

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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FINAL BUDGET AGREEMENT REMAINS ELUSIVE: 1996 SPENDING UNRESOLVED *HS*

Following the agreement that ended the partial shutdown of the federal government on November 19, the White House and the Congress continue to jockey over how to reduce spending to produce a balanced budget by 2002. A series of preliminary negotiations have resulted in not much more than rhetoric about who is to blame for the current situation that could lead to another partial government shutdown on December 15.

The Democrats are trying to separate the passage of the FY 1996 appropriations bills from the seven year plan to balance the budget. Republicans are wary of this strategy since it reduces the leverage they have over the White House. Complicating the appropriations situation is the President's need to sell the deployment of 20,000 American troops to maintain the peace agreement in Bosnia.

For that reason, on November 30, the President allowed the FY 1996 Defense appropriations bill to become law without his signature, despite his earlier threatened veto because it contained \$7 billion more in spending than he believed necessary. The President also hoped that some of the excess funding in the defense bill could be pried loose to restore cuts made in presidential priority areas in the domestic policy appropriations bills. In the November 19 agreement, these priorities were identified as: Medicaid, education, agriculture, national defense, veterans, and the environment. Protecting these priorities may now be more difficult, if not impossible.

A number of observers, including the Senate Democratic leadership, have commented that science and technology, were not included in the list. In a response to a letter from Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), Clinton assured him that "a forward looking balanced budget must maintain vital investments in science and technology."

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COSSA ANNUAL MEETING LOOKS AT STATE OF FEDERAL RESEARCH SUPPORT *MB*

The 1995 COSSA Annual Meeting brought over 60 number of leaders of science, education, and professional groups, universities, and research institutes together on November 20 to hear federal science policy leaders discuss the present and future states of federally-sponsored research.

LANE CALLS SOCIAL SCIENCE FULL PARTNERS IN NATION'S R&D *MB*

NSF Director Neal Lane, the meeting's featured speaker, lauded the contributions of the social sciences, and placed them on equal footing in a national R&D program that he said could be jeopardized by severe budget cuts.

Introduced by his former colleague at Rice, Joseph Cooper, now Provost at Johns Hopkins and a COSSA Board Member, Lane stated: "Without an understanding of human learning, human conflict, patterns of use and consumption, group dynamics, and the process of decision making... we cannot hope to solve any of the major world problems. In fact, the biggest problems that we face in society are the human, rather than the technical problems."

"It is difficult for you, I am sure, to hear critics suggest the social sciences are not equal members of

INSIDE UPDATE...

More Highlights of COSSA Annual Meeting:

- Congressional Staff Give View from the Hill
- Mann Discusses Budgetary Politics
- OBSSR Director Looks at SES and Health and the Role of NIH

Academy Report Examines Allocating Science Funds in a New Era

Waller Named to Lead Statistical Association

this R&D enterprise. Let me assure that we at NSF do not hold that view... the social sciences should be right at the center of the nation's R&D enterprise," Lane told the audience.

In response to a question, Lane said that the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) in the "short term" is "alive and well," however "in the long term...we'll look at our organization as a whole" as part of Vice President Gore's National Performance Review, popularly known as Reinventing Government. SBE, created in 1991, came under attack earlier this year by House Science Committee Chair Robert Walker (R-PA), and the House-passed NSF reauthorization bill orders NSF to reduce the number of directorates by one. While the legislation, which has yet to be considered by the Senate, does not specify which one, a committee report accompanying the bill identified SBE.

Commenting on the ongoing Fiscal Year 1996 appropriations process, which at press time may entail a 2 percent reduction in NSF's overall budget, Lane said, "In ordinary times, one would wince at such a reduction. But these are extraordinary times and by comparison to other R&D agencies and many programs, NSF has fared relatively well... It's remarkable what one feels even a little bit good about these days!"

Lane devoted much of his remarks to proposed sweeping cuts in federal R&D programs. "If we start drastically cutting or eliminating components of this

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public/private enterprise that we call American R&D, we place the entire system and its goals at risk. Future success depends on the whole R&D enterprise operating with an interrelated and synergistic momentum."

His tenure at Provost of Rice University, Lane remarked, helped him "grasp the holism and interconnectedness of all sciences that are required in order to comprehend real world problems and find genuine solutions... It is, in the long run, the pattern of human application of that knowledge in social, economic, and political systems that determines our societal success or failure."

Lane said that NSF will be expanding its interdisciplinary programs that link the social sciences to the fields of physical science and engineering, citing as examples programs on transformation to quality organizations and the human dimensions of global change. "Nowhere does the potential pay-off for cross disciplinary work look more promising than in the social and behavioral sciences," he added. Lane cautioned that expanding interdisciplinary work can be hindered by academic departments hesitant to "open their doors to strangers 'bearing fruit' from another discipline."

