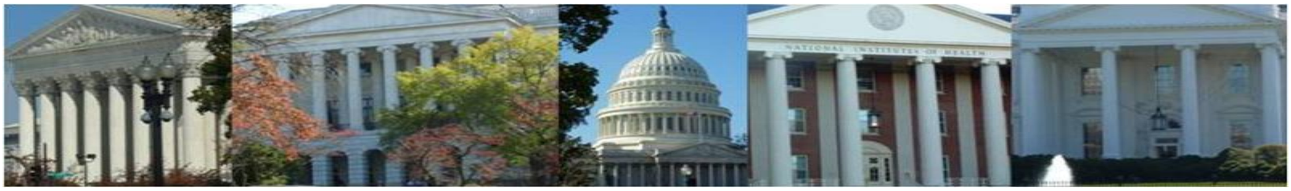
COSSA Washington UPDATE



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House Panel Scrutinizes Funding of SBE Sciences by NSF

The Subcommittee on Research and Science Education of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee held a hearing on June 2 to "better understand the research being conducted in the social, behavioral and economic sciences [SBE] and to take a closer look at the Federal funding of such research." Since the National Science Foundation (NSF) is the largest Federal supporter of basic SBE research, the hearing focused on NSF.

The witnesses appearing before the panel, chaired by Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL), included: Myron Gutmann, Assistant Director for NSF's SBE directorate; Hillary Anger Elfenbein, Associate Professor, Olin School of Business at the Washington University in St. Louis; Peter Wood, President of the National Association of Scholars; and Diana Furchtgott-Roth, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute.

Left to Right: Gutmann, Elfenbein, Wood, Furchtgott-Roth.

Ranking Democrat Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL), a Ph.D. Political Scientist, referenced four earlier hearings held by the Subcommittee that examined the important research in the SBE sciences related to national security and defense, health, energy, and natural disasters. He also noted SBE's support for the development of Geographic Information Science that has helped enormously during those disasters, including 9/11.

In his opening statement Brooks, who noted his degree in Political Science and Economics [a B.A. from Duke] specified that he believes that the SBE sciences produce "interesting and sound research." The key issue from his perspective was the "need for federal investments in these disciplines...particularly when federal research dollars are scarce."

Gutmann in his testimony laid out the case for NSF support for fundamental SBE research. He noted the importance of NSF funding for these sciences, "approximately 57 percent of the university-based social and behavioral sciences research in the nation." He related to the panel the organization of the directorate and its partnerships within NSF and across federal agencies to "understand science in its human context." The directorate, Gutmann told the panel, gets 5,000 proposals and funds about 1,100 awards. He provided many examples of how SBE research has served the nation including research on human actions and decision making, terrorism, artificial speech, matching markets and kidney transplants, spectrum auctions and the importance of protecting social networks in disaster situations. He also mentioned SBE's role in helping the nation understand its scientific enterprise both in the directorate's National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics and its development of the Science of Science and Innovation Policy and the STAR METRICS programs.

Elfenbein, a psychologist, discussed her research on emotion recognition and its applicability to the military, business, and medicine. She described to the panel her transition from Physics and Sanskrit undergraduate majors to a Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior. She noted the interest the Army Research Institute took in her research for use by the troops in Iraq. Businesses, she noted, "increasingly focus on emotional intelligence and related skills in their workforce to achieve a competitive edge." In the medical world, the link between emotional skills and emotional disorders makes her work applicable to testing patients' response to treatments, Elfenbein testified. She strongly made the case for understanding the "human factor" in examining technology, health, industry and politics.

Wood, an anthropologist by training, who was a professor and administrator at Boston University for many years, argued that academia must play its role in the retrenchment of budgets that will occur at the federal level. He declared that "the SBE sciences should not be x-ed out completely from the budget of the NSF or other federal agencies." "I would take it as a serious loss for the nation if we recalibrated ourselves all the way out of a serious commitment to SBE research," he concluded. "A great deal of NSF funding in the SBE disciplines goes to projects that are intellectually worthy," he testified. However, Wood believes that in SBE "a small portion of its budget" funds "trivialities and politicized programs."

He argued for a "triage" approach to budget cutting. He laid out six principles: 1) availability of non-governmental sources of funding; 2) the oversupply of Ph.D.s in the SBE sciences; 3) the rise of anti-science ideologies, such as in anthropology, although he admitted that this has not "infected" NSF's anthropology program; 4) non-science agendas like social justice or teaching engineers about ethics; 5) projects that "slip too easily into contemporary policy debates, such as NSF's sustainability initiative or research on immigrants; and 6) the restructuring of higher education, particularly the rise of for-profit institutions.

Furchtgott-Roth is a former Chief Economist at the Department of Labor and former Chief of Staff at the Council of Economic Advisers, both under President George W. Bush. Since "social, behavioral and economic sciences research does not fit the conditions that define it as a 'public good,'" she declared it should receive no funding from the Federal government, particularly NSF. She indicated that Foundations were a source that SBE scientists could use and since Smith, Marx, and Keynes all conducted their research without government support, so could today's economists and other social scientists. Nobody asked her whether this argument could also apply to math because of Euclid or to Physics because of Newton and Einstein. One exception, she acknowledged might include NSF's funding of longitudinal studies such as the Panel Study of Income Dynamics since "there is a public interest in having a continuous series of data."

The questioning of the witnesses by the Committee members rotated from deep skepticism of support for these sciences by Republicans Rep. David Harris (R-MD) and Dan Benishek (R-MI) to support for their importance from Democrats Lipinski, Rep. Hansen Clarke (D-MI), Paul Tonko (D-NY), and John Sarbanes (D-MD).

