improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. With the enactment of the America COMPETES Act in 2007, NSF was put back on a budget-doubling track. The recently released President's FY 2011 budget proposal gives NSF an eight percent increase to maintain that doubling promise.

The current NSF Deputy Director is sociologist Cora Marrett, who presumably would become Acting Director when Bement leaves, if the Administration cannot nominate and get the Senate to confirm

a new director by June 1.

New Structure, New Priorities for Agriculture Research

On February 2, Roger Beachy, director of the National Institute on Food and Agriculture (NIFA), appeared before the Social Science Subcommittee on the Experimental Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) to outline the new structure of his agency and its plans for supporting research. With the departure of Rajiv Shah to become head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Beachy now also holds the title of Acting Chief Scientist of the Department of Agriculture.

The NIFA Director explained that its structure would consist of four institutes and one center. These include the following with their NIFA-described missions:

- 1) Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, which would enhance global food security through productive and sustainable agricultural systems;
- 2) Institute of Bioenergy, Climate and Environment, which would ensure energy independence through clean, biobased energy systems and ensure sustainable and adaptive agro-ecosystems in response to climate change;
- 3) Institute of Food Safety and Nutrition, which would ensure a safe food supply, improve citizens' health through nutrition, reduce childhood obesity, and improve food quality;
- 4) Institute of Youth, Family, and Community, which would enable vibrant and resilient communities, prepare the next generation of scientists, enhance science capacity in minority-serving institutions, and enhance youth development; and
- 5) Center for International Programs, which would educate the next generation of scientists in developing communities and share research discoveries to enhance food production and stabilize economies.

The director assured the Subcommittee members that social scientists on the NIFA staff would get diffused throughout each of these.

At the same time, NIFA has defined "Priority Science Areas," particularly for its Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) (formerly the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program). These include:

- 1) Global Food Security and Hunger;
- 2) Climate Change;
- 3) Sustainable Energy;
- 4) Childhood Obesity; and
- 5) Food Safety.

The AFRI has a large boost in funding in the President's FY 2011 proposed budget from \$262.5 to \$428.8 million. This is still a long way from the \$700 million authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, but clearly a significant step forward.

Beachy referenced the National Academies' report, *A New Biology for the 21st Century*, as the basis for his vision of systems modeling of the agriculture and food system. The report envisioned the emergence of a New Biology approach that would enunciate and address broad and challenging societal problems. It focused on examples of opportunities that cannot be addressed by any one subdiscipline or agency-opportunities that require integration across biology and with other sciences and engineering, and that are difficult to capitalize on within traditional institutional and funding structures.

In the agriculture realm, Beachy noted that this vision included not only producing better food, but

adaptation to climate changes, increased broadband access in rural areas, renewable energy, green jobs, and the long-term health of rural areas and its residents.

Lionel 'Bo' Beaulieu of Mississippi State reminded Beachy that rural America is not just agriculture and that the revitalization of rural communities appeared to be missing from the NIFA agenda. Sally Maggard, a social scientist on the NIFA staff, noted that the science agency and the Office of Rural Development have been working together on "systemic issues." Another issue raised in the discussion was the impact of immigration on rural America. The NIFA research agenda did not seem to encompass that issue either.

Beachy announced that as part of NIFA's education agenda it would sponsor pre- and post-doctoral fellowships that would be similar to those awarded by the National Institutes of Health.

Diana Jerkins, Acting Director of Integrated Programs, AFRI, discussed the upcoming program solicitations with the Subcommittee. They are running late, but there will be multiple RFAs (requests for applications) that will follow the five priorities, but could include other areas as well. All of them will feature requirements for collaborative research across disciplines, universities, and states. The Department was hoping to make them available by March.

She also made an appeal for help in finding peer reviewers for these competitions. Those who would like to participate should contact Pat Hipple of NIFA, phipple@nifa.usda.gov.

As he has for many years, COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver also spoke to the Subcommittee, addressing the current political climate in Washington and the opportunities for social and behavioral scientists in the President's FY 2011 budget proposal.

NICHD to Examine its Scientific Opportunities; Will Seek Input of the Extramural Community

On January 28, Acting Director Alan Guttmacher presided over the 140th meeting of the National Advisory Child Health and Human Development (NACHHD) Council to the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Deputy Director Yvonne Maddox introduced Guttmacher who is a pediatrician and medical geneticist. The deputy director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, in 1999, Guttmacher joined the NHGRI as Senior Clinical Advisor to the Director. In that role, he established a dialogue with health professionals and the public about the health and societal implications of the Human Genome Project.

