

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## **SBE DIRECTORATE AT NSF TAKING SHAPE: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SOUGHT** *HS*

Discussions are underway on the shape of the new directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) at the National Science Foundation, announced by Walter Massey at the National Science Board meeting on October 11. (see *Special Edition of UPDATE* dated October 15 for details of the announcement.)

NSF expects the new structure to be reflected in the FY 1992 operating plan which soon will be sent to Congress. The operating plan details the appropriation provided by Congress in broad categories to the various programs at NSF.

NSF has begun its search for the Assistant Director of SBE. Social and behavioral scientists are urged to send nominations (self included) to Dr. Walter Massey, Director, National Science Foundation, 1800 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20550. NSF is looking for a senior, distinguished scientist from these disciplines. The goal is to have him/her on board by March 1, 1992.

Although there is talk of reserving decisions for the new Assistant Director, the Acting Assistant Director for SBE, Frank Harris, has asked the staff of the current programs in the Social and Economic Science Division and those programs from the Behavioral and Neural Science Division being transferred to the new directorate (Anthropology and Language, Cognition and Behavior) to discuss possible division structures. Four working groups have formed: Anthropological and Geographical Sciences, Cognitive and Psychological Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, and the Social Sciences. In addition, the location of data programs, an instrumentation and infrastructure program, and the Science, Technology and Society program are also being discussed.

The International Programs of NSF, which will be included in the new SBE, have been under scrutiny for the past few months by an ad-hoc committee headed by NSF Deputy Director Fred Bernthal. Bernthal has appointed a committee of

the current Assistant Directors to mull over the ad-hoc committee's recommendations. It is anticipated that changes in these programs will result from this examination.

## **REP. BOUCHER CRITICAL OF NSF FUNDING OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH** *MB*

Rep. Rick Boucher (D-VA), chairman of the House Science Subcommittee, strongly urged National Science Foundation (NSF) officials to give greater priority to social science research in NSF's global change research agenda. Boucher's comments, echoing those of many in the social and behavioral science community, came at the conclusion of two days of hearings held by his subcommittee to assess the federal government's research response to the issue of global warming.

Robert Corell, Assistant Director of the Geosciences Directorate at NSF and Frank Harris, Executive Officer of NSF's Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences (BBS) Directorate (and recently appointed Acting Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate), outlined for Boucher's panel the role of NSF in the

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basic research on the earth, atmosphere, ocean, and polar regions, and funds social science research on understanding climate change, they said.

Only \$3.4 million of the \$118 million requested by NSF for global change research will be spent on the social sciences, which Boucher termed as a "very small amount" given the importance of understanding the human aspects of this issue, particularly in developing economic models. Harris, asked by Boucher if he were comfortable with this level of funding for social science research, responded that he wanted the budget to increase slowly to better allow the research community to more efficiently absorb the increases. Harris said that he hopes that in five years 8 to 12 percent of the research budget will be for social science research.

#### Social Scientists Cite Inadequate Support

Boucher's criticism of NSF funding priorities followed the testimony of two noted social scientists who discussed the vital role social science can play in climate change research, and the need for proper federal support of this research, particularly in the area of economics.

William D. Nordhaus, professor of economics at Yale, testified that his discipline must be better and more consistently funded at the federal level if it were to adequately study issues such as global warming. Nordhaus told the committee that until this year NSF's budget for social science prevented economists from obtaining significant funding for climate change research. With other federal agencies giving economic research funding to private

consultants or laboratories, he said "university-based researchers doing work in the economics of global change are scratching around" for support.

Nordhaus noted "the meager scale of NSF and other government support for economics and the other sciences today. Put starkly, there is little support for global change research in economics and in the other social sciences." He stated that economics receives approximately one-half of one percent of the federal budget for climate change research.

#### Jacobson Discusses Ability to Predict Behavior

Harold K. Jacobson, professor of political science at the University of Michigan, outlined the Human Interactions component of the U.S. Global Change Research Program. Jacobson discussed the expectations of social and behavioral science research in this area, the relationship between U.S. efforts and those of other nations, the emphases of U.S. funding, and issues of future funding for the human dimensions of global change.