Rep. Gerry Hultgren (R-IL) expressed concern about politicization and basic vs. applied research in the SBE sciences. In response, Elfenbein related her strong belief in "peer review over political review, and expertise vs. political review." In 2007 Elfenbein experienced a congressional attempt to substitute "political review" when it tried to defund her research. This attempt was thwarted by the explanation of the importance of her research to the military.

Harris and Benishek were incensed by the 18 percent increase for SBE in the President's proposed budget. In particular, Harris badgered Gutmann about the 174 percent increase for SBE's role in NSF's Science, Engineering, and Education for Sustainability initiative. Nobody suggested these increases come from a very small base.

Chairman Brooks and Benishek questioned Gutmann about the SBE's RAPIDS awards. These are given for fast-response research with program officer input, but without going through the normal peer review process. Many of the SBE RAPID rewards have funded research on human responses to natural and man-made disasters including Katrina, the BP Oil Spill, and the earthquake in Haiti, Gutmann explained. The importance of using the RAPIDS approach, Gutmann said in response to Lipinski, is that in physical emergencies talking with people while their memories are fresh is important to the science.

Brooks also asked about how SBE would handle a 42 percent cut that appeared predicated on a reduction required by the House view of the price necessary to raise the debt limit on August 2. Gutmann did not respond.

Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) expressed his support for SBE research in the energy and economy sector. As he has done in other hearings, Bartlett acknowledged the significant role human behavior will play in any alternative energy policy the nation adopts.

At the end of the hearing, Clarke made a passionate defense of the SBE sciences declaring they are not responsible for the deficit and should not suffer because of it. Tonko decried the political attacks on scientific research expressing concern about a "chilling effect."

Although Chairman Brooks played it pretty close to the vest in the hearing, in an interview with

SCIENCE Magazine afterwards, he made it clear that he believes the SBE sciences are not "hard sciences" for which he has "a priority." He believes that with the "hard sciences" you can "see more tangible results." "So the social sciences have a greater burden of proof," he concluded. However, he told SCIENCE that he did not support Sen. Tom Coburn's call for eliminating the SBE directorate (see Update, May 31, 2011).

Although the hearing was interesting and at times theatrical, the practical consequences will play out in the consideration of the FY 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, which includes funding for NSF. That process is scheduled to commence in the House on July 7 with the markup in the Subcommittee. Markup in the full House Appropriations Committee is scheduled for July 11. House floor action could occur the week of July 25.

For more on the hearing including copies of the written testimony and an archive of the session go to: http://science.house.gov.

Rehberg Targets "Soft Sciences" in House Agriculture Appropriation Bill

On Tuesday, May 31, the House Appropriations Committee advanced legislation that would eliminate billions in agriculture spending and cut certain farm subsidies. The measure would provide $17.3 billion in discretionary spending authority for the Agriculture Department and related agencies, a cut of roughly $2.6 billion from current funding and $5 billion from the President's request.

In justifying the cuts House Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA) noted: "While the bill reduces funding for the agencies and programs under its jurisdiction, it provides sufficient funding for them to focus on their core missions. USDA... will be able to continue their critical missions of ensuring food and drug safety, supporting American agriculture and rural communities across the Nation, ensuring that agricultural research is science-based and focused on keeping American agriculture competitive..."

During the proceedings the full Committee also adopted an amendment by Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT) that would prohibit funds to the FDA for rule-making activities or guidance unless the Secretary of Agriculture bases decisions on "hard science" rather than "cost and consumer behavior" and also determines that the benefit of the rule or guidance justifies the action. The amendment was necessary, according to Rehberg, because "the FDA is starting to use soft sciences in some considerations in the promulgation of its rules."

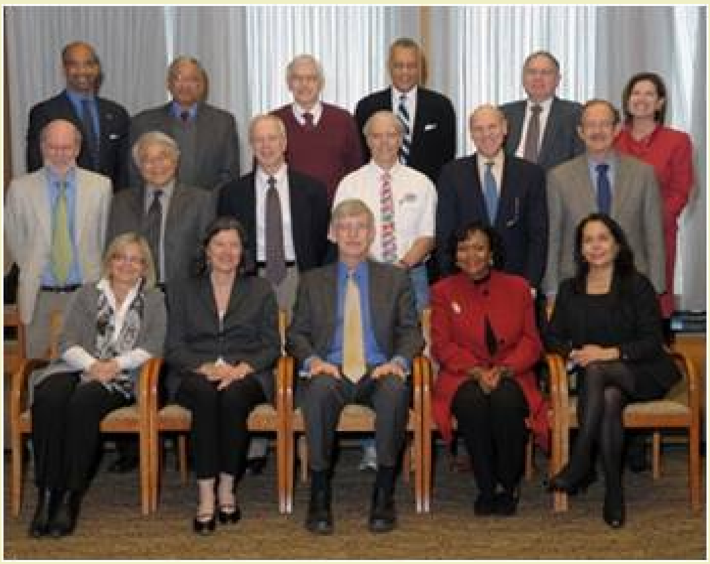
Democrats on the Committee called for the withdrawal of the amendment since absolutely no hearings had been held on the subject. They also noted that Rehberg had failed to even clearly define what he meant by "hard science" or "soft science." Nevertheless, the amendment was adopted with a 29-20 vote.

In the Committee report, the appropriators in discussing their recommendation to reduce funding for the Agriculture Food and Research Initiative (AFRI) to $229.5 million in FY 2012 expressed concern "about some of the research being funded by the agency. For example, the agency recently awarded more than $23 million in grants to improve regional and local food systems." It further makes clear: "In light of...the nation's serious budget deficit and debt problems, the agency should be focusing its research efforts on only the highest priority, scientifically merited research. While there are many interesting research topics and a multitude of issues that could be researched, the Committee expects the agency to focus on its core mission of agricultural research by setting a very high standard for research funded by the agency and requiring a rigorous peer review."

