

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## NSF DIRECTOR NEAL LANE MEETS WITH COSSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE <sup>HS</sup>

Neal Lane, Director of the National Science Foundation, met with the COSSA Executive Committee on April 20. Lane addressed the new challenges and opportunities facing the NSF. He began by announcing his pleasure at the President's intended nomination of Anne Peterson as NSF's Deputy Director (see *Update*, April 18). Lane's intention is to make her NSF's Chief Operating Officer.

Lane affirmed the importance of social science in the nation's scientific agenda. Listing research topics scientists should pursue, he included, understanding revolutions around the world, analyzing the human dimensions of technological change, assessing the political and economic consequences of global change, and investigating the interactions of human processes with social problems.

Noting changes in national priorities brought on by the end of the Cold War, Lane suggested this has influenced federal support for science and made life difficult for many scientists, particularly in the physical sciences. Yet, he suggested Congress seems inclined to spend money on science and engineering to confront the nation's new priorities: competitiveness, crime, jobs and health.

At the same time, Lane asserted, Congress continues to ask tough questions about science and technology. Expectations are quite high that research can deliver answers to help solve the nation's problems or congressional support will erode. In the social sciences, Lane believes, policymakers trust that the research will lead to qualitative changes in society's problems.

Accountability is another issue policymakers want leaders of scientific agencies to face, Lane stated. Referring to the strong language of the Senate Appropriations report issued in 1993, Lane said Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) was trying to force greater NSF responsiveness to the needs of the nation, especially in times of tight federal budgets. However, Lane cited NSF's presence in

the Clinton administration's investment strategy and Mikulski's speech to the OSTP Forum on Science as evidence that the Foundation remains a favored agency.

The NSF director also expressed his opinion that the old linear mode of research does not work anymore. There are complex feedback systems that make it difficult to rely on straight-line progress from basic to applied to product development. He suggested that this model probably never worked in the social sciences, because of the complexity of dealing with human interactions.

In the debate over future funding for research, Lane claimed that the argument over strategic versus curiosity driven research is over. A consensus has been reached that federally supported research should, at least partially, center on fundamental science broadly focused on important areas to the nation, he said. For NSF this does not mean abandoning its core values of individual investigator generated proposals that are merit reviewed by peers, Lane stated.

### New Paradigm for Science Policy

Referring to the OSTP sponsored Forum on Science held at the end of January, Lane suggested

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a new paradigm for science policy emerged from the meeting: 1) maintaining the core values noted above; 2) identifying research and education that meet national needs, a key function of the committee structure of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC); 3) promoting knowledge transfer; and 4) strengthening science, mathematics and engineering education at all levels.

Commenting on NSF's FY 1995 budget proposal, Lane called it "a good budget in a tough budget year." He acknowledged that national initiatives were driving the budget, with 75 percent of the increase going to these "strategic" areas. For the SBE directorate this means almost all of the proposed increase will go to support research on human dimensions of global change. Pointing out that the FY 1995 proposed percentage increase for SBE outpaces the growth of the NSF, Lane conceded SBE's growth comes from a small base. He did suggest that if Congress does not appropriate the total requested budget, NSF will "apply its priorities to whatever we get."

Following his remarks Lane responded to questions. Asked about the perception that the Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR) has been unresponsive to the needs of the SBE sciences, Lane suggested a meeting with Luther Williams, Assistant Director for EHR. Lane also suggested that COSSA should interact with other societies outside the SBE sciences to emphasize commonalities. Cora Marrett, Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences at NSF, who accompanied Lane to the meeting referred to the Santa Fe Institute as a place where

economists, psychologists, biologists, and physicists were working together on common problems of complexity.

Responding to a question about a possible multiagency violence initiative led by NSF, Lane admitted there was congressional interest in research on violence, but determining how it would fit into the NSTC structure as a national science and technology initiative would be difficult.