Guttmacher, who most recently completed a stint as Acting Director of NHGRI, related that he had once had a conversation with National Institutes of Health (NIH) director and former NHGRI director Francis Collins about NICHD and its mission, one that he "considers has the most important mission" of the 27 NIH institutes and centers. Being at the NICHD, Guttmacher said, "felt like coming home." Guttmacher recognized former NICHD director Duane Alexander's 23 "incredible years as director" and noted that Alexander is "owed a debt of gratitude" for his leadership. Guttmacher replaces Susan Shurin as NICHD Acting Director, who served in this capacity for several months before returning to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute where she is the deputy director to serve as Acting Director following the resignation of its director Betsy Nabel. The NIH has opened the search for a permanent director for NICHD.

Guttmacher informed the Council that beginning over the next few months, NICHD will begin a year-long examination of the NICHD's broad missions, looking at the promising areas of NICHD's portfolio, the scientific mission and the scientific opportunities. After a review of the Institute there would be a more detailed examination of the institute's programs. According to Guttmacher, the institute is currently putting together a draft process. He emphasized that the "vast majority of the people involved" in the process "should come from the extramural community."

Guttmacher also updated the Council on the National Children's Study (NCS). The NCS is working to expand the scope of activity of the Vanguard Study in order to accelerate development and deployment of the Main Study. The goals are to evaluate (1) alternative strategies for recruitment, (2) Study visit assessments (those events and assessments that are scheduled during Study visits), and (3) Study logistics and operations. Three additional recruitment strategies are under development for implementation and include: 1) Provider-based Recruitment; 2) Enhanced Household Recruitment; and 3) High Intensity/Low Intensity Dynamic Model. Guttmacher indicated that the role of the coordinating center has been changed to increase efficiency. No change in the NCS' budget is anticipated. The FY 2010 budget for the Study is \$193.9 million and included in the NIH Office of the Director's appropriation.

NICHD's Division of Epidemiology, Statistics, and Prevention Research

NACCHD was given a branch update by NICHD's Division of Epidemiology, Statistics, and Prevention Research by recently appointed division chief Germaine Buck-Louis. She began by informing the Council that the branch focuses on public health and a number of special populations within public health. According to Buck-Louis, the division was created five years after the inception of NICHD. It consists of three branches: 1) Epidemiology; 2) Biostatistics & Bioinformatics; and 3) Prevention Research, and a small computer science office.

The Epidemiology Branch includes research, professional service and training. It conducts epidemiologic research focusing on reproductive, perinatal and pediatric health endpoints. Part of the Branch's mission is to provide service to the NIH community, other government agencies, academic and research institutions, professional societies, and the general public on issues relevant to the mission of the NICHD.

The Biostatistics & Bioinformatics Branch conducts statistical theory and methodological research relevant to problems under investigation in the areas of maternal and child health. It also provides statistical support in the design and conduct of clinical trials.

The Prevention Research Branch supports studies to identify determinants of health behavior and test the efficacy and effectiveness of educational, behavioral, and environmental strategies for improving or protecting maternal, child, and adolescent health is conducted within the Prevention Research Branch. The three main areas of research being conducted by the Branch include: young novice drivers, family management of diabetes, and adolescent problem behavior.

Twenty-nine individuals and 23-25 fellows make up the branch. The fellows are considered an "incredible resource" to the divisions, Buck-Louis emphasized. The Division's mission is three-fold: 1) conduct original research, 2) mentoring, and 3) professional service. Buck-Louis noted that population science looks at the complexity of disease and the life course approach, along with translation and inter-relatedness. Buck-Louis observed there is a long standing tradition of translation research that has been incorporated within the Division long before it became a popular term around the NIH.

She pointed out that the Division had recently been restructured mostly through the elimination of vacant sections. The Division, said Buck-Louis, loves to take an important question and find low-tech solutions for problems. As concerns about health care reform continue, it is important to continue to think about low-tech reform, Buck-Louis concluded.

NIAAA Advisory Council Convenes for 123rd Meeting

On Thursday February 4, NIAAA acting director Kenneth Warren presided over the 123rd meeting of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, providing a summary of NIAAA recent activities. Approximately 75 observers attended the open session, including representatives from constituency groups, liaison organizations, NIAAA staff, and members of the general public. Below are a few of the meetings key highlights.

Director activities: In his directors' report to the council Warren spoke to the recent tragedy in Haiti where members of the GHESKIO research team conducting have been accounted for. Currently investigators are attempting to contact the 110 participants in the study. Led by Robert Marlow and Jessy Devieax of Florida International University, in collaboration with Jean Pape director of director of the GHESKIO medical clinic in Port au Prince, the study is examining the efficacy of a Cognitive-Behavioral Stress Management interventions for enhancing safer sex practices, adherence to antiretroviral medication, and reducing alcohol and other drugs use among HIV-infected alcohol abusers. The clinic was located in the area hit worst by the earthquake. Warren informed the panel that the GHESKIO medical clinic has been moved to an intact military hospital and is open and providing care.