For the Full Committee Report on the legislation, which has been placed on the House Calendar and is expected to reach the floor on Tuesday, June 14, please look here.

NIH ACD Holds 102nd Meeting

The 102nd meeting of the Advisory Council to the Director (ACD) of the National Institutes of Health
(NIH) was convened on June 9 -10. The two-day meeting of the advisory body included the NIH director report by Francis Collins, an update on the Common Fund and the accompanying priority setting activities, the National Center for Advancing Translation Sciences, a report of ACD Biomedical Workforce Working Group activities, an Institute Director Report from the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development by director Alan Guttmacher, and an update on the progress on establishing the Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction institute (see related story).



NIH ACD Members Source: NIH

In his report to the ACD, NIH director Francis Collins reflected on the current budgetary climate and noted that "these are historically difficult times for any part of the budget that is part of discretionary spending," pointing out that NIH is in that category. He shared with the ACD the chaos that the succession of continuing resolutions (CRs) caused over many months, putting grants administrators and program people in the position of not knowing what funding would be available. He noted that they did not want to violate the Antideficiency Act, which according to the GAO states that: "Government officials may not make payments or commit the United States to make payments at some future time for goods or services unless there is enough money in the "bank" to cover the cost in full. The "bank," of course, is the available appropriation . . . Violations of the Antideficiency Act are subject to sanctions of two types, administrative and penal."

Collins expressed gratitude that the agency received only a $321 million or 1 percent reduction in its FY 2011 budget compared to the FY 2010 funding level. He noted, however, when accounting for an inflation level of 3.5 percent, the agency has a 4.5 percent reduction in its purchasing power. According to Collins, this is only the second time since 1971 and the sixth time in 60 years that there has been a "real cut" in the NIH's budget. Nevertheless, Collins expressed "deep concern" for the agency's budget for FY 2012. He also expressed regret and disappointment that the House has decided not to hold an appropriations hearing on the NIH's budget. He recalled the years when the House would hold approximately two weeks of hearings to hear from every NIH institute, center and office. He noted that the agency had "a very positive" hearing before the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee chaired by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) (see Update, May 16, 2011). He reiterated that this is a very uncertain time for the NIH given that the FY 2012 budget is "tangled up" with the discussion of the debt ceiling.

Neil Shapiro, NIH budget director, echoed the NIH director's comments and discussed the House 302(b) allocations. Shapiro explained that the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee received a FY 2012 budget allocation that is $18.2 billion less than the FY 2011 enacted level, a reduction of 12 percent below where that group of agencies is this current fiscal year. He emphasized that the overall numbers are "fairly daunting" given that the NIH represents nearly 20 percent of the $157 billion allocated in FY 2011. Collins clarified that the FY 2012 302(b) allocation for $139 billion is for all of Labor Health and Human Services, noting that the House-passed H.R. 1 provided $145 billion. "There are proposals coming from the House that would make H.R. 1 look good," said the NIH director.

Responding to questions regarding Congressional support for the NIH by the staff, Collins replied that there "are staff who see NIH as valuable," conversely there are "some that are not friendly and are giving NIH staff a hard time about every little detail." As the ACD was meeting, Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Bob Casey (D-PA) were seeking signatures for a joint letter addressed to the chair and ranking members of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services.

The letter "respectfully requests" that committees "maintain a strong commitment to funding the [NIH] in the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education bill. We believe that it is essential to continue support for medical research because of the potential health benefits for all Americans and the importance of ensuring that our Nation remains at the forefront of medical research." Dated for June 10th, as of Monday morning the letter had 37 signatures: Senators Casey, Burr, Pat Leahy (D-VT), John Kerry (D-MA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Kay Hagan (D-NC), Carl Levin (D-MI), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Udall (D-NM), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jack Reed (D-RI), John Rockefeller (D-WV), Al Franken (D-MN), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Scott Brown (R-MA), Mark Udall (D-CO), Susan Collins (R-ME), Mark Begich (D-AK), Chris Coons (D-DE), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), and Roger Wicker (R-MS).

The Common Fund and Innovation Brainstorming

James Anderson, director the NIH Division of Program Coordination, Planning and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) provided a presentation of the NIH Common Fund/Roadmap and an "Innovation Brainstorming" activity by DPCPSI. According to Anderson, currently 24 programs are being supported by the NIH Common Fund (CF). He explained that the CF, initiated by former NIH director Elias Zerhouni and codified in the 2006 NIH Reauthorization Act, is designed to be transformative, synergistic, cross-cutting across multiple institutes and centers (ICs) and disease states, have broad benefit (no other entity is likely or able to do it alone and should benefit public health) and incorporate an implementation plan, including goals, and milestones that allow it to transition to the community. Collins praised Zerhouni for establishing the Roadmap process and expressed appreciation for the CF's creation, exclaiming that it is "a wonderful playground."

The CF programs are "catalytic," said Anderson, designed to provide new tools, infrastructure and data to support or establish new fields of study; new technology and approaches to overcome barriers to progress in the field; and new approaches to foster innovation and creativity.