Jacobson told the panel that the ability to predict human behavior will always be limited, saying, "predictive capabilities concerning human behavior can be developed, but they will never yield forecasts with the certainty of those concerning biological, chemical, and physical phenomena. Behavioral and social science can, however, greatly improve existing forecasts and develop new ones. To expect more would be to court serious disappointment."

While noting that other nations' global change research programs do not even contain a social science component, Jacobson added that the Human Interactions component in the U.S. program is still a recent development. Jacobson concluded, "given this fact and its relatively small size, it is appropriate that the budget for the Human Interactions component should increase substantially. Within the United States and abroad, the behavioral and social science community is poised to do significant research on global change."

Subcommittee member Rep. Don Ritter (R-PA) criticized the uncertainties and politicization of global change research, with Jacobson responding that "politicization is greater when research in lesser. You increase research to prevent quick leaps to judgment."

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## POTENTIAL USES AND MISUSES OF GENETIC INFORMATION EXAMINED BY HOUSE COMMITTEE *JFA*

The House Government Operations Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture, chaired by Rep. Robert Wise, Jr. (D-WV), held a hearing on October 17 to examine the potential uses and misuses of genetic information. This issue has been heightened by the federal effort to support human genome research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Department of Energy (DOE).

The committee primarily was concerned with two issues raised by the wider availability of genetic information: the privacy (or confidentiality) and discrimination. In his opening statement, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), chairman of the full Government Operations Committee, warned against the potential for private and public sector agents to use genetic information about individuals to discriminate against them in employment and insurance. "The fear in the minds of many people is that genetic information will be used to identify those with "weak" or "inferior" genes, who will then be treated as a "biological underclass," he said. Conyers recounted historical examples of this kind of effort, including the eugenics movement of the 1920s that resulted in the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, which identified certain categories of people as genetically inferior and denied them entry into the U.S. More recently, Conyers noted, a study by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) found that twenty "Fortune 500" companies had some form of genetic screening of their employees in the past twenty years.

Subcommittee Chairman Wise underscored the potential dangers of releasing genetic information in the current era by suggesting some of the commercially exploitative uses to which it could be put. He gave as one example the case in which a child is identified as having a genetic predisposition to be musical, provoking "someone to try to sell that child's parents a piano."

Testifying about the state of human genome research and the potential uses and misuses of genetic information were representatives from the government's research enterprise. James Watson, Director of the National Center for Human Genome Research (NCHGR) at NIH, and Nobel Prize winner in medicine in 1962 for his role in discovering the molecular structure of DNA, gave a ten-minute crash course in human genetics as

background for the discussion of the positive and negative implications of the research.

Bernadine Healy, Director of NIH, described the mandate of the NCHGR and its cooperative work with DOE and other government and independent agencies. She highlighted the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications (ELSI) program, which by Congressional mandate receives three percent of the NCHGR budget to conduct and support research on the social, legal, and ethical implications of human genome research, including issues of privacy and discrimination. Healy made a point of saying that ELSI was established as an independent entity so that it would be "free of any political ideology." She also noted that ELSI shares a joint advisory committee with DOE to ensure collaboration among agencies conducting human genome research.

Healy underscored NIH's belief in the importance of individual control over the acquisition of personal genetic information and the need to improve social protection against discrimination based on genetic information. As an aside, she noted that "the greatest discrimination in this country has been by genotype: against those without a Y chromosome."

Healy also mentioned the importance of keeping genetic information in context--that is, as part of managing medical information in general, where issues of confidentiality, privacy, and discrimination already exist. She noted that NIH is establishing a center for science policy studies within the Office of the Director to examine the range of social and ethical issues raised by the application of biomedical research conducted by NIH.

French Anderson, Chief of the Molecular Hematology Branch of the NIH, added that he sensed that people are assuming that once the human genome is mapped, we will know everything there is to know about a person and use it for either good or evil purposes. But, he said, all we'll really learn is one's genetic propensity to certain diseases and disorders, which does not wholly determine what happens to an individual. It is important to recognize the environment-genetic interaction and the many influences on a person's life, said Anderson.

The hearing was called in relation to a bill introduced by Conyers, called the Human Genome Privacy Act (H.R. 2045), which prevents disclosure of genetic records without an individual's personal

written consent and guarantees people the ability to correct or amend any of their records that are maintained by the federal government, its grantees and its contractors. Conyers sees this legislation as the first step toward extending these protections to the private sector.