In response to an audience question about the challenges of expanding interdisciplinary work, Lane praised the social science community "for coming together to solve a problem" and cited violence research as an example.

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF GIVE VIEW FROM THE HILL

Two senior science policy staff members on Capitol Hill offered insights into how federally-sponsored research is perceived and will fare in the Republican-led Congress.

Thomas Weimer, staff director for the House Subcommittee on Basic Research, whose jurisdiction includes the National Science Foundation, discussed what he termed "the changing ecology" of science. The weaker support for science on Capitol Hill can be attributed, he said, to the end of the Cold War and the calls for reducing the size and scope of the federal government. Regarding the former, Weimer said, a new paradigm for science is needed, and on the latter,

the size of the federal science bureaucracy makes it a target for cuts.

The 104th Congress, according to Weimer, brings a youthful and inexperienced background to these issues. Of the 50 members of the House Science Committee, 22 are freshman, 9 are sophomores, and few bring prior experience to these issues. Weimer contended that it takes two or three terms in Congress to begin to make independent decisions on science policy matters. Age, he said, is a significant variable on science issues; the young vs. old dichotomy is often more important than Republican vs. Democrats. Weimer spoke of the need to educate these younger Members on science and technology.

Weimer noted that both the White House and congressional spending plans for the next seven years have a downward trend for R&D. Aggregate spending figures for the next few years are already flat, he added.

Addressing calls to revamp the federal science infrastructure -- including the possible creation of a Department of Science -- Weimer said that the White House chose not to engage this question in 1995. Predicting the debate renewing in 1996, he argued that the issue needs to be reframed. Rather than looking back over what has worked in the last 50 years, Weimer said that the questions policymakers ask should concern what is the best framework for federal efforts given the likely downsizing of future R&D budgets.

David Goldston, Legislative Director to Representative Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), and a former House Science Committee staff member and director of a private sector study of R&D, said it is difficult to have a calm science debate in Washington when it is "thrown into the larger whirlpool" of the current political climate.

Science Programs Snuck Through in 1995

Despite saying that basic science is still intact at a time when other federal programs have been slashed, Goldston was less than optimistic. He agreed with Weimer that age is a key variable, and said that several senior Members protected science in this year's debates. Many in Congress, he said, do not know about science programs, and he said that R&D "snuck through" this year because budget cutters were busy

"settling long-standing vendettas" in other areas of the budget. He said that science fared well in 1996 for "reasons that don't offer much solace."

Discussing the state of the social sciences on Capitol Hill, Goldston said that these disciplines are in a weaker state than other sciences, and spoke of the importance of educating Members and staff. He said that the threats to NSF's SBE Directorate earlier this year were helpful in defining social science in a broader context, joking that some on Capitol Hill no longer view social science as something that says that "criminals are not responsible for their actions."

Educate New Members Back Home

Goldston, concurring with Weimer, said that newer Members are the "driving force" on Capitol Hill, and that they need to be educated about federal science efforts. He said that this could be best done when elected officials are home in their districts, where they are less on their guard and away from the flurry of the legislative day. He advocated bringing legislators to campuses, and having them meet with students and business leaders, in addition to researchers. For the social sciences, he said this education process could best be done by "doing well by doing good" -- better teaching and including more undergraduates in their research because many congressional staff are only a few years out of college and are likely to view federal support for social science through their own prism of recent experiences.

Addressing the issue of indirect costs, he urged the higher education community to resolve this issue quickly, before Congress takes action. He said that indirect cost scandals have tarnished the image of higher education on Capitol Hill, and that universities have done "the worst job conceivable" in arguing that they lose money on research grants they win. In a climate where many in Congress think of yachts when they think of indirect costs, Goldston said that universities "should race to get it out of" congressional domain.

MANN DISCUSSES BUDGETARY POLITICS *MS*

Thomas E. Mann, Director of the Governmental Studies Program and the W. Averell Harriman Senior Fellow in American Governance at The Brookings Institution, the day's first speaker, set the tone by analyzing the agreement ending the budgetary stalemate that had shut down the federal government.

Mann, a former Executive Director of the American Political Science Association and Chair of the COSSA Executive Committee in the early 1980s, began his remarks by saying he was "coming home" and noted the presence of several longtime champions of social science.

According to Mann, a balanced budget has become the "mantra" of contemporary politics, based in part on the assumption that this is what the American people want. Mann, however, termed balancing the budget "a secondhand rose," meaning that everyone wants something more than that. In the intense focus on reducing the deficit, he said, many seek "the moral high ground." While the deficit is actually decreasing, Mann said that the perceived failure to grapple with deficits has become a metaphor for larger failures of democracy and our nation. "We're tired of feeling badly about our government," he stated.