Anderson cited two of three CF priorities in the FY 2012 budget request for NIH, the HMO Collaboratory, as examples of the type of programs funded in the program. The HMO Collaboratory program will be supported by the CF from FY 2010 - 2015. He explained that large scale human studies are needed to define disease trends and risk factors and to bring science to health care reform. Traditional studies, however, are expensive and hampered by insufficient "power" due to limited number of subjects, data and biospecimens, and an inability to follow up with subjects over time. According to Anderson, the NIH ICs will support research using data, patients, and samples collected by HMOs. The question is how to leverage and expand this capacity to maximize efficiencies in large scale epidemiological studies and pragmatic clinical trials, he noted. To get at the answers to these questions, the agency intends to support supplements to "jumpstart" the program, including conducting an inventory of capabilities and setting up a governance model. It also intends to establish a data coordinating center to strengthen: core IT, data, and sample infrastructure and to fund pilot studies to test new capacities in large scale human studies.

He cited the NIH Director's Early Independence Award (EIA) as a second example of a CF initiative and also a priority in the FY 2012 budget request. The EIA attempts to respond to the concerns raised over the decades regarding scientists spending long periods of time as post doc appointees. The program is inspired by programs at several institutions that have shown that exceptional individuals do not require a post doc to undertake pioneering research. Anderson pointed out that the first year will be a pilot and fund approximately 10 awards-it is designed to test ideas and process. The program may be scaled up in subsequent years.

Eligibility requires that the individuals find an institution willing to accept them within 12 months before or after graduation. Institutions may also actively recruit eligible EIA candidates. Additionally, they are required to ensure that the candidate has independent lab space, supplies, staff space and equipment. Appointments are for five years. Institutions must provide that the candidate protected time for development as a researcher. The candidate's proposed research may complement and enhance the institution's program. Institutions are allowed to retain the candidate.

Anderson also discussed the CF priority setting process. Input is gathered from the broad community of stakeholders. Ideas are considered by the NIH leadership. Recommendations are made to the NIH director, who selects the new program areas. Additionally, DPCPSI and trans-NIH teams develop specific initiatives that address priorities within each program area, he explained.

He informed the ACD that planning for the selection of the FY 2013 CF initiatives has begun. The first phase of the planning process consisted of a meeting held on May 4-6, 2011, Innovation Brainstorm: Transforming Discovery into Impact, of individuals "selected based on their records of interaction, innovation, and broad thinking...drawn from a wide range of scientific disciplines. These creative scientists have demonstrated the ability to take intellectual risks, and will bring fresh ideas and new perspectives to the discussion..." According to Anderson, meeting participants were asked to identify the most exciting, high-impact research paper in any field within the past year, briefly describe the importance of the paper to a broad spectrum of science, and outline possible ways that strategic investments could reduce the time needed for the impact to be realized.

Eight reports resulted from that meeting: (1) beyond Genomic-Wide Association Studies (GWAS), (2) Microbiome Part II, (3) artificial organs as tools for translation, (4) group effects, (5) proteomics and therapeutics development (6) single cell analysis (support planned prior to the meeting and scheduled for launch later this year), (7) NIH award strategies, (8) computational challenges, and (9) molecular classification of disease. The next steps in the process include: the ICs submitting concepts, prioritization of concepts by the NIH director followed by assignment to Working Groups for analysis and development.

Workforce Working Group Report

Shirley Tilghman (President of Princeton University), co-chair of the ACD Biomedical Workforce Working Group, provided the group with an update of the Working Group's activities. Tilghman informed the ACD that the Working Group's activities are "just under way." The most important thing, she reported, is that they have recruited a "very important" group (see Update, May 2, 2011). She discussed the charge to the group. She noted that given the budgetary climate, the study was "more urgent," noting that we are "likely to see a period where growth in the biomedical enterprise is not likely to happen."

Tilghman reported that the Working Group is still debating the scope of the study but has decided that it would begin at post-college with a focus on PhDs, MDs, and MD/PhDs. It would also look at enhancing employment opportunities for master-degreed individuals. The study, however, would not restrict the outcomes to just biomedical researchers recognizing their roles in science policy, education, communication, industry, as well as academia. According to Tilghman, the Working Group's main agenda will be to help the modeling community produce a model of the scientific workforce that will help the NIH to mobilize its research and training dollars.

She highlighted Working Group member Bruce Weinberg, an economist at Ohio State University, will lead a subgroup of the Working Group to do the "challenging work of developing the model." The rest of the Working Group, according to Tilghman, will develop the perspective that will inform the model. The modeling subcommittee members include: David Blau - Ohio State University; Stephen Eubank - Virginia Tech; Richard Freeman - Harvard University; Donna Ginther - University of Kansas; Peter Sorger - Harvard; Paula Stephan - Georgia State University; and Michael Teitelbaum - Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

The Working Group is scheduled to hold a one day meeting at NIH on June 21. The meeting will include presentations from stakeholders, including professional societies, she reported. Subsequently, the Working Group expects to issue a request for information (RFI) at the end of June 2011. The Group also intends "to go on the road" in small groups to the scientific community to ask "pointed questions." Within a year, it expects to have "at least a good idea of what the model will look like," said Tilghman.

Thomas Kelly, (Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and a member of the NIH the Scientific Management Review Board) inquired whether the group had the underlying data required for modeling. That is to be determined, Tilghman responded, adding that for some things there is good data and for others data is wanting. She cited as an example the lack of data required to answer the "simple question" of how many graduate students are supported on R01 [investigator-initiated] grants. It is a critical question to have answer, she noted. Sally Rockey, director of the NIH Office of Extramural Research and the co-chair of the Working Group, responded that the agency is collecting the information and has some data sets. She also pointed to the data collected by the National Science Foundation. Rockey also explained that they are consolidating data and examining the ability to collect the data. She further noted that data collection have to be considered from the perspective of a government agency which cannot collect data without approval of the Office of Management and Budget.

Report of NICHD Director Alan Guttmacher

Alan Guttmacher, director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, provided a report on the National Children's Study (NCS) and the NICHD Visioning Process.