Warren also announced that in late December 2010, he spoke at the meeting of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, the nation's premier professional society in brain, behavior, and psychopharmacology research. The field of neuropsychopharmacology involves the evaluation of the effects of natural and synthetic compounds upon the brain, mind, and human behavior.

Legislation, budget and policy: Warren noted that in FY 2009 NIAAA awarded 721 research project grants (RPG's). FY 2009 support levels from regular appropriated funds for other key extramural funding mechanisms included: 20 research centers for \$27.9 million; 115 other research grants for \$26.1 million, 306 full-time training positions for \$11.7 million; and \$33.4 grants for \$26.1 million for research and development contracts.

The FY 2010 appropriation for NIAAA provides \$462.3 million, representing a \$12.3 million or a 2.7 percent increase over FY 2009 and a \$7.2 million or a 1.6 percent increase over the President's budget request. NIAAA plans to obligate its remaining \$52.4 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) allotment to support the second year of the ARRA funded grant awards made in FY 2009 and to accelerate testing of new drugs for the treatment of alcohol disorders through R&D contracts.

The FY 2011 President's budget request calls for \$462.2 million for NIAAA.

NIAAA multimedia products: For the 2009 Holiday season, NIAAA continued its seasonal outreach series with the release of its New Year's Eve fact sheet, Alcohol Related Traffic Deaths Jump on New Year's Eve. Seasonal fact sheets contain relevant statistics presented in an easy-to-understand "infograph" style, practical science-based commentary, and NIAAA website information. They are disseminated widely through electronic media and in print upon request.

The fact sheet focused on the physiological effects of excessive drinking, and how many common abilities may become compromised as a result. It also corrected some popular myths about intoxication and impairment that often led to dangerous celebratory drinking. The fact sheet was featured on more than 214 websites billboards in Time Square and Las Vegas. NIAAA estimated that the fact sheet reached an estimated 170 million people.

Upcoming Events and Initiatives: NIAAA celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. The Institute plans to mark this anniversary throughout the year. Commemorative banners will appear on the main NIH campus, anniversary issues of the NIAAA publication *Alcohol Alert* and *Alcohol Research and Health* are planned, and an anniversary symposium will round out the year. Additionally, the NIAAA website will undergo a redesign and a branding effort to help increase recognition of the Institute and its products is also underway.

Measuring Higher Education Outcomes Focus of National Academies' Panel

One of the legacies of the Bush Administration's Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings was her Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which issued its report *A Test of Leadership* in late 2006. One of the key features of the report was a call for greater accountability of higher education institutions, which included the issue of productivity. A number of higher education groups led by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) have promoted a voluntary system of accountability that includes student assessment tools.

In 2009 the National Academies' began a project *Measuring Higher Education Productivity: Conceptual Framework and Data Needs*. The panel, chaired by Teresa Sullivan, recently named University of Virginia President and current University of Michigan Provost, is charged to "develop a conceptual framework for measuring higher education productivity and describe the data needs for that framework." The framework should "address productivity at different levels of aggregation, including the institution, system, and sector levels." The Academies' Committee on National Statistics and the Board on Teaching and Assessment are co-sponsors and the Lumina Foundation is providing the funding for the panel.

On January 28 and 29, the Committee held its second meeting to hear about "efforts around the world to measure higher education productivity, design and implement accountability systems, and improve input/output data at different levels of aggregation."

With regard to international efforts, the panel heard about activities by the European Union (EU) from Andrea Bonaccorsi of the University of Pisa, work by the Australian Council of Education Research from Hamish Coates, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) programs and plans from Bo Hansson. The EU has projects for developing microdata and quantitative indicators for higher education institutions. The difficulty, Bonnacorsi explained, is the heterogeneity of the national higher education institutions across the EU making comparisons difficult, so at the moment the focus is on creating an inventory.

In Australia, Coates noted that almost one-third of higher education students are from foreign lands. The focus is "on standards, not standardization," while trying to ascertain access, aptitudes, and aspirations of its students. They are experimenting using various national and international databases, but Coates admitted that they are way behind the data available for the K-12 system. Hansson noted the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) as key indicator of achievement across countries. OECD collects statistics across its members including labor market outcomes and has developed an Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO), which is a feasibility study of evaluating higher education institutions in ten countries.

There are now three major tools used to measure student achievement in higher education as part of the Voluntary System of Accountability: the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) developed by the American Council on Testing, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) developed by the Council for Aid to Education, and the Proficiency Profile (PP) developed by the Educational Testing Service. Donna Sundre of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at James Madison University told the panel that these tests all had deficiencies. She suggested one problem was that student test-takers had little motivation because individual performance was not important since the assessments focus on institutional achievement. She also suggested there was considerable "faculty pushback" to "top down" evaluations.