Although the panelists--being federal employees--could not endorse the legislation itself, all agreed in principle for the need to institute privacy and anti-discrimination protection related to the use of genetic information.

## HOUSE TASK FORCE EXAMINES BUDGET ENFORCEMENT ACT *JA*

The Task Force on Budget Process, Reconciliation, and Enforcement of the House Budget Committee held a hearing on October 10 to examine the effect of the Budget Enforcement Act (BEA) of 1990 on the federal budget process.

Anthony Beilenson (D-CA), chairman of the Task Force, began by noting that the two essential elements of the BEA-- the "pay-as-you-go" rule regarding entitlement programs, and the spending caps for the three discretionary categories of defense, international, and domestic--"have influenced considerably the way Congress now makes its spending decisions." The BEA disallowed any transfer of money between discretionary categories once the caps were determined.

However, with the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the apparent end of the Cold War, discussion has begun in Washington about the possibility of modifying the caps to reflect shifting priorities away from defense spending and toward greater domestic spending. The Task Force hearing addressed this issue with testimony from three prominent social scientists: Robert Reischauer, Director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO); Alice Rivlin, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and former CBO Director; and Allen Schick, Professor and Director of the Bureau of Governmental Research in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland.

All three witnesses agreed that the BEA, even with its problems, is better than "Gramm-Rudman" which placed restrictions on government spending through the threat of sequestration. They furthermore agreed that the real problem is not the

BEA, but rather the deficit itself, and that the BEA does not adequately address this.

Reischauer claimed that the deficit will remain at about 2 1/2 percent above GNP for the remaining years of the decade if major changes in spending and revenue aren't made. He blamed "excessive private and public consumption" during the 1980s on raising the deficit to such high levels. Adjusting the three caps of the BEA will not address the deficit problem, he said.

This sentiment was echoed by Rivlin, who asserted that "deficit reduction is the key to strengthening the economy." She noted that even if the spending caps and pay-as-you-go rules of the BEA continue to be enforced, "the budget is not now on a track to long-run surplus or even balance." Rivlin furthermore charged that any change in the budget process should attempt to "recognize shifting priorities and accelerate budget deficit reduction at the same time." She recommended merging the three discretionary categories into one with a combined cap as a reasonable first step.

Calling the BEA "a seriously flawed deal," Schick suggested that the hearings should reevaluate not just the spending caps of the BEA but also the entire budget process. One of the problems of the BEA, he noted, is that it freezes programs and leaves no room for new initiatives: "BEA bars Congress from financing additional discretionary expenditures by cutting mandatory spending or raising taxes. In view of the strong bias in favor of funding existing programs, BEA has called a halt to virtually all discretionary domestic initiatives," Schick said. This is also the case with the pay-as-you-go system where existing programs are fully funded but new initiatives require producing additional revenue or finding offsets in other accounts. "The barriers to program initiation have bottled up much of the legislation produced by House and Senate committees during the current session," said Schick.

All three witnesses agreed that one of the other major problems with the BEA is that the discretionary spending caps have come to represent floors rather than ceilings--"minimum amounts that must be spent." Schick charged that "in effect, BEA has changed discretionary defense spending into an entitlement for the Defense Department, and it has had a comparable impact on other parts of the budget." He suggested that the BEA be clarified to ensure there is no requirement to spend up to the cap.

Rivlin concluded by warning the Task Force that no matter what changes are made to BEA, it shouldn't be assumed that all problems can be solved by revising the budget process. "Are you suggesting we need some political will and courage?" Beilenson asked rhetorically.

## AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS CLEARS CONFERENCE *HS*

The FY 1992 Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill emerging from the House-Senate conference committee cleared both Houses of Congress on October 16 and was sent to the President for his signature.

The bill includes the \$4 million for the Markets, Trade and Policy portion of the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program. The Competitive Grants programs received \$97.5 million, an increase of \$24.5 million over FY 1991 spending. However, the Congress delayed the obligation of \$25 million of the new money until September 20, 1992.

Special grants in the Cooperative State Research Service received \$74 million, a \$12 million increase from FY 1991. The Rural Policies Institute at the Universities of Missouri, Arkansas, and Nebraska received a \$200,000 increase to \$575,000. The House and Senate had previously concurred on Hatch Act funding of \$168.8 million, a \$6.5 million increase over FY 1991.