Guttmacher provided the ACD with background information on the NCS, including the overall goal of the study which is to improve the health and well-being of children and to identify early antecedents of adulthood by examining the "multiple effects of environmental influences and biological factors on health and the development of 100,000 children across the U.S. following them from before birth until age 21." He explained that "environmental" is broadly defined and include factors such as air, water, soil, dust, noise, diet, social and cultural setting, access to health care, socio-economic status and learning. The NCS is mandated by the Children's Health Act of 2000 and is the largest and most "ambitious long-term study of child health and human development ever in the U.S." A data and biosample resources, it is not a conventional "study," Guttmacher informed the ACD. The "real beauty" is the power of the data and biosample resource and its ability to look at hypothesis 15 years from now not considered nor thought about in present day. He also cited the ancillary benefit of the study, the federated IRB [institutional review board] (see Update, August 9,2010).

The three major components of NCS, Guttmacher explained, include: (1) the NCS Vanguard Study, a 21-year pilot phase for methods, started in 2009 with seven centers and expanded by 30 more in 2010; (2) the NCS Main Study, a 21 year exposure response phase, is three years behind the Vanguard Study with a planned start in 2012; and (3) Formative Research, short-term studies often with methods development to inform the main study and the Vanguard study.

He also highlighted the changes associated with the NCS over the last two years. The original recruitment and enrollment assumptions proved faulty so new approaches are now being field at Vanguard sites. The study has also moved from assumption-based to an evidence-based plan. Additionally, the NCS timeline has been modified so that the Main Study has been delayed one year and is scheduled for implementation in early 2012. Recommendations and cost estimates are expected to be available later this year for the Main Study.

The original seven Vanguard sites used the household-based recruitment strategy. Three alternative strategies are currently being field-tested: enhanced household recruitment, provider-based recruitment, and two-stage recruitment (see Update, August 9,2010).

The FY 2011 budget for the NCS is $191 million. The FY 2012 budget request is $194 million.

The NICHD Visioning Process

According to Guttmacher the NICHD Visioning process is limited by the mission of the NICHD which is quite broad. The Institute is least known for its focus at the NIH on rehabilitation research which recently celebrated its 20th birthday as part of the NICHD, since its founding. The Visioning process is designed to look across the next 10 years and identify the most promising scientific opportunities across the mission of the institute. Its purpose is to set an ambitious agenda that inspires the research community to achieve critical scientific goals and meet important public health needs. The goals of the process, he explained, is to give the external community ample opportunity to participate; foster cross collaboration among NICHD, other NIH ICs, and external partners; and add early stage investigators and other new stakeholders to the conversation.

Guttmacher explained that he "is hoping for direction," as to what the scientific community can do to make a difference. He shared that he has received "wonderful" comments. The plan is to take the comments, along with the upcoming meeting on June 23 -24, to refine white papers drafted based on the nine themes (see Update, April 18, 2011). At a two-day advisory council meeting in September, an in-depth discussion will occur of the proposed vision. In December, the results of the process would be published in a leading scientific journal. Further dissemination via scientific presentations and newsletters would occur in 2012. Then, based on what comes out of the Visioning process, the Institute will begin conducting a strategic planning process in 2011 -2012.

Guttmacher shared a "smattering" of preliminary thoughts that have come out of the process thus far with the ACD. Comments regarding scientific data included a call to require a data sharing plan in all relevant applications; more effective ways to gather data, including those the private sector employs; better ways to process, store and analyze masses of data; and a requirement to make data available to the entire scientific community. Comments addressing the conduct of studies have included a call for enhanced research capacity in low resource settings; use of social media and new technologies; studies that can be linked in systematic ways and methods to merge data sets; better IRB harmonization across multiple sites; methods to reduce bias when randomized control trials (RCTs) are inappropriate; a centralized archive of data on interventions and evaluations of them; and that every patient be considered a potential research participant.

The comments, Guttmacher noted, also addressed "how we think": replace dichotomies with dimensional systems, which have advantages such as greater power to detect effects, etc.; research that anticipates changing morbidity/mortality; more orientation toward biological processes, rather than disease; examination of the positive impacts of disabilities on individuals, families, and society; getting beyond "SES:" disadvantage, disability, stress (toxic vs. beneficial), adversity; and the need to distinguish between social and scientific definitions of function which are frequently used to qualify for economic benefits.

Additional information on the NICHD Visioning process is available at http://www.nichd.nih.gov/vision.

NCATS

Kathy Hudson (NIH Deputy Director for Science, Outreach, and Policy) and Maria Freire (Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation) provided the ACD members with an update on the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). The Department of Health and Human Services provided the Congress with additional information regarding organizational change and requested that those changes be incorporated in the FY 2012 appropriations legislation.

Hudson presented a "to do" list of activities needed to fulfill the stand up of NCATS. Remaining activities toward this goal include: launching communication initiatives, notifying and welcoming incoming NCATS employees, searching for director, obtaining congressional appropriations, and launching NCATS on October 1, 2011.

Hudson noted that completion of several of those items were currently in progress. She also reported that, regarding the movement of the programs from the National Center for Research Resources which is slated to be abolished, people running particular programs will be kept with those programs. She assured the ACD that those moving to existing ICs would be welcomed with open arms and that activities are in place for those individuals moving to the Office of Director. The search for a director for NCATS has been launched is being led by National Human Genome Research Institute Director Eric Green and National Institute of Mental Health Director Tom Insel.

Freire, chair of the ACD NCATS Working Group, discussed the group's charge:

- Identify areas whereby NIH can contribute to the streamlining of therapeutic and diagnostic development nationally and globally.
- Recommend possible ways in which NCATS can maximally tap the strengths of extant programs, the authorities under the Cures Acceleration Network (CAN), and the vast capabilities of partners.
- Propose new models for how NCATS could build partnerships with extramural entities, including biotech and pharmaceutical companies, to achieve its mission of accelerating translation research.