Kevin Carey of Education Sector and Carol Twigg of the National Center for Academic Transitions examined the relationship between cost and productivity. Carey discussed the online database that allowed colleges and universities to measure their activities in the context of comparable institutions (see www.collegeresults.org). Twigg advocated redesigning courses using technology as a way of reducing costs for institutions. The key was getting away from the "one professor"

lecturing model of higher education instruction, she declared.

Bill Massy of Stanford discussed the "wicked problem" of departmental productivity. There are difficult conceptual issues, he asserted, since there are multiple outputs - teaching and research - and the definition of productivity "embraces quality as well as quantity." There are also practical issues such as a "widespread perception that 'productivity' means cost cutting at the expense of quality and there is difficulty in obtaining good benchmarks."

At the state level many different requirements are coming out of the legislatures and executive branch agencies, according to Peter Ewell of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, and Nate Johnson of the University of Florida. Institutional data collection has become an important part of making the case to these decision makers as they continue to escalate their oversight of what they are paying for in higher education.

Irwin Feller, Professor Emeritus of Economics at Penn State University and a Visiting Scientist at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), asked a key question. Feller noted that his interest is how performance measures affect the behavior of organizations? Has all the recent emphasis on accountability "amounted to anything" regarding the behavior of colleges and universities, he asked? This is something the Committee may have to consider as it continues its work.

Education Reform: The New York City Experience

The Alliance for Excellent Education (The Alliance) held a conference January 25, on "Informing Federal Education Policy through Lessons from New York City." The Alliance also released a paper, *New York City's Strategy for Improving High Schools*, it is the first of three to be released examining New York City's reform efforts.

Opening the conference on his city's education reform efforts was Joel Klein, Chancellor of New York City Department of Education. He remarked that we must never underestimate the power of education to transform lives, and that "we are never going to fix poverty in America until we fix education."

New York City is the largest school district in the nation. It has more than 1,630 schools, which includes charter schools, has 136,000 employees, and a budget of \$21 billion. Of the 1.1 million students in the district more than 80 percent are minorities, 14 percent are English language learners, and 74 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch. With such big challenges and a diverse student population many of whom are in failing schools, what happens with New York City's reform efforts will provide a "what works and what doesn't" blueprint for many school districts across the country.

New York City had an estimated 66,900 students who dropped out of the 2008 class. According to the Alliance report, reducing the number of dropouts could have significant economic implications for the city. If New York City reduced its number of dropouts by half for just one single class, it would result in economic benefits not only for the student, but also their community. The report shows that these 33,500 additional graduates would earn an increased \$537 million in combined earnings over the course of a year compared to those without a diploma. The additional graduates also would result in a boost in state and local tax revenue by as much as \$92 million.

Roberto Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy, reiterated that education reform is a top priority for the Obama administration. Rodriguez said the Administration believes that quality education is a crucial prerequisite for success and that it is a moral imperative to provide high quality education for all students. John Easton, Director of the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), told the gathering that IES needs to play a greater role in helping determine what

reforms are actually effective. He noted that the use of data can help states and school districts make better informed decisions, and enlighten policy reform efforts.

Klein who along with Mayor Michael Bloomberg has pushed education reform efforts in New York City told the conference, that although it is crucial to have high school reform strategies that policies focusing only on high schools alone will fail. He said to ensure that all students are ready for high school we must also reform elementary and middle schools. And although his school district has made some strides in improving student achievement, Klein remarked, "There are no great school systems only systems made up of great schools."

For more information on this event go to the Alliance for Excellent Education at:
<http://www.all4ed.org/events/Jan25NYC>.

State of the Science: IOM Committee to Examine LGBT Health Issues, Research Gaps and Opportunities

On February 1, the Institute of Medicine's Board on the Health of Select Populations held its inaugural meeting of an 18-month study to examine Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) health issues.

The impetus for the study, commissioned by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is the "little or no national-level health data" for this population. The study also responds to researchers' belief that there "are significant gaps in knowledge and research on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender health in general and in particular in research supported by the NIH." The researchers point out that in recent years, multidisciplinary research (medicine, psychology, epidemiology, demography, sociology, economics, anthropology, and political science) "in general medical health, mental health, substance use, health services use, and demographic risk factors has begun to identify important sexual orientation and gender identity-related health concerns and disparities." Accordingly, researchers requested an inventory of current NIH-funded research on LGBT health issues and an IOM state of the science study.