Budget Balancing Masks Larger Objectives

Mann argued that, for many, balancing the budget is a cover for pursuing larger objectives. For Republicans, it is tax and spending cuts to reduce the size and scope of the federal government; "starve the beast" and make it difficult for government to regrow. For Democrats it is reforming specific components of the federal government. In either case, he contended, it is easier to pursue your goals when it appears you are working on behalf of a larger objective.

The 1994 congressional elections, which resulted in the GOP takeover of Congress, were the most dramatic in the last half century, he said. It has produced "breathhtaking" changes in the way Congress and the federal government work. House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) has centralized power and led many to believe the goals of the Republican revolution could be achieved. While many are skeptical about the ability of the GOP to pass its budgetary plans, Mann said that their agenda is still more or less intact.

Mann termed the November 19 agreement ending the shutdown as the first skirmish in the battle between the White House and the congressional leadership. He predicted that in the budget fight, the political interests of "win-win-win" will prevail. With some form of an agreement, the White House can claim it made progress toward reducing the deficit while preserving key programs; the Republicans can say that they tried, but blame President Clinton for being a roadblock to true progress; and the American people can have the opportunity to see competing plans debated.

Mann said that the short-term agreement marked the changing of the guard from Gingrich to Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-KS), in that Gingrich's role has been to set a broad vision and motivate his troops, while Dole's turn arises when it is bargaining time. He predicted that most appropriation bills will not be resolved until late in the process so they can be used as bargaining chips.

Discussing how the budget situation affects education and research, Mann said that while some agencies are "singing songs of sorrow," the National Institutes of Health appears to be faring quite well. He noted ideological opposition on Capitol Hill to many federal technology programs. Mann noted that Congress has been picking and choosing among various federal R&D agencies. While he perceives an overall support for basic research, he sees it getting squeezed in the quest to reduce the budget deficit.

Saying "basic research and higher education are in for tough times," Mann commented that the congressional sentiment to higher education is hostile. He said many perceive universities as bastions of political correctness and recall controversies relating to indirect costs.

OBSSR DIRECTOR LOOKS AT SES AND HEALTH AND THE ROLE OF NIH RESEARCH *AS*

Norman Anderson, the first Director of NIH's newly created Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR), discussed socioeconomic status (SES) and health as a way to demonstrate the importance of OBSSR and as a way of illustrating his goal of promoting multidisciplinary research at NIH.

Anderson emphasized that one of the values of his office is that "it can take a bird's eye view across all of

the institutes" and highlight "cost-cutting areas that apply to multiple institutes." In addition, the OBSSR can help develop initiatives in which several institutes and centers can participate, he said.

The OBSSR's mandate, as legislated by Congress in the 1993 NIH Revitalization Act, could essentially be broken down into "two important areas ... One is to promote multi-disciplinary research and the other is to integrate what is called the biobehavioral ... biopsychosocial perspective into research across the Institutes," maintained Anderson.

Answering a series of questions that he said the mandate raises: "Why do we need a multi-disciplinary approach? Why can't we continue to work within the domain of our training and our disciplines since that has had some benefit? What is a biobehavioral perspective?" Anderson explained that "behavioral and social sciences do not really exist apart from genetic and physiological or biomedical factors but indeed interact with them to influence [health] outcomes." While acknowledging that there are exceptions, Anderson said that if we are "to maximize health benefits to understanding and achieving health outcomes we clearly need a multidisciplinary approach." "One discipline cannot address these interactions fully," further explained Anderson, "and indeed this is what many people call a biobehavioral /biopsychosocial perspective...It is indeed the integration of biological, psychological, social and other factors."

Anderson emphasized that he believes that the effects of SES on health are an ideal subject for the OBSSR's first trans-NIH initiative, thereby promoting a multidisciplinary biopsychosocial approach. "I think SES is a good paradigm for integrating psychosocial factors into the mission of NIH ... and the concept is relevant to every institute at NIH," he said. Citing from a wealth of health literature, Anderson discussed how most disorders studied by NIH are problems for those with low SES. "As one moves up the SES ladder, morbidity and mortality rates generally decline," Anderson told the audience. A relationship, he indicated, that holds true for a number of disorders.

Applauding the success of the behavioral and social sciences in identifying social and risk factors for disease and disseminating that information to the public, Anderson also emphasized the need for more basic behavioral and social science research. "Basic behavioral and social science research," said

Anderson, is "really the foundation of all the other areas of research."

Anderson concluded his presentation by describing a number of administrative initiatives that his office is undertaking:

- developing a standard definition that would be used to assess the behavioral and social science portfolios of the Institutes;
- developing a strategic plan for OBSSR;
- educating the Institutes regarding behavioral and social science research by holding workshops and conferences across the institutes;
- working to reveal areas in the Institutes' portfolios that are prone for discoveries and encouraging increased funding in those areas;
- becoming a "national focal point" for disseminating information to the public about discoveries in the behavioral and social sciences at NIH;
- funding small grants and providing fellowships; and
- providing regular briefings on behavioral and social science research to NIH Director Harold Varmus.