Freire noted that the NIH is a unique place for NCATS to work, adding that "we don't train people well in translational science." She pointed out that there are efforts to be creative and innovative but that "money is a barrier."

Updates on New SUAA Institute at NIAAA Meeting

The National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), held a two day meeting on June 8 and 9. The Council's session was closed on Wednesday as they discussed grant applications, but Thursday's session was open with items such as mentored career award evaluation and pharmacist-mediated brief alcohol interventions on the agenda. The excitement in the room peaked, however, when Larry Tabak, NIH Principal Deputy Director, entered to discuss updates on the creation of the new NIH Institute for Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction research (SUAA).

The call for the new institute was announced in November of 2010 when (NIH) director Francis Collins released a statement announcing that he had received a formal recommendation from the NIH Scientific Review Board to create a new NIH institute for substance use, abuse and addiction research and related public health initiatives, and dissolve the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) [See Update, November 22, 2010]. In the release Collins stated: "The formation of a single, new Institute devoted to such research makes scientific sense and would enhance NIH's efforts to address the substance abuse and addiction problems that take such a terrible toll on our society."

On Thursday Tabak devoted just under an hour to discussing a detailed timeline with the Council and other interested parties in the room. He began by bringing the room up to date and explaining that from January-March 2011 internal discussions were held between NIH staff to develop guiding principles for the new Institute. He noted that science would drive all recommendations and expertise would be critical for the program. Out of that discussion NIH discovered how truly complex the portfolio being examined is. This has forced a shift in the timeline, pushing the start date of the new Institute to October of 2013-the beginning of FY 2014. This date has the added benefit of allowing time for the Institute to appear in the President's FY 2014 budget request, allowing for transparency in these difficult economic times.

From this month through October of 2012 a SUAA task force as well as a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)/NIAAA integration working group will be meeting. By December 2012, Tabak noted, final recommendations will be given to the NIH director. He also carefully detailed that while stakeholders would not be invited into detailed discussions of portfolio selection, they would be full participants in the development the scientific strategic plan. Further, while the acronym "SUAA" was used during the meeting, Tabak noted that this title was just a place holder and a different name would be created for the Institute.

There was some concern among council members that NIAAA's ability to examine the positive effects of alcohol would be lost since NIDA does not share the same ability. Tabak noted that this issue is being examined and that it was not a goal to ignore potential benefits. After a brief question and answer session, Tabak was forced to exit the meeting, leaving excited discussion of possibilities behind him.

For an update on the new Institute from NIH Director Francis Collins, please look here.

Senate HELP Examines Early Childhood Programs

Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Chairwoman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's newly created subcommittee on Children and Families convened a hearing on June 9, examining the benefits of high quality early childhood programs like Head Start and Early Head Start.

Ten years ago the National Academies issued the report on early childhood development, From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development (see Update, November 22, 2010). One of the crucial findings of this report was that brain development is most rapid during the first five years of life, and that early experiences matter for healthy development.

In her opening statement Mikulski stated that: "Programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start have proven long-term economic payoffs, such as higher income and higher tax revenues, less crime, decreased referrals for special education, better health, reductions in welfare use, less child abuse, increased worker productivity and a larger, more qualified workforce. Studies have shown that for every $1 we invest in high-quality early childhood development programs, our society sees a return on investment of $16 - predominantly because of lower crime costs."

Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children & Families at the Department of Health and Human Services, testified that we need to make sure we address the needs of our most vulnerable population, and make sure that every Head Start program provides a quality education. She pointed out the need to make common sense changes to early education programs including improving the overall quality of state programs, making the programs more consistent, instituting better health and safety measures including instruction in child CPR, and supporting the workforce with training and professional development.

Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) asked Lombardi what percentage of our high needs' kids are currently served by Head Start. Lombardi stated that Early Head Start serves less than five percent of eligible infants and toddlers, and Head Start serves less than 50 percent of eligible three and four year olds. However, she pointed out that with the money received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Head Start programs increased the number of children served by 48,000 infants and toddlers and 13,000 three and four year olds.

The President's FY 2012 budget includes $8.1 billion for Head Start, and also includes a request that would provide a $1.3 billion increase for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), for a total of $6.3 billion in FY 2012 which would allow CCDF to support services to approximately 1.7 million children.

In addition, the FY 2011 final appropriation contains $700 million for the next installment of Race to the Top (RTT). In a joint announcement Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius announced that the Administration plans to use approximately $500 million of the RTT funds for a major competition with the goal of improving early childhood care and education. Lombardi touted the RTT Early Learning Challenge as a "game changer" for early childhood education, and believes the program will help amplify and expand current state reforms efforts, and help bring along systemic reform.

One of the problems of the current child care system according to Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, is the lack of background checks on workers. Burr recently introduced S. 581, the Child Care Protection Act of 2011, that would amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to require criminal background checks on all child care providers. Burr asked Lombardi if the administration plans to support his bill and Lombardi replied that it will work with Burr on this issue.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) railed that "as a nation we should be extremely embarrassed and ashamed" at our childhood poverty rate. Currently one in five kids live in poverty, which is the highest rate in the industrialized world. He continued on to say that there is a known correlation between high poverty rates among children and our incarceration rate which is the highest in the world. He stated, "It's time to get our priorities right, it is smart economics to invest in our kids."

Mikulski asserted her belief that despite the economic downturn early childhood education programs are important to our future success and must be spared drastic cuts. "We must not cut what works, and we must not cut the programs that give our next generation the greatest chance at success and our country the greatest chance at prosperity," she declared.