Robert Graham, University of Cincinnati School of Medicine, is the Committee's chair. Before laying out the charge to the Committee, NIH Deputy Director Raynard Kington highlighted the research challenges, including: diversity among and within LGBT populations including diversity of health concerns and health research experiences; methodological limitations (e.g., lack of standardized definitions or methods, and small, nonprobability samples); concerns for respectful approaches to research on sensitive issues; and concerns with self-identification and protection of privacy. According to Kington, such a study could: examine the current state of knowledge on LGBT health, including general health concerns as well as health disparities; examine the best methodological practices for investigating health concerns on LGBT communities; and develop a strategic plan for investigating and addressing the health concerns of LGBT people.

He informed the committee that the NIH's research portfolio currently includes studies involving gap men or men who have sex with men, lesbian women, bisexual men, and transgender individuals (including intersex children). The health issues studied by NIH-funded research include: HIV/AIDS; sexually-transmitted diseases; mental health; substance abuse; stigma; psychological aspects of coming out; phases of denial, disclosure, and acceptance; psychological development; and physical development, physiology, endocrinology, nutrition, and treatment of transgender children.

The agency's charge to the IOM Committee is to "assess the state of the science on health of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people." The issues that the NIH would like for the Committee to address include:

- The health status of LGBT persons and their health risks, health disparities, and access to and utilization of health care;
- Research gaps and opportunities;
- Methodological challenges, including definitional and measurement issues for research on health of LGBT persons and identification of best practices for health research in LGBT populations;
- Research training needs that might be limiting LGBT health research;
- The developmental processes of childhood and adolescence in the context of family, including normative and atypical physical, emotional, and cognitive development of LGBT children and adolescents, children and adolescents of LGBT parents, and impacts of family and social acceptance of sexual orientation and gender identity on the mental health and personal safety of LGBT persons;
- The effects of age, race, ethnicity, and geography (urban vs. rural environments) on the health of LGBT persons; and
- The effects of social determinants and cultural factors, including stigma, discrimination and violence on the health of LGBT persons.

Kington concluded his remarks by stressing that the NIH looks forward to a "scientifically rigorous report" that: identifies the critical public health issues in LGBT populations; develops compelling scientific and public health reasons for biomedical and behavioral research on LGBT health; and provides guidance for biomedical and behavioral research on LGBT health that is within the mission of the NIH. He emphasized that when studies are done well they can have a dramatic impact on science and public health.

Science of Behavior Change: Finding Mechanisms of Change in the Laboratory and the Field – Applications Wanted

The potential role of behavioral science in the prevention and treatment of disease and reducing future rates of disability is often underestimated. Behavior change interventions to address many health issues have favorable side effect profiles and can complement other treatments. To address this underutilization of the science in this area, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has released a funding opportunity announcement, *Science of Behavior Change: Finding Mechanisms of Change in the Laboratory and the Field* ([RFA-RM-10-002](#)), designed to improve understanding of the basic mechanisms of behavior change by bridging work in the laboratory and the field. **Letters of intent are due: March 29, 2010.**

With its broad range of missions focused on improving public health, the NIH can facilitate a unified science of behavior change, with the goals of decreasing isolation among disease-specific behavior change research, increasing the application of basic science approaches to understanding mechanisms of behavior change, and bridging laboratory and field-based approaches to the study of mechanisms of behavior initiation and maintenance (including adherence), to produce potent behavior change interventions to improve the public health.

NIH is concerned that progress has been slow in translating basic science advances to behavior change research. The problem, as the agency sees it, is that researchers in the field of behavior change often work on disease- or condition-specific problems in relative isolation. Further, fundamental work on the general mechanisms of behavior change may have broad relevance to NIH but no close match to the interests of any one institute or center. Despite the fact that risk behaviors have been observed to occur in "bundles" at points in the lifespan and may have common underlying processes, current disease-specific research tends to focus on one problem in isolation, both in terms of basic science attempts to understand the proximal influences of discrete behaviors and in intervention efforts that address a single problem rather than a cluster of related behaviors.

Recently, the agency began investing in research in emerging basic biobehavioral science in areas such as the social, behavioral, cognitive and affective neurosciences, behavioral economics, neuroeconomics, behavior genetics, and social network analysis. Discoveries in these areas related to, for example, the role of executive control processes in impulse regulation, the influence of choice framing on decision making, and the impact of social environments on genetic and neural pathways associated with stress and coping, are increasingly relevant to understanding how to effect positive behavior change.

The understanding of the science of behavior change will allow NIH to advance several goals, including: the identification of the optimal targets and timepoints in the lifecourse for intervention; the identification of common mechanisms of change related to either multiple or bundled health behaviors; the ability to tailor interventions to particular at-risk individuals or groups; the application of novel technologies for behavioral assessment and change; and the identification of individuals or groups most likely to benefit from specific interventions.