ACADEMY REPORT EXAMINES ALLOCATING SCIENCE FUNDS IN A NEW ERA *HS*

With a thirty percent reduction in domestic discretionary spending, including federal funding of scientific research, a possible price for achieving a balanced federal budget by 2002, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine have produced a report focusing on the process of managing a system for allocating those diminished funds. The report, *Allocating Funds for Science and Technology*, was requested by the Senate Appropriations Committee in 1994.

Former Presidential Science Adviser and National Academy of Sciences President Frank Press chaired an 18 member committee that called for a redefinition of federal research and development. Although most observers refer to a \$70 billion federal research and development budget, the Press committee claimed the real Federal Science and Technology (FS&T) budget is closer to \$35-40 billion. The committee would exclude testing and evaluation, mostly conducted by

the Defense Department (DOD), from the definition since it is "based on existing technologies rather than the creation of new knowledge and technology." Under the new definition the DOD share of the FS&T dollar goes from 51 percent to 22 percent, and the Department of Health and Human Services, mostly NIH, goes from 16 percent to 30 percent. The NSF share increases slightly from 3 to 5 percent.

Changing the definition also refocuses the federal effort in S&T on science conducted by researchers in universities. Examining the performers of S&T under the old definition shows that industry conducted 45 percent of the research and universities only 17 percent. Under the new definition, industry carries out only 21 percent, while universities jump to 31 percent.

A Unified Look at Science Budgets

Arguing that FS&T spending should be considered as a unitary federal investment, the panel recommended that the budget should be processed as a single entity by both the Executive Branch and the Congress. The report recognized that the Congressional committee system will not change to accommodate such a unified approach, but it called for an initial overall congressional evaluation so that interdependence and redundancies among agencies could become increased factors in assessing the budget and appropriating funds. The administration would carry out a similar examination before submitting the unified science and technology budget to Congress. The current administration argues that it is doing this through the National Science and Technology Council, but it is unclear how well this system has worked.

The committee accepted an earlier judgment by the NAS' Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy that the United States cannot be the world leader in every possible scientific endeavor. In some areas, the nation must accept "being among the world leaders." How to decide which areas belong in each of these categories is unclear, but the individual fields are given leeway.

Competitive merit review involving external reviewers and university-based research would remain the keystones of the FS&T system. By supporting projects and people, not institutions, the system would "increase flexibility in responding to new opportunities and changing conditions," according to the committee. They also concede that FS&T should favor academic institutions because of the linkage

between research and education, and universities' flexibility and inherent focus on quality. As Press noted in presenting the report, the process of selecting university faculty acts as a quality control. In addition, like many others, the committee also called for an increase in interdisciplinary work and international cooperation.

Saying No to a Department of Science

The panel did not support the concept of a Department of Science, something House Science Committee Chairman Rep. Robert Walker (R-PA) has championed. Rather, the report recommended retaining R&D within agencies whose mission requires it, thus maintaining the current pluralistic system.

Commenting on support for the development of commercial technology, the report concluded that the federal government should encourage but not directly fund this part of R&D, except for "enabling technology for which the government is the only funder," or where the technology is specific to government missions. The Clinton administration's strong support for partnerships to develop commercial technology should not be supported in an era of declining resources and such government funds "could be better spent on other, more productive items in the FS&T budget."

The report does not say anything about choosing among different disciplinary priorities. In a list of "Examples of Work That Enables Continuing U.S. Innovations," a number of examples from the social and behavioral sciences are included such as language acquisition, ethnography and sociology of drug abuse rituals related to AIDS, econometric projection techniques, designing new programming languages, and adopting cognitive science of language recognition for development of natural language software. Among the members of the Committee were Baruch Fischhoff, Professor of Social and Decision Sciences at Carnegie Mellon, Paul Romer, Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, and Harold Shapiro, President and Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University.

Copies of the report are available from the National Academy Press 202/334-3313 or 1-800-624-6242. The report is also available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nas.edu/nap/online/>

HOUSE REJECTS SPENDING BILL; NSF FUNDING NOT SET MS

(continued from page one)

With defense now enacted, there are six appropriations bills to go. The House rejected the VA, HUD, Independent Agencies conference agreement and voted to instruct the conferees to find another \$230 million for veterans' medical care. The conference agreement had reconciled the National Science Foundation's FY 1996 spending at \$3.18 billion overall, and \$2.274 billion for research. These represent a slight decrease in new budget authority for the NSF as a whole, and a slight increase for research. These figures could change if the conferees need to find the veterans' money from other agencies within the bill, as now seems likely. This bill also remains on the presidential veto list, since the conferees agreed to