The Economic Research Service received \$58.7 million, an increase of almost \$3 million over last year. The National Agricultural Statistical Service received \$82.6 million, a \$6.2 million increase over FY 1991. The Pesticide Data Program was funded at FY 1991 levels.

## PLANS FOR CENTER FOR SURVEY METHODS EXPLORED AT CNSTAT WORKSHOP *HS*

The Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) convened a workshop on September 26 to discuss plans for the proposed Center for Survey Methods. The Center, included in the proposed FY 1992 budget for the National Science Foundation's Division of Social and Economic Science, is needed to improve the quality of the federal statistical workforce, according to Hermann Habermann, Chief

of the Office of Statistical Policy at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Although OMB initiated and "will continue to be interested" in the project, Habermann said this is now an NSF project, that would be an opportunity to "think innovatively" about sharing knowledge about conducting surveys and statistics between the academic community and the federal statistical community.

NSF will solicit applications in mid-November for a grant or a cooperative agreement that will be awarded in late summer 1992. Funding is expected to begin in FY 1992 at \$400,000, increasing to \$1 million in future years. Universities, consortia of universities and other organizations are encouraged to apply to run the Washington, DC based Center.

During the all-day workshop representatives from the federal statistical agencies and from academia discussed what the Center should do. Most of the recommendations focused on the curricula and types of training to be offered. These ranged from basic courses in statistics and survey research for an undertrained workforce to highly-specialized post-doctoral courses that would take a multi-disciplinary approach. There was also an appeal for ethics and confidentiality courses.

Barbara Bailar, Executive Director of the American Statistical Association, concentrated her remarks on the research needs that the Center should meet. Among the topics she considered necessary for exploration were: translating the goals of a survey into questions; questionnaire content, wording, and placement; quality assurance methods; nonresponses and imputation; best combination of methodologies; and confidentiality concerns. Bailar also emphasized the need to encourage more analysis of federal survey results. Judith Tanur of the State University of New York at Stony Brook echoed Bailar's concern for more research into the mechanisms underlying survey response.

## JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE LOOKS AT WAR ON POVERTY: WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T? *HS*

Concerned with the continuing high levels of poverty in the United States, the Joint Economic Committee (JEC), on September 25, continued its series of hearings exploring the legacy of the Great Society and its War on Poverty. With Rep. Steve Solarz (D-NY) presiding, the committee sought to

discover "the true record of this most ambitious social agenda since the New Deal."

Rep. Richard Arney (R-TX) played skeptic, asking "whether conditions have actually improved for those targeted by Great Society programs," and answering that "based on its objective of promoting self-sufficiency among the poor, the War on Poverty must be judged a failure."

Witnesses offered different perspectives. Sar Levitan of the Center for Social Policy Studies at George Washington University, argued that "the New Deal, the Great Society, and related social legislation have provided greater economic security and expanded opportunities for all Americans." He cited Head Start, Chapter 1 compensatory education, and skills training through the Job Corps as the positive legacies of the War on Poverty. Levitan denounced the Reagan administration for giving up on many anti-poverty programs and blamed the changes in society, such as increased permissiveness and drug use, for further reducing the success of those programs that survived.

Sheldon Danziger, Professor of Social Work and Public Policy at the University of Michigan, asserted that "poverty would be much higher today if the War on Poverty had never been declared." He noted that the official poverty rate declined from 19 percent in 1964 to 11.1 percent in 1973. Danziger argued that since 1973, despite continued growth of social welfare spending, macroeconomic conditions have led to lagging economic growth and productivity, causing the incomes of the poor to grow more slowly than the average rate of income growth, a process that worsened during the economic recovery in the 1980s. Thus, further attempts to reduce poverty were defeated, according to Danziger.