Examples of research topics that are relevant to this funding opportunity announcement include, but are not limited to:

Social and Contextual Mechanisms

- Mechanisms whereby choice architecture "nudges" individuals or groups to change behavior.
- Mechanisms underlying successful incenting of businesses and physicians to motivate customers and patients toward "healthy behavior."
- Mechanisms whereby health behaviors spread through social networks and within cultural groups.
- Mechanisms underlying successful communication of health behavior recommendations by professionals.
- Mechanisms of change in provider and institutional behaviors to enhance patient adherence to treatment regimens.
- Social and contextual mechanisms related to health disparities in health behavior acquisition, prevention, change, and maintenance.
- Mechanisms for individual differences in response to social or contextual modifications.

Psychological Mechanisms of Decision Making

- Mechanisms of decision-making in health behaviors in which the decisional approach involves non-rational, non-quantitative factors, including biases and gist representations derived from emotions, education, culture and experience.
- Mechanisms underlying preferences for activities that have immediate benefits and costs rather than future health benefits, including research on how such preferences for inter-temporal trade-offs are formed, and the impact of exogenous and endogenous contextual factors on preference formation.
- Development of preferences for risk taking and motivation for risk management as they relate to health behavior.
- Processes by which decisions are or are not translated to actions.

Biobehavioral Mechanisms of Self-control related to Behavior Initiation, Maintenance and Adherence

- The relationship between cognitive control functions and self-regulatory abilities in affectively charged contexts (e.g. under conditions of temptation, peer pressure, stress, etc.), and on the individual and contextual factors that support or undermine self-regulation under these conditions.
- The role of cognitive ability and emotional regulatory ability in supporting health behavior change, and the identification of different life stages and potential critical developmental periods for the engagement or training of these abilities to support sustainable behavior change.
- The plasticity of individual traits and capacities related to the development of self-regulatory

and problem solving skills that support effective behavior change.

- The development and maturation of neurobiological mechanisms for impulse control regarding dietary choices and substance abuse, with the goal of identifying factors that place individuals at risk for childhood obesity, addiction, and other health problems across the lifespan.
- The neurobiological and/or genetic mechanisms underlying individual differences in self-control, and the contexts that elicit their manifestation.
- Exploration of the relationship between and individual's capacity for self-regulation and the development, maintenance or cessation of positive or negative behavior bundles.
- Basic biobehavioral or biosocial science that develops, tests, and examines the mechanism of behavior change in a behavior change intervention.

For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-10-002.html>.

NIH Funding for Scientific Meetings Designed to Develop Interdisciplinary Research Teams Available

The National Institutes of Health (Child Health, Cancer, Drug Abuse, Aging, and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences) are interested in supporting conference grants designed to develop interdisciplinary research teams. The teams must include investigators from the social and/or behavioral sciences, and may include the life and/or physical sciences. The goal of the funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to broaden the scope of investigation into scientific problems, yield fresh and possibly unexpected insights, and increase the sophistication of theoretical, methodological, and analytical approaches by integrating the analytical strengths of two or more disparate scientific disciplines while addressing gaps in terminology, approach, and methodology. This program will allow investigators from multiple disciplines to hold meetings in order to provide the foundation for developing interdisciplinary research projects.

For the purposes of this FOA, interdisciplinary research integrates the analytical strengths of two or more disparate scientific disciplines while addressing gaps in terminology, approach, and methodology. Its goals are to broaden the scope of investigation into scientific problems, yield fresh and possibly unexpected insights, and increase the sophistication of theoretical, methodological, and analytical approaches. Applicants must justify not only the significance of the research question that they propose to address, but also the need and potential benefits of bringing a mix of specific disciplines together to address it. This FOA does not require the proposed creation of a new discipline.

Eligibility is limited to teams that incorporate a contribution from the behavioral and social sciences. Although at least one such discipline must be represented, teams that include other disciplines such as (but not limited to) the life and/or physical sciences, engineering, and mathematics, are both eligible and encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to communicate with the Scientific/Research Contact(s) in advance of submitting a letter of approval in order to verify that the disciplinary mix proposed is appropriate to the goals of this FOA. The team may address any topic of relevance to the mission of the participating organizations.

Topics that are of interest to the NICHD include but are not limited to:

- Biogenetic origins of family behaviors;
- The effects of physical and mental health on family stability;
- The neurobiology of stigmatization and discrimination;
- Migration and the spread of infectious disease;
- Obesity, particularly childhood obesity;
- The biological and bio-psychosocial effects of early use of prosthetics on child development; and
- The study of time awareness or time perception as it reflects and supports quantity perception

and quantitative abilities using interdisciplinary approaches incorporating developmental, genetic, psychosocial, neurobiological, and other perspectives to identify behavioral markers and endophenotypes for specific quantitative abilities, predictors of later quantitative disabilities, and potential intervention points to reduce math learning disabilities.

