

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## NICHD DIRECTOR IS FEATURED SPEAKER AT COSSA ANNUAL MEETING JA

Duane Alexander, Director of the National Institute on Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) treated attendees at COSSA's annual meeting on December 3 to a frank discussion about the fate of federally-funded research on sexual behavior. Alexander's comments came in the context of his luncheon speech, in which he described the full range of social and behavioral science initiatives at NICHD.

Alexander began by noting that the recently approved \$9 billion budget for FY 1992 for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a whole includes the largest support ever for social and behavioral science. NICHD devotes a larger proportion of its budget (20-22 percent) to social and behavioral research than any other NIH institute, followed by the National Institute on Aging (10 percent), he said.

Although Alexander acknowledged that there still is a long way to go to raise the proportion of the overall NIH budget dedicated to health and behavior research from its current 3-4 percent to the 10 percent mandated by Congress over the next ten years, he insisted that there had been a significant "mind shift" in recognizing the value of this research "from the top" since the arrival of the new director of NIH, Bernadine Healy. He cited the Women's Health Initiative and the Minority Health Initiative--two large-scale NIH-sponsored clinical and community studies with social and behavioral components--as indicators of Healy's identity as an "advocate" of social and behavioral research.

Alexander then went on to describe briefly the range of research areas and initiatives at NICHD, including fertility, population dynamics, sudden infant death syndrome, normal child and adult development, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, child care, women's employment and family dynamics, accidents and injuries, and mortality and violence among black males. He cited specific examples of NICHD-sponsored social and

behavioral science research in each of these domains, and noted their valuable contribution to public health policy.

Recognizing the deep concern held among COSSA's members and friends about NICHD-sponsored research on human sexual behavior, Alexander embarked on a detailed account of the history and current status of surveys that have come under attack in recent months (see Update, August 5 and September 23, 1991). He noted that, as early as 1987, NICHD began calling for proposals to develop national surveys of adult and adolescent sexual behavior and its implications for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STD), and AIDS. He described the chronology of events that led from the original calls for proposals to the eventual "suspension" this year of three approved grants--the Survey of Health and AIDS Risk Prevalence (SHARP), the American Teenage Study (ATS), and the Social Demography of Interpersonal Attraction.

Alexander called the whole experience "frustrating," especially for the principal investigators involved, but also for NICHD staff who had spent as much as five years of their professional lives involved in these studies and now "have nothing to show for their work." Additionally, he was discouraged "not just that these studies won't get done, but also that we won't get the knowledge that we'd hoped to obtain," and he noted "the loss that we feel because these were outstanding studies."

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In talking about the future of sexual behavior research, Alexander stated that it was "very clear" that studies that ask "extremely sensitive questions about personal sexual behavior" probably will not be fundable by NICHD or any other federal agency, but studies with "less sensitive" questions probably will be funded. He also underscored NICHD's commitment to seeing these studies get conducted; but, he said, "we must find a way to do them with the approval of the institute [NIH], the Department [Health and Human Services], and the Congress."

Alexander closed by stating directly that NICHD is "not abandoning this area of research," and will work with the scientific community to develop fundable projects.

#### MS Perrolle Describes Social Science at OSTP

Earlier in the day, Pierre Perrolle, Assistant Director at the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) for the social sciences, described the structure and functions of OSTP. He discussed the role of the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST) and the Federal Coordinating Council on Science, Engineering and Technology (FCCSET).

Perrolle delineated four issue areas for OSTP: science, technology, education, and international science policy. In the science area the two things that matter most are megaprojects and infrastructure. The question facing OSTP is how to deal with large projects such as the space station, the superconducting supercollider and interdisciplinary projects, such as global change, in an era of constrained resources. In the

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community. Update is published fortnightly. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$50; institutional subscriptions, \$100, overseas mail, \$100. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788

infrastructure area, Perrolle noted OSTP's role working with OMB to help solve the university indirect cost problem and the need to increase support for research facilities and instrumentation in order to curtail "pork barrel" projects.

In technology, OSTP is focusing on the presidential initiative in high performance computing and communication. PCAST is looking extensively into the role of technology and national security. On education, Perrolle noted OSTP's role in the President's America 2000 strategy, but unlike its emphasis on overall improvement of K-12 education, PCAST is concerned about the education of gifted children who will become the nation's premier scientists of the future.