Mikulski said she plans to hold more hearings on the topic of early childhood education before the summer recess.

New White House Rural Council Announced

On Thursday, June 9, the White House announced that President Obama had signed an Executive Order establishing the first White House Rural Council. Sixteen percent of the American population lives in rural counties; the council was designed to develop answers to the challenges faced by these rural communities, but also to find ways to fulfill their economic potential.

The White House Rural Council will be chaired by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Members will include all the Cabinet agencies as well as the Domestic Policy and Economic Councils, the Council of Economic Advisers, the EPA, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Small Business Administration.

The new Council will coordinate programs across government to encourage public-private partnerships to promote further economic prosperity and quality of life in rural communities nationwide. The Council will be responsible for providing recommendations for investment in rural areas and will coordinate Federal engagement with a variety of rural stakeholders, including agricultural organizations, small businesses, and state, local, and tribal governments. The new council will ultimately be responsible for improving the coordination of Federal programs to maximize the impact of Federal investment and to promote economic prosperity and quality of life in rural communities.

In the next few months the Council will focus on job creation and economic development by increasing the flow of capital to rural areas, promoting innovation, expanding digital and physical networks and more. This will include, among other things, improving job training, developing high-growth regional economies by capitalizing on inherent regional strengths, and increasing post-secondary enrollment rates and completion for rural students.

BEA Seminar Details NIPA Revision and Health Care Expenditures' Discrepancies

In its efforts to bring about constant improvements to the economic data it provides to the nation's government policy makers and non-government economic decision makers, on June 7, the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) led by Steve Landefeld, held a seminar that focused on the revisions to the National Income and Products Accounts (NIPA). The seminar also included a presentation on the discrepancies in health care expenditures as measured by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) National Health Care Expenditure Accounts and the BEA's health-related expenditures included in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Landefeld introduced the seminar by indicating the NIPA revisions, the annual ones in 2011 and a more comprehensive one to come in 2013, are part of a G20 "data gaps initiative." (The G20 was established in 1999 to bring together major advanced and emerging economies to stabilize the global financial market.) At the same time, the director took note of the current budgetary climate and indicated that tradeoffs will likely occur in NIPA and BEA's other activities. He declared that some progress has been made with the inclusion of research and development investment expenditures into the accounts.

Shelly Smith of BEA explained the 2011 flexible annual revisions, which are scheduled for release on July 29. In that revision, the reference year will remain 2005, although some series' revisions will go back to 2003. Others will result in changes to the indexes and chained-dollar estimates that will affect the entire historical time span back to 1929.

The new data will benchmark the Census Bureau's Annual Retail Trade Survey and Service Annual Survey to the 2007 Economic Census. One aspect of changing patterns of consumer expenditures is the revised figures for spending on software, including downloads, up enormously, compared to spending for newspapers and magazines and dishes and glassware, down significantly. Other improvements for the NIPA revision include better data on medical and hospitalization insurance services and measuring petroleum imports by quantity rather than price making the data less volatile. In addition, the series will include updated prices for communication equipment and for portfolio management and investment services.

The revised NIPA will also feature an updated presentation of government social benefits breaking out Old Age, Survivors, Disability, and Health Insurance into Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid expenditures. Family assistance payments will move into the "Other Category," while Unemployment Insurance and Veterans' Benefits will retain their own categories.

Reconciling Difference in Health Care Expenditures: A Question of Sources

In examining differences in health care expenditures collected by BEA and CMS, Robert Kornfeld of BEA, indicated that the discrepancies resulted from dissimilarities in categorization, measurements, and sources of the data.

Despite these, the estimates of total health spending are pretty similar. As with many other measures, the distinctions are in the details. Thus, there are significant differences in the estimates of spending for physicians/labs and hospitals (more in the CMS account) and other professional services and net cost of health insurance (more in the BEA account).

One significant difference is that CMS counts government-sponsored research at the National Institutes of Health as a "national health expenditure," while BEA does not. CMS counts Medicaid and Medicare as "sources of funds," BEA considers them "government social benefits." Another example is that the CMS includes outpatient care centers and services directly purchased by the government in its estimates, BEA does not. BEA counts health spending in schools as an education expense.

Although the reasons for the discrepancies are now understood, there is no move toward reconciliation in one survey and one number. However, CMS and BEA will continue talk about the differences.

Law and Justice Panel Examines Research on White Collar Crime

With the Bernie Madoff case still rippling through many institutions and other instances of financial manipulation increasingly on court dockets, on June 10, the National Academies' panel on Law and Justice, chaired by James Q. Wilson, Professor Emeritus at UCLA and visiting Professor at Boston College and Pepperdine, held a seminar that examined the state of research on white collar crime (WCC).

This is important, because as Neal Shover, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Tennessee, declared, WCC is more costly than street crime and leads to a loss of faith in legitimate institutions and confidence in their leadership. Asked why resources are not as healthy for prosecuting WCC as they are for street crime, Rachel Barkow of NYU Law School suggested that "politics" often is a consideration. Another response came from Carl Bell of the University of Illinois, Chicago, and Glenn Loury of Brown University, who noted the racial disparities in the two types of crimes. Another question raised by some panel members was whether "profit seeking was inherently criminogenic?" Questions of line-drawing and risk-taking for legitimate business activities clouded the ability to answer this question.

What is White Collar Crime?

One of the difficulties in establishing a research agenda for WCC comes from competing definitions. Another from Wilson's perspective is the WCC nomenclature. He indicated that not all the perpetrators of these crimes wore white collars; he cited internet scam artists. Therefore, he argued for a name change to "Abuse of Trust." His panel colleagues were not sure about this.