Application of systems science methodologies to behavioral and social science research questions relevant to NICHD's mission. For a discussion of systems science methodologies see: PAR-08-224 <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-224.html>

Topics are of interest to the NCI include but are not limited to:

- Research aimed at understanding how interactions among genetic and behavioral/environmental factors influences obesity and cancer risk. Specific gene-behavior interactions would include gene-diet and gene-physical activity effects on body fat composition (e.g., teams might include behavioral scientist, nutrition researchers, exercise scientist, epidemiologist, and public health scientist to better understand the gene-behavior determinants of obesity as well as inform efforts in obesity prevention);
- Real-time geospatial research to assess and modify tobacco or obesity-related health behavior (e.g., teams might include geographers, computer engineers (GPS), tobacco researchers, exercise scientists, nutrition researchers, public health researchers, transportation and urban planners, and behavioral scientists to examine the use of innovative geospatial tools (e.g., GPS) to measure and change population-based tobacco use, activity and/or diet patterns);
- Multilevel health care interventions to increase adherence to screening, diagnostic, or treatment guidelines or to increase identification and treatment of tobacco users in medical settings consistent with PHS Clinical Practice Guideline for Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence (e.g., teams might include behavioral, medical, social science and health service researchers to analyze and intervene in care delivered through offices, groups of offices, or hospitals);
- Application of competitive-sport sciences to cancer prevention and control research in areas such as: physical activity behavior change theory, roles and function of "team" processes in cancer care medical teams, incorporation of personal genomics and physical activity intervention, incorporation of emotional and cognitive cue processing during physical activity (e.g., teams might include competitive-sport scientists, social psychologists, exercise physiologists, sport psychologists sociologists, physicians, sports nutritionists, and cancer prevention and control interventionists);
- Basic and biobehavioral research examining areas such as: Influence of biological programming of social adversity and stress response systems on tumor growth and progression; Delineation of molecular mechanisms and pathways of stress-mediated effects on tumor biology using well-defined vertebrate models and/or human cancer samples; Social regulation of gene expression in cancer (e.g., teams might include behavioral scientists (basic, applied and clinical), cancer and molecular biologists, molecular epidemiologists, bioinformaticians, system biologists, oncological imagers); and
- Development of innovative assessment measures for individual and population level exposure to social stress and the application those methodological approaches to studies of health (e.g., teams might include stress methodologists, psychometricians, neuroscientists, biomedical engineers, psychophysicologists, cognitive and perceptual psychologists, social epidemiologists).

Topics that are of interest to the NIA include but are not limited to:

- Neuroeconomics and social neuroscience of aging: bridging economics, psychology, with social, cognitive, and affective neuroscience on topics related to aging;
- Integration of biology and genetics with behavioral and social sciences related to aging: bridging laboratory and population-based approaches for integrating biological measures (biomarkers,

molecular markers) and genomic approaches with the collection and analysis of social and behavioral data;

- Harmonization of cross-national studies of aging to the Health and Retirement Study;
- Coordination of measurement and analysis of behavioral and social phenotypes in longitudinal studies of aging: coordination of measurement, analysis and model development for research related to the interplay between genetics and behavioral and social factors;
- Behavioral economics and behavior change with an emphasis on developing areas of relevance to aging, including health behaviors, end-of-life decisions, savings;
- Social network dynamics related to aging: consideration of longitudinal data needs and interdisciplinary efforts to develop theory;
- Biodemography, including bridging population genetics with social and behavioral science;
- Development of national indicators of health and well-being that complement measures such as Gross Domestic Product;
- Interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the impact over the lifecourse of factors such as personality, intelligence, and self-regulation on decision making, health, and economic outcomes later in life; and
- Advancing understanding of how psychosocial stress experiences and exposures differ across geographical regions, time, and social groups, and accumulate over time to impact later life health.

Topics that are of interest to the NIDA include but are not limited to:

- Genetic and epigenetic influences on substance use and related behavior;
- Use of novel techniques or animal models to investigate the biobehavioral foundations of drug abuse;
- The use of technology in behavioral assessment, promotion of behavior change, and/or as a treatment intervention;
- Biological and bio-psychosocial effects of the environment on substance use;
- The neurobiological bases of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development, and whether these neural substrates can be modified through psychosocial interventions aimed at preventing mental health disorders and substance abuse;
- Pharmacologic, physiologic and/or behavioral approaches to treating tobacco use and nicotine dependence in those with or without co-morbid mental health, substance abuse and alcohol disorders, including optimal service delivery models;
- Development of treatments/interventions for substance use, including nicotine dependence, in special populations, including HIV+ patients, pregnant women, and children exposed prenatally to drugs of abuse;
- Exploration of neural development and cognition across the lifespan, and how it influences drug abuse and addiction; and
- Neural circuitry and behavioral tendencies in drug abuse from a variety of perspectives, including psychology, psychiatry, pharmacology, toxicology, behavioral economics, education,

therapy, social work, development, neuroimaging, genetics, epidemiology, criminal justice, and certain fields of technology.