Referring to international activities, Perrolle mentioned the emergence of high level informal meetings where the science advisers of the G-7 countries discuss issues without the presence of staff. OSTP's international agenda also focuses on relations with the European Community and Japan, and the long-term science implications of the demise of the USSR.

Other OSTP activities in which Perrolle is particularly involved include: developing new rules on the protection of human subjects in research, examining risk assessment and health issues, developing a data policy for global change, and revising the Office of Government Ethics rule on the participation of federal employees in professional associations.

Asked how much PCAST, FCCSET, and OSTP itself focus on social science issues, Perrolle responded that it is a question of expectations and prior context. PCAST gives advice pertaining to physical and natural science problems, because that is what the President expects of it. He suggested that PCAST has raised other issues, but the White House has not responded in a significant way. For example, national security issues are still framed around discussions of hardware, rather than the broader social and political issues.

#### Woolsey Describes CBASSE Activities MS

Following lunch, Suzanne Woolsey reported on the many activities of the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE), of which she is the Executive Director. Established in the early 1970s, CBASSE is a part of the National Research Council, the operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).

According to Woolsey, CBASSE's major function is to build consensus among researchers from social and behavioral science disciplines on "what the issues are" and "what the research needs to be." Most of the work is mandated from the outside, usually Congress looking for answers to pressing social problems. However, Woolsey suggested that CBASSE was attempting to do "a lot more work on issues that are not explicitly defined as social problems," in order to convince people that "the utility of social science methodology and insight is across-the-board" on a wide range of issues.

CBASSE is organized into four divisions. The Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT), which oversees the federal statistical system, soon will conduct a large study on how to improve the Census, is examining revisions to the measures of poverty, and recently produced a report on the uses of microsimulation studies for social welfare policy. The Social and Economic Studies division is examining how research can answer questions regarding child abuse and neglect and the control of violent behavior. Other divisions in CBASSE include Education, Training and Employment, and Human Behavior and Performance. The former is looking at the federal role in education research; the latter is concerned with human factors research and techniques for enhancing human performance. In addition, CBASSE later this month will release its report on human dimensions of global change.

Woolsey noted that she is trying to move away from reliance on committees writing formal reports, which are often delayed because of the NAS' painstaking review process, and toward more short-term workshops and conferences which produce reports of discussions. As an example, she cited recently held discussions trying to help the Agency for International Development define indicators of "progress toward democracy."

#### Education Research Debated MB

The final event of the meeting was a panel discussion entitled "Education Research and Education Reform," which examined the role of research in the context of larger issues of education reform. The panel, moderated by COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver, featured Milton Goldberg, Director of the Office of Research, U.S. Department of Education; Paul Hill, Senior Social Scientist, the RAND Corporation; Jean McDonald, Center for Policy Research, National Governors' Association; and Gerald Sroufe, Director of

Government Relations, American Education Research Association.

Silver began the discussion by quoting from the landmark 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, which warned of "a rising tide of mediocrity" in our nation's schools. Turning to Goldberg, who served as executive director for the commission which authored the report, Silver asked what impact the powerful rhetoric of this report has had. Goldberg stated that the report was aimed at making Americans realize that "quality of education has a direct relationship to quality of life," a sentiment Goldberg said was not widely recognized at that time.

Panelists then commented on what -- if any -- progress in education reform has been made since A Nation at Risk was released. McDonald, citing statistics comparing achievement levels of top American students to those in other nations, said "unfortunately our nation still seems to be at risk." While noting improvement in education for minority youth, Goldberg was quick to comment on "the woeful ability of high school students to do anything beyond basic thinking." Hill noted two areas he believes remain unaddressed: the quality of education for average students in K-12, which he said "truly affects our competitiveness," and the problems of urban schools. Speaking on the latter, Hill said that while progress may be being made in some parts of the country, great problems still persist in urban schools, something which in his opinion has not been addressed by reform efforts. Sroufe, while noting much progress has yet to be made in improving American schools, offered the opinion that not all problems in education are rooted in our schools, rather that they are part of larger societal issues.