## VARMUS TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE PANEL ON NIH FUNDING *SP*

On April 19 National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Harold Varmus presented the administration's FY 1995 budget proposal before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. Varmus, testifying before the House subcommittee for the first time as NIH director, addressed a new chairman, Rep. Neal Smith (D-IA). Smith, a member of the subcommittee since 1967, replaced Rep. William Natcher (D-KY), who recently died.

Varmus' House testimony paralleled his Senate remarks (see *Update*, March 21), citing a 4.7% increase in NIH's budget, which is \$517 million above the current level. Varmus reported that besides increased spending in scientific activities that NIH traditionally supports, the proposed budget of \$11.473 billion includes itemized increases for the study of AIDS, breast cancer, and tuberculosis, as well as increases for neglected aspects of the health of women and minorities and for the application of high performance computing to science and medicine.

As in his Senate testimony, Varmus lauded the advances of the biomedical sciences but neglected to mention ongoing behavioral research at NIH. When asked by Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) about the status of the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research, Varmus said, that "the charter for the office was still awaiting approval; they were on the verge of a search for a director; and they hoped to find an outstanding director to coordinate behavioral and social science research at NIH."

Hoyer also asked Varmus about the role of the behavioral and social sciences at NIH, and Varmus replied that "behavior is important because it affects so many of the diseases we study." To illustrate its importance, Varmus cited the discovery of colon cancer genes and stated that "it is one thing to

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define a medical opportunity, and another to convince people to take advantage of it. Convincing people to get tested, to have colonoscopies, for example, is so essential that it is hard to imagine proceeding without a behavioral component."

During the question and answer portion of the hearing, subcommittee chair, Smith (D-IA), expressed his disapproval of multiple authorizations for the NIH, stating that "they act as limitations." He also cited his disdain for the tendency to "authorize by disease," and voiced his preference for giving broad authority to the director of NIH. When Smith asked Varmus if he has the flexibility he needs as chief administrator for the NIH, Varmus said that "in an ideal world, the public would understand that NIH is acting in their best interest. However, I understand you have the right to know how we will spend the money and that you have a responsibility to the citizenry. We need to persuade the public that we have the same concerns as they do." Varmus also mentioned his 1 percent transfer authority and the director's discretionary fund which is at his disposal for urgent needs.

#### Tough Job Running NIH?

Rep. John Porter (R-IL), ranking Republican of the subcommittee, asked Varmus about the challenges of being the top administrator for NIH. Varmus stated that his biggest problem was inadequate funding, and he was concerned about the negative signal it sends to new and potential scientists. In his administrative role, Varmus expressed two concerns--1) the government directives to reduce senior level staff, and 2) the difficulties of establishing an equitable workplace. Porter also expressed his opposition to funding AIDS research as a line item through the Office on AIDS Research (OAR), stating that it set a bad political precedent. Varmus responded by saying that he has confidence in the new OAR director, William Paul,; that establishing the AIDS budget is a consensus process formulated by five coordinating committees; and that funds used for AIDS research are not just pertinent to AIDS.

Rep. Louis Stokes (D-OH) commended Varmus for his commitment to the inclusion of women and minorities at NIH. Varmus reported that a review of the intramural program to increase the participation of minorities was in progress. Stokes also expressed concern about how the Office of Research on Minority Health identifies its priorities.

Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-TX) and Porter commented on the NCI breast cancer study in which falsified data were entered by Canadian physician, Roger Poisson. Both were concerned that the penalties for this fraud were not severe enough--an eight year prohibition of funding--the maximum penalty Poisson could have received was ten years. Porter asked Varmus whether there should be criminal penalties for the intentional falsification of data? Varmus stated that he had no objection personally; that it is not likely that Poisson will ever again receive funding as he now has an infamous reputation; and that NIH is trying to recover the grant money.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) expressed interest in how the restructuring of the Office of AIDS Research (OAR) will improve the planning process for conducting AIDS research. Varmus stated that he "was impressed with the thoughtfulness and cooperation that the OAR was exhibiting in its attack on AIDS." He described the composition of the five coordinating committees which inform the planning process, and added that he is a member of the new AIDS drug task force.