Timothy Smeeding, Professor of Economics and Public Administration at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, added a cross-national perspective to the hearing. Smeeding is Director of the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) which examines the changing effectiveness of income security policies on poverty in eight nations: The U.S., Canada, Australia, Sweden, Germany, France, United Kingdom and the Netherlands (see box). Smeeding testified that: "In the mid-1980s the level of poverty in the U.S. was a clear outlier, compared to any similar other nation [in the study]. With the exception of childless adults U.S. poverty rates were at least twice as high as those in all other nations studied." Smeeding concluded, based on the

### LUXEMBOURG INCOME STUDY ANNOUNCES SUMMER WORKSHOPS

The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), which examines measures of income and economic well-being in modern industrialized nations, announces its fourth summer workshop to be held July 19-31, 1992 in Luxembourg.

The LIS workshop is a two-week pre- and post-doctoral workshop designed to introduce young scholars in the social sciences to comparative research in income distribution and social policy using the LIS database.

For further information, please contact: Timothy M. Smeeding, LIS Project Director, The Maxwell School, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244, Phone: (315) 443-9042.

evidence from the LIS of the impact of each nation's antipoverty policies, that "Our [U.S.] antipoverty system doesn't work as well as do systems in other nations."

Walter Williams, Professor of Economics at George Mason University, attacked the anti-poverty programs for creating "a level of dependency and pathology entirely new among black Americans." What has occurred among a large segment of the poor black community, according to Williams, "is permanent dependency and poverty of the spirit, which is far more debilitating than material poverty." Williams also asserted that "poverty is seriously overstated," since the Bureau of the Census excludes from its definition both assets and non-cash payments to the poor.

The witnesses proposed solutions, including: arguing for a return to public service jobs (Levitan); government-supported universal health insurance and a universal child allowance, similar to that proposed by the National Commission on Children (Smeeding); and eliminating barriers to poor people obtaining jobs, such as licensing requirements and minimum wage laws (Williams). Danziger concluded that the diversity of the poor "means that no single program or policy can solve the problem." But he argued that "well-informed government policy can make a difference. And once again we need to place antipoverty policy at the top of our national agenda."

## OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE RELEASES 1992 RESEARCH PLAN *MB*

The Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) recently released its Proposed Comprehensive Research Plan for Fiscal Year 1992. OJJDP's agenda, which primarily focuses on training and technical assistance programs, does contain a research component.

As part of OJJDP's agenda on gangs and violent offenders, it will fund a study of the nature of the juvenile justice system's response to juvenile sex offenders. OJJDP also will continue its funding of a National Youth Gang Clearinghouse. The office announced the creation of a \$750,000 evaluation program, "Effectiveness of Juvenile Offender Treatment: What Works Best and for Whom?" Funding will continue for contracts to evaluate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of selected OJJDP programs. The office also will continue funding for its fellowship program for independent study in the field of juvenile delinquency.

Through its Information Systems, Support, and Statistics initiative, OJJDP will continue funding the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which collects, analyzes, and disseminates information on juvenile court systems. The Juvenile Justice Data Resources program will address the need to improve the availability of juvenile justice data sets, as well as OJJDP's analytical resources. This project will seek to ensure that data are fully available and useful to researchers. OJJDP will also continue a statistical program to report to Congress on juveniles taken into custody, and the response of the juvenile justice system to victimization. Citing lack of research, OJJDP intends to fund a study to examine the effects of delays in juvenile treatment and sanctions.

The public comment period for OJJDP's FY 1992 plan concludes on November 12, 1991. For further information on the plan, or to comment, please contact Marilyn Silver at (202) 307-0751.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION *MC*

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

### Office of Postsecondary Education

The purpose of the Cooperative Education Program-Research Projects is to provide grants to institutions to conduct studies to improve, develop, or evaluate methods of cooperative education for the benefit of the cooperative education community.

**Eligible Participants:** Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs); combinations of IHEs; and public and nonprofit private agencies and organizations.

**Budget:** Estimated range of awards: \$20,000 to \$100,000. Estimated number of awards, 2

**Review Process:** Preference is given to applications that meet the following priorities:

(a) Longitudinal studies on former cooperative education students and non-cooperative education students to determine the relationship between the students' cooperative education work experiences and one or more of the following: initial job placement, job advancement, and college retention rates and academic achievement.

**Deadlines:** Application deadline date is December 13, 1991 with the deadline for intergovernmental review to be February 21, 1991.

**Contact:** To receive application and information contact: Dr. John E. Bonas, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3022, ROB-3, Washington, DC 20202-5251. Telephone: (202) 708-9407.

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