Silver asked Sroufe, "has education research provided the information we need?" Sroufe began his response by saying that research has "pretty well laid out what needs to be done," but that the larger issue is one of resources, stating that there is a need to better "focus our resources on our problems." Goldberg expressed similar sentiments, saying that the role of education research, and social science research in general, is to "narrow the gap between what we know and what we do," and that more can be done in this area. McDonald cited the recent ascendancy of "translators," those who can place research findings into the language of policymakers. Hill cited his own research on Catholic schools as providing insight into the benefits of schools having themes or sense of purpose.

Panelists also commented on the role of research in relation to the six education goals agreed to by the President and the nation's governors in 1989, goals which McDonald said were adopted as a means to focus education reform efforts. Sroufe opined that the goals were unlikely to have much impact on research, as they are not stated in ways easily applicable to research. Goldberg disagreed, noting that the goals "give us context" by which to conduct research, and McDonald expressed her opinion that research need not be defined or limited to the six goals.

## RAVITCH OUTLINES VISION OF EDUCATION RESEARCH OFFICE *WS*

Meeting with representatives of 20 organizations, including COSSA, interested in the work of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), Assistant Secretary Diane Ravitch discussed her efforts to "shape a vision" for the office. Their efforts coincide with the ongoing discussions with House and Senate actors in the upcoming Congressional reauthorization of OERI.

In an attempt to develop a highly professional, non-partisan OERI infused with a "culture of professionalism," Ravitch said the key was to develop priorities for research. She outlined six program areas -- at two points she called them directorates -- that would be tied to the national goals outlined in America 2000. The six areas are: 1) early childhood learning, including the role of family and community; 2) the education of at-risk children; 3) curriculum, instruction and assessment; 4) higher education and adult education; 5) mathematics and science education; and 6) school organization, finance, structure and personnel.

Asserting the need for a better fit between research and practice, Ravitch noted that the consumers of education research should not be other researchers, but teachers, parents, administrators, and policymakers. She decried the "incomprehensibility" of much education research and reiterated her call for the development of videos and high-technology products to translate the research to non-peers who could use it. Among the high-tech products being developed at OERI is an on-line interactive system dubbed SMARTLINE. Still in its planning stages, this venture will provide easy access to education information and research results. Also included in OERI's high tech plans are ways to link America's libraries to the information super-highway now under development.

## INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE GUIDE AVAILABLE

The Liaison Group for International Educational Exchange announces the publication of the second edition of the International Exchange Locator, a guide to international exchange organizations, federal agencies, and congressional committees.

The directory is cross-indexed and provides access to listings by geographic focus, educational levels, and by state or country offices.

For information on individual or bulk orders, please contact Jynks Burton of the Liaison Group at (202) 659-0151.

## Field Initiated Studies Grants Awarded

Ravitch also expressed support for increased funding for Field Initiated Studies (FIS). Awards for FY 1991 provided 12 grants totaling \$967,862. The studies supported will investigate such issues as middle school students who fail in large urban school districts, literacy skills of black children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the identification of gifted Native American students, and the long-term effects of staff development projects. Applications are now available for the FY 1992 FIS program from the Office of Research, OERI, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20208-5646.

## INTELLIGENCE FUNDS CONVERTED TO SUPPORT FOREIGN STUDIES *MS*

Legislation recently signed into law will convert \$150 million from the intelligence budget to fund educational exchanges, graduate fellowships, and other international studies programs, doubling the current amount of federal support in this area.

This increase in support for international and foreign language studies was included in the intelligence authorization and defense appropriations bills which were signed into law by the President. The provisions were authored by Sen. David Boren (D-OK), chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a long-time advocate of expanding international educational opportunities.

Citing a "lack of linguistic and cultural skills" by Americans, Boren said at a recent press conference, "We can no longer define our national security interests in military terms alone. Our ignorance of world cultures and world languages represents a threat to our ability to remain a world leader."

Boren's legislation, the National Security Education Act of 1991, will divide \$35 million for Fiscal Year 1992 evenly among undergraduate scholarships to study abroad, graduate fellowships in foreign studies, and grants for foreign studies at colleges and universities. The remaining \$115 million appropriated for FY 1992 will be used to create a trust fund to support future programs. Boren said he believes this could double the number of American students studying abroad.