For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-10-106.html>.

NIH Seeks to Fund Research Designed to Enhance Global Health Research Involving Human Subjects

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking applications from U.S. institutions for one year of support for resources and activities that will strengthen oversight of NIH supported human subjects research conducted collaboratively with institutions in low- to middle-income countries (LMIC).

NIH support for global health research that involves human subjects in developing countries continues to expand, especially in ethically challenging scientific areas such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, maternal and child health, vaccine and drug development, human genetics and genomics, environmental exposures and lifestyle diseases. Global health investigators supported by NIH are required to obtain ethical approval for collaborative research at both U.S. and foreign institutions where research will take place. This is often a protracted process of resolving differences in the administrative, regulatory, social, cultural and ethical perspectives of multiple review committees that may result in research delays and compromised protection for research participants. Ethics review committees in the U.S. and the developing country often lack specific expertise in international research ethics, common administrative procedures and understanding of the pertinent social and cultural aspects of the research environment in each others' countries. They often lack the means to communicate and collaborate on the review and monitoring of the same research protocols placing a large burden on researchers to mediate these processes.

NIH will provide support to develop collaborative processes and training as well as jointly used tools and systems to address the specific needs and capabilities for improved review and monitoring of protocols for NIH supported research conducted at a developing country institution. The grants will offer one year of support for an applicant U.S. Institutional Review Board (IRB) to collaborate with a developing country counterpart IRB which reviews some of the same NIH research protocols to do any of the following:

- Develop sustainable electronic systems, procedures and communication methods to facilitate collaboration on review and monitoring of protocols sent to both IRBs;
- Increase administrative, scientific, socio-cultural and ethical competencies of IRB members and staff related to research reviewed by both IRBs through joint workshops, short-term exchange and training activities; and
- Create sustainable international research ethics training resources for global health researchers at both institutions to improve research protocols and practices involving human subjects in the collaborating developing country.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate full partnership with the proposed developing country institution ethical review committee in the needs analysis to serve as the basis for the application and in proposed leadership, resource sharing and program activities. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to designate multiple PIs on their application naming their primary developing country collaborator as a PI. Applications should include plans for sustaining proposed collaborative systems, processes, training components and resources after the end of the grant period at the U.S. and developing country institutions.

The Fogarty International Center (FIC), Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Drug Abuse (NIDA), and Mental Health (NIMH) are participating in the funding opportunity announcement. **Letters of Intent Receipt Date: February 22, 2010 Application Due Date: March 22, 2010.** For more

Applicants Sought for the 2010 Institute on Systems Science and Health

The Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), The Syndemics Prevention Network at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are now accepting applications for the **2010 Institute on Systems Science and Health (ISSH 2010)**. ISSH 2010 will be held at the Columbia University in New York, NY on June 13-18, 2010. The program will begin with a welcome session at 6:00pm on Sunday, June 13 and will conclude by 2:00pm on Friday, June 18. Participants are expected to attend the entire course. **Applications due February 15, 2010.**

The objective of the course is to provide attendees with a thorough introduction to a selected systems science methodology that may be used to study behavioral and social dimensions of public health challenges. In the week-long course, participants will focus on one of three methodologies: agent-based modeling, system dynamics modeling, or network analysis. The ideal candidate is an investigator, at any stage of his or her career, who has had little or no formal training in systems science and aims to use the knowledge gained at ISSH to develop proposals to the NIH and CDC for research projects to improve population health and health equity.

To be eligible for ISSH 2010, individuals must have: 1) Completed or be currently enrolled in a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent terminal degree within their field and 2) Crafted a research statement focused on a public health problem/opportunity that would benefit from the appropriate use of one or more systems science methodologies. Priority will be given to investigators who have demonstrated research potential/experience and who will clearly benefit from systems science training. The ideal candidate will have prior exposure to systems science methodologies but will have little or no formal training in this area. In addition, he or she will be actively pursuing an independent research career and have a desire to focus future work on applying systems science approaches to population health problems featuring behavioral and social processes.

Applicants are NOT required to be citizens, permanent residents, or non-citizen nationals of the United States. However, expenses will only be paid for domestic (within the U.S.) travel. Preference will be given to applicants who plan to use the training to inform research on health problems facing the U.S. population. Women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

For more information and/or to apply see <http://issh.aed.org/>.

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