#### Focus on Women and Minorities

While wanting to preserve flexibility for the NIH and focus on basic research, Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) expressed her gratitude "for the attention that NIH is now devoting to the health of women and minorities which has often been neglected in the past." She asked Varmus about the ongoing Women's Health Initiative (WHI), a protocol recently reviewed by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The study concluded that the WHI could proceed, but should be modified. Varmus said that he had convened a meeting for IOM and WHI staff, and that they had uniform agreement on most issues of contention except end points for diet modification, where there was "healthy disagreement." He stated that the study is going forward very much according to original plans.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) also praised NIH efforts to improve the health of women and minorities and expressed support for the activities of the new OAR. She was especially pleased to note that occupational health issues were being addressed by the Office of Research on Women's Health, and pointed out that women historically have been denied access to certain occupations because of their child-bearing capacity.

## NIH INSTITUTE DIRECTORS TESTIFY ON FY 1995 APPROPRIATIONS *SP*

Appearing before the House appropriations subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, directors of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) presented their annual appropriations testimony outlining significant advances in biomedical and behavioral research as well as detailing where new research efforts might be directed. Following the panel presentations, directors responded to questions from the twelve members of the subcommittee.

Discussions of social and behavioral research occurred during the hearings for the National Institute on Aging (NIA), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

### National Institute on Aging

Richard Hodes, in his first appearance before the Subcommittee as NIA Director, stated that "many of the disorders and problems that older Americans face can be best attacked by addressing the behavioral and/or social aspects of the problem." He cited the first nationally-representative database on self-care behaviors practiced by community dwelling older Americans as an example of NIA-supported research that will "provide the basis to develop strategies needed to promote the increased use of assistive devices and environmental change to maintain independence and productivity with advancing age." Hodes also mentioned research NIA is conducting to develop cognitive and other non-pharmaceutical interventions to maintain and promote independent functioning of older at-risk adults.

Addressing the health research needs of women and minorities, Hodes described NIA's continuing Women's Health and Aging Study designed to determine what diseases and other predisposing events cause and influence disability in women age 65 and older, as well as a new initiative on the natural history of menopause, which will include both biological and psychosocial aspects. "NIA has a strong commitment to research which focuses on minority populations and the significant differences which exist between them and non-minority populations" reported Hodes. As an example, he

cited an NIA initiative developed to specifically recruit African-American and Hispanic populations for dementia studies through its Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers.

### National Institute of Child Health and Development

NICHD Director Duane Alexander discussed new evidence regarding Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the leading cause of infant death after one month of age. Alexander reported that NICHD and other federal agencies will soon begin a major public education campaign to encourage parents to place sleeping infants on their back or side rather than on their stomachs to reduce the risk of SIDS. Other social and behavioral research highlighted by Alexander included a national study of the determinants of adolescent health (see *Update*, April 4), and an initiative that will study the "behavioral factors that affect the acceptability and effective use of female-controlled barrier contraceptives and spermicides."

### National Institute of Nursing Research

Ada Sue Hinshaw, in her last appearance before the subcommittee as NINR Director, focused her testimony on several significant behavioral and social NINR research initiatives including: a study to prevent hip fractures in the elderly through the use of a pad worn at the hip joint; behavioral interventions to reduce the incidence and severity of nausea and vomiting resulting from chemotherapy; culturally sensitive community interventions that focus on populations that are particularly vulnerable to disease or risky behavior; studies to reduce risk factors for cardiovascular disease through education or aerobic exercise; research to assess the effect of mother-child interactions to the child's behavior and sense of control; and studies comparing low birthweight and full-term infants to assess their later health, success in school, and behavioral and cognitive competencies.

### National Institute on Drug Abuse

Alan Leshner, the new NIDA Director and former Deputy Director of NIMH, emphasized the need to improve techniques to recruit and retain patients in drug treatment and to prevent relapse. He reported that "multi-component preventive programs, such as school-based interventions, supported by parent education and community-wide media campaigns, are more likely to be effective in reducing drug use, compared to more limited approaches." Additional research is needed to

identify protective factors such as effective parenting," he stated.