Under the bill, recipients of graduate fellowships would be required to teach or work in a federal agency for at least one year for each year they receive a fellowship. Program funds will be distributed by a governing board consisting of officials from the departments of State, Defense, Education, and Commerce and from the Central Intelligence and U.S. Information Agencies.

### POLITICAL SCIENTISTS TELL SENATE PANEL OF NEED FOR CONGRESSIONAL REFORM *MB*

Three noted political scientists appeared before a November 19 hearing of the Senate Rules Committee, chaired by Sen. Wendell Ford (D-KY) to urge the establishment of a joint committee to consider changes in Congressional management and procedure.

The hearing was the first in a series of Congressional hearings to be held on S. Con. Res. 57, legislation to create a Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. Thomas E. Mann, Director of Governmental Studies at the Brookings Institution, Norman J. Ornstein, Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and James Thurber, Director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at the American University appeared before Ford's committee, as did the four original co-sponsors of the resolution, Sens. David Boren (D-OK) and Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Reps. Lee Hamilton (D-IN) and Willis Gradison (R-OH).

Mann and Ornstein, submitting joint written testimony, and Thurber discussed the need for such a study. Mann and Ornstein rejected arguments that Congress as an institution is the primary source of our nation's problems, contending, "The problems of governance go well beyond the internal organization of Congress, or of the manner of election to Congress... they reflect an extraordinarily complex set of economic and social challenges." They expressed their belief that a reform process should begin in Congress, as reforms in other aspects of government would be difficult without the active involvement of Congress. Thurber said, "Improvement in the way Congress manages itself will bring a long term recovery in the confidence of the American people." Citing a litany of criticisms of Congress, Thurber said that it would be up to the joint committee to determine whether these criticisms are valid.

The three political scientists were in consensus on areas of focus for the proposed panel: the committee system, the congressional budget process, workloads, internal management, and the proper oversight and foresight role. Mann and Ornstein suggested that the panel should examine how new technologies can be applied to Congress, for example using computerized scheduling to reduce schedule conflicts and using teleconferencing for field hearings or town meetings with constituents.

In recommending an approach for the proposed joint committee, Thurber suggested that it should begin by determining what criticisms of Congress are valid, saying "Some 'problems' may be due to political preferences of voters and not because of the organization and management of Congress." He urged the committee to survey members, staff, and outside experts, as well as to carefully examine recommendations of previous studies.

In extemporaneous remarks before the Senate panel, Ornstein cautioned that such a study would not be a "magic bullet" and may or may not produce a major change in public attitudes toward Congress. Mann said that the recent flurry of criticism has, "put Congress on the defensive and Congress needs to get ahead of the curve on this issue."

Mann, Ornstein, and Thurber were in agreement on the role political scientists can play in Congressional reform, stating that in addition to advising the proposed Joint Committee, the political science community could bring together experts on Congress to serve a pre-planning role.

In his testimony before the committee, Boren said, "In both perception and reality, Congress is failing to grapple with the serious challenges facing our nation.... It is time for Congress to thoroughly examine itself." The concurrent resolution, which is co-sponsored by thirty-three senators and 120 Representatives, has yet to be acted upon by Congress.

## FORUM EXPLORES HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL CHANGE *WS*

Describing the 1990s as "The Decade of Decisions" that will influence the next century, Thomas Malone exhorted the 600 natural, social and engineering scientists in attendance at the Forum on Global Change and the Human Prospect "to probe deeply into the forces underlying global changes that are now engaging worldwide attention."

Malone, Distinguished University Scholar at North Carolina State University and member of the COSSA Board of Directors, organized the conference held on November 16-18 in Washington, DC and co-sponsored by COSSA, Sigma Xi, the Social Science Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association of Engineering Societies, and the Council of Scientific Society Presidents.

Speakers at the Forum, such as Peter Raven, Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden, Dean Jamison of the UCLA School of Public Health, and David Pearce of the University of London, laid out the depressing statistics concerning world population growth, poverty, hunger, and lack of development. Although some successes have occurred in the past half century including some decline in fertility and infant mortality rates, and the eradication of some communicable diseases, problems continue to multiply and shift. Decreased infant mortality and longer life spans increase the number of elderly which in turn increases the strains on health care systems unable to care for these people.