With regard to definitions, historically going back to criminologist Edwin Sutherland, the focus in deciding what was WCC has been on the status of the offender, with class or "privilege" the demarcation. Others have argued for a definition based on the offense, a tack taken by the FBI. Barkow gave the panel an expansive definition based on the offense. She suggested that illegal acts that did not incur physical violence, but were clear violations of trust, and included deceit, concealment and abuse of power, and created an economic or business advantage, defined WCC. Shover, however, disagreed and argued for continued focus on the Sutherland definition based on the characteristic of the offender.

Michael Benson, Criminal Justice Professor at the University of Cincinnati, and Peter Yeager, Sociology Professor at Boston University, reviewed the current state of the WCC research for the committee. Benson discussed studies that examined the offender. He suggested that there is research based on anecdotal data and many case studies about why supposed "privileged" folks commit these crimes. He declared that these "don't add up to anything." He also indicated that the rational choice perspective clouded many of these investigations and that new skepticism of this view from behavioral economists and decision making theorists suggest a need for different directions. One area Benson would like to explore is "how these guys are doing in prison?"

Yeager examined the studies that focused on the organizational dimension. He noted a number of broad sample surveys that looked at predictors of non-compliance and correlates of specific violations. He also mentioned attitudinal polls about ethics in business, but he indicated that these were done with undergraduates and MBA students and weren't worth much. Some case studies of organizational failure like Diane Vaughan's of the *Challenger* disaster have been superb, Yeager said. However, these are difficult to conduct since corporations responsible for criminal activity clearly limit access to key personnel.

The results of these studies, according to Yeager, indicate that financial performance relates very weakly to crime commission. Corporations facing "financial strain," although hard to measure, is not always a characteristic that leads to offending. Usually, law-breaking involves large firms, but not always, Yeager stated. One finding from interviews, he cited, suggests that law breaking by corporations occurs because the firms claim the statute under question is "illegitimate."

Two areas for new research Yeager recommended include examining the interactions of macro, organizational, and group factors on a corporate culture and focusing on the public policy role in shaping compliance. Jeremy Travis, President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a member of the committee, noted a new study of the Catholic Church's organizational response to the pedophile situation (The study is available at: http://www.usccb.org/mr/causes-and-context-of-sexual-abuse-of-minors-by-catholic-priests-in-the-united-states-1950-2010.pdf.)

Lack of Sufficient Data

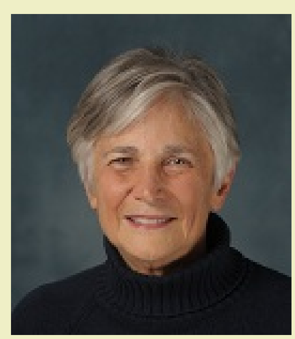
Another difficulty in getting a handle on WCC is lack of data. Sharon Ormsby of the FBI told the panel that her organization has a number of data sets, including indicators on the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), and is making efforts to share other data collected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other regulatory agencies. It was unclear whether these data sets would be available to researchers. The FBI is also conducting a review of the UCR that could provide opportunities for expanding its scope further into WCC.

Bill Black of the University of Missouri Kansas City then took the panel on a tour of the responses to the Savings and Loan crisis of the 1980s and the latest financial crisis that remains with us. In the course of his remarks Black noted that there are research and data that could be useful to WCC studies, including a survey of appraiser coercion. Many of these were conducted in the course of investigations by state Attorneys General such as Andrew Cuomo in New York.

Bureau of Justice Statistics director James Lynch informed the panel that the National Crime Victimization Study (NCVS) includes data on identity theft. Another source of data can come from the new Office of Financial Research in the Treasury Department created in the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (see Update, July 26, 2010).

Looking ahead the panel indicated that next steps could include a workshop that would explore further infrastructure and data needs in this arena as well as laying out a research agenda that would focus on the small steps necessary to advance the science.

Diane Ravitch Receives Moynihan Prize from AAPSS



The American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS) presented its Daniel Patrick Moynihan prize for 2011 to Diane Ravitch in a ceremony at the main New York Post Office in New York City undergoing its transformation into the new Pennsylvania Railroad station named after the late Senator. Previous Moynihan Prize recipients include Alice Rivlin, David Ellwood, and Robert Greenstein.

Ravitch, Research Professor at New York University and a non-resident scholar at the Brookings Institution, was honored for work as an education historian and the application of that work to public policy. The former Assistant Secretary of Education for the Office of Research and Improvement under the first Bush Administration and the author of a history of the New York City schools, she has become a major critic of New York City

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan for laying off teachers. And in reversing some earlier positions she has become a significant critic of the Charter School movement suggesting the evaluation research demonstrates that most of them are not educating our young people any better than the public schools. She has also become a major critic of testing. Both of these positions are reflected in Ravitch's latest book *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choices are Undermining Education*.

AAPSS also honored, by naming them Fellows, a number of other scholars whose work has impacted public policy. Eric Wanner, President of the Russell Sage Foundation since 1968 was named the Eleanor Roosevelt Fellow. Former COSSA congressional seminar speaker Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University was named the Ernest Burgess Fellow. This year's Harold Laswell Fellow was Manuel Castells of the University of Southern California. Susan Fiske of Princeton was named the Gordon Allport Fellow. This year's Francis Perkins Fellow was Richard Freeman of Harvard University. Rogers Smith of the University of Pennsylvania was named the Theodore Roosevelt Fellow.

The AAPSS is one of the nation's oldest learned societies and is dedicated to the use of social science to address important social problems. It publishes *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Princeton Sociologist Douglas Massey is AAPSS' President. At the awards dinner, AAPSS fondly remembered Phyllis Kaniss, its Executive Director from 2006-2010, who died last December.

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