Leshner described two behavioral programs of special significance--the National AIDS Demonstration Research Program, where NIDA is demonstrating that "outreach programs can significantly alter behaviors associated with the spread of AIDS through drug use," he said. A second program highlighted by Leshner, the Behavioral Therapies Development Program, seeks to build upon knowledge from basic behavioral and clinical studies to define, develop, and refine behavioral therapies, including behavioral interventions, psychotherapies, counseling approaches, and other rehabilitative strategies.

#### National Inst. on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Enoch Gordis, NIAAA Director since 1986, noted that in response to the President's FY 1995 request, "NIAAA will focus its research efforts on areas that target special populations as well as the population as a whole. These areas are: women's health, medications development, health services research, minority health, youth, and prevention." Gordis pointed out that "prevention research at NIAAA is attempting to determine the family, socio-cultural, legal, and other environmental triggers that can interact with individual vulnerability and result in alcohol abuse and alcoholism." Economic influences that affect decisions to drink, the relationship of alcohol and violence, alcohol-related injuries, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention efforts will continue to be supported at NIAAA, according to Gordis.

#### National Institute of Mental Health

Acting NIMH Director Rex Cowdry told the Subcommittee that "behavioral research has made substantial progress exploring the factors which shape our interactions with the world, and has demonstrated an ability to improve the lives of many of our citizens. In particular, it has demonstrated an ability to change behaviors that put some of our citizens at increased risk for developing AIDS." He also stated that research on child and adolescent mental disorders are a priority of NIMH, and that "while much scientific effort is being directed at the severe disorders experienced by children, our research also is concerned with the causes, treatment, and prevention of childhood behavior problems."

#### ABELES NAMED ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT AGING INSTITUTE *EH*

Social psychologist Ronald P. Abeles has been named Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Research at the National Institute on Aging (NIA). The behavioral and social research program's portfolio supports studies on aging in such areas as cognitive functioning, family and intergenerational relations, retirement dynamics, demography, caregiving, long-term care, and the psychosocial aspects of health.

Abeles' current research focus is the sense of control --or lack of it -- that older people feel in their dealings with society. He recently co-edited Aging, Health, and Behavior (Sage Publications, 1993) and Aging and Quality of Life (Springer Publishing Company, 1994).

The appointment, according to NIA Director Richard J. Hodes, "is a tribute to Ron Abeles' work in advancing behavioral and social research on aging. In the new post, he will play an even greater role in helping us understand the dynamics between society and older people."

#### CARNEGIE RELEASES REPORT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT *EH*

The Carnegie Corporation of New York released a report entitled, *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children*, on April 12 at a national meeting in Washington, D.C. A task force of scientists, business, and governmental leaders prepared the report in order to "provide a framework of scientific knowledge on the developmental needs of young children and to recommend specific actions to meet those needs in the years ahead." Summarizing their findings, the task force wrote,

We can now say, with greater confidence than ever before, that the quality of young children's environment and social experience has a decisive, long-lasting impact on their well-being and ability to learn. . . The risks are clearer than ever before: an adverse environment can compromise a young child's brain function and overall development, placing him or her at greater risk of developing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, and physical difficulties. In some cases these effects may be irreversible.

The Carnegie researchers emphasized, however, the equally dramatic opportunities for positive intervention in child social, behavioral, and physical development, pointing to adequate pre- and postnatal care, dependable caregivers, and strong community support as means of preventing damage and providing children with a decent start in life.

*Starting Points* calls for integrated action in four critical areas: promoting responsible parenthood; guaranteeing quality child-care choices; ensuring basic health and protection; and mobilizing communities to support young children and their families.

Copies of the full report may be ordered from Carnegie Corporation of New York, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604 for \$10.00 including shipping (prepaid only). Bulk rates are available for over 25 copies: for information, please telephone (212)371-3200.