M.G.K. Menon, President of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), focused on the dilemma of reconciling economic development to alleviate the poverty in underdeveloped countries against the need to alleviate the environmental problems often caused by that development. The report Our Common Future, produced by a commission headed by former Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Bruntland, called for "sustainable development" as the answer to this dilemma.

Menon noted that, for the most part, global environmental change is not viewed as a major priority in the Third World. He did call, however, for more attention to the human dimensions of global change, since technological fixes will not be enough to achieve sustainable development.

Rep. George Brown (D-CA), Chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, was somewhat pessimistic and stated that the world "is not headed in a sustainable direction." It will be necessary, according to Brown, to transform societies through "a revolution in values." He suggested that there was "more progress in the social and policy sciences than in the physical sciences" in moving toward societal transformation. Calling for a "science of humane goals," he urged physical scientists to work more closely with social scientists and humanists to create the political support to accomplish the changes necessary for sustainable development. John Gibbons, Director of the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, echoed Brown, in calling for science and technology that will move away from creating more personal gratification and toward achieving social goals.

Key to attaining sustainable development will be attitude changes among developed countries. William Clark from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, examined the practicality of this, by directing his remarks to America's national interest in a time of global change. Suggesting that there will be "a lot of mess along the road," Clark cited the proliferation of actors, the growing significance of public-private players, and the changing nature of power and influence as factors limiting the United States' ability to act in the interdependent world setting. Clark called for more models of the international system that utilize the interface between the social and natural sciences. He also called for enhanced international institution building.

Also speaking at the Forum were Mayumi Moriyama, Senior Director of the Special Committee on the Environment for the Diet of Japan, who described the role of Japanese women in that country's environmental movement, Elwood Blanchard, Vice President of Dupont, who reported industry's role in achieving sustainable development, and Thomas Odhiambo, Director of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology in Kenya, who depicted the dire need for economic development in Africa as "a basket case" in need of a Marshall Plan rescue.

The Forum also provided opportunities for small group discussions in a variety of areas including urbanization, education, population growth, and institutional change.

The Forum was held as a prelude to the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Brazil in June 1992. Joseph Wheeler, Director of Programme

Integration for UNCED, told the gathering that the UN conference was being designed to "change the course of history." Fifty thousand people from all over the globe, representing governments, non-governmental organizations, business, industry and academia, are expected to act on a 125 item agenda that will, in Wheeler's modest words, "save the world" from environmental destruction.

- **EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the final issue of Update for 1991, with publication resuming in mid-January. The staff at COSSA would like to extend warm wishes for the holiday season.

### **SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE** KC

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.

#### **Agency for Health Care Policy and Research**

The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) announces the availability of a Request for Applications (RFA) for grants for health services dissertation research. The AHCPR conducts research that will enhance the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of health care services. The provision of dissertation grant issues related the delivery of health care services. Grant support is designed to aid the career development of new health services researchers and to encourage individuals from a variety of academic disciplines and programs to study complex health services delivery problems.

**Application Procedure:** The research grant application form PHS 398 (rev. 10/88) must be used in applying for these grants, in accordance with the special instructions described here and in the application kit. Research grant application materials, special instructions for dissertation grant applications, and the RFA are available from: Moshman Associates, Inc., 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 410, North Tower, Bethesda, MD 20814, phone: (301) 229-3000

**Eligibility Requirements:** A student applying for a dissertation research grant must be enrolled in an accredited doctoral degree program in the social, management, medical or health sciences. The student must also be conducting or intending to conduct dissertation research on issues related to the delivery of health care services.

**Mechanism of Support:** This RFA will use the AHCPR grant-in-aid (R03). Responsibility for the planning, direction, and execution of the proposed project will be solely that of the applicant.

**Budget:** AHCPR expects to fund about 10 to 20 dissertation research projects in 1992. Awards will depend on the availability of funds. The budget of an application for a dissertation research grant must not exceed \$20,000 in total direct costs for the entire project period. An application that exceeds this amount will be returned to the applicant.

**Review Criteria:** Applications are reviewed to determine their suitability to review criteria in four major areas: problem significance, research design, personal qualifications and support structure, and budgetary appropriateness.

**Deadlines:** Applications must be submitted by Thursday, January 23, 1992.

**Contact:** Office of Scientific Review, phone: (301)443-3091.

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