### RACIAL JUSTICE PROVISIONS NARROWLY SURVIVE IN HOUSE CRIME BILL DEBATE *MB*

By a 212-217 vote on April 20 the House of Representatives defeated an attempt to remove the Racial Justice Act from HR 4902, a package of sweeping anti-crime measures.

The Racial Justice Act would allow death row inmates to use statistical evidence to show patterns of racial discrimination in capital offense cases and is an outgrowth of extensive social science research findings.

The provisions sparked heated debate after Rep. Bill McCollum (R-FL) moved to delete them from the crime bill. He said that the language "encourages a quota system for death penalty cases," and unsuccessfully offered an amendment to reaffirm current law prohibiting using race as a factor in sentencing.

Speaking on McCollum's amendment, Rep. Charles Canady (R-FL) said that the Racial Justice Act would "turn our jury system over to social scientists."

Democrats, led by the act's longtime supporter, Rep. Don Edwards (D-CA), compared the act to landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s and cited statistical studies showing blacks executed

three to four times as often as whites for similar crimes.

As the crime bill moves to a joint House-Senate conference committee, the racial justice provisions face an uncertain fate. The narrow margin of victory in the House and the absence of similar language in the Senate's crime package have given the Racial Justice Act's opponents reason for optimism.

### ACADEMY PUBLISHES TWO REPORTS ON VIOLENCE *MB*

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has released two reports summarizing conferences in which researchers, practitioners, and other leaders discuss issues related to violence.

*Violence and the American Family* highlights a May 1993 meeting aimed at improving community-based family support services. *Violence in Urban America: Mobilizing a Response* summarizes a conference cosponsored by the NAS and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in October 1993.

NAS has mailed copies of the report to all who attended the COSSA-American Society of Criminology crime seminar held in Washington earlier this year. To obtain copies of the reports, contact NAS at (202) 334-2300.

### NSF SEEKS DIRECTOR FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE STUDY *MB*

The National Science Foundation is seeking a program director for its three-year Transformations to Quality Organizations study co-sponsored by the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences and the Engineering Directorates (see *Source*, Page 7).

The ideal candidate will have both business and organizational experience and will have conducted research related to organizational quality. Under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, an individual can remain an employee of his/her current institution while serving a multi-year rotation with NSF.

For more information, contact Catherine Handle of NSF at (703) 306-1185, extension 3027.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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.

### Transformations to Quality Organizations

This announcement provides guidelines for the first year of a three-year program to support multidisciplinary research on quality in organizations based on partnerships between researchers and firms or organizations. The objective is to support research to develop or improve concepts, tools, and methods for better managing transformations to quality organizations.

To develop this knowledge base and to answer questions about transformations to quality organizations, the National Science Foundation and the Total Quality Leadership Steering Committee propose to fund an expansion of research on organizational quality over the next three years. This will provide an unparalleled opportunity to improve both empirical and theoretical understanding of organizational transformations and quality systems. The challenge for researchers is to work in partnership with organizations to conduct research with the potential both to contribute to the knowledge base and to improve practice in organizations. The results of this research should enable US businesses and organizations to implement quality improvements more rapidly and successfully. The impact of these changes should include improved work processes, products, job security, customer satisfaction, and financial performance.

**Application Procedure:** A concept paper is due by **May 16, 1994**. It must be no longer than five pages and include:

- ◆ A) Name, institution, address, phone and fax number, and e-mail address of primary contact;
- ◆ B) Brief problem statement, describing the research problem or opportunity;
- ◆ C) Abbreviated summary of literature and leading edge practices;
- ◆ D) Summary of proposed approach and methods, describing what the team will do, and how it will be done;
- ◆ E) Significance and impact of the proposed research, explaining the intended results of the research, how they can be used, and potential value added;
- ◆ F) Research team, including their respective responsibilities and skills; and G) Estimated budget request.

Concept papers approved for development into full proposal will be selected by June 17, 1994. Full proposals must be received by August 8, 1994.

**Budget:** NSF expects to make somewhere between 10 and 40 awards in the range of \$50,000 to \$200,000 per year for three years.

**Contact:** For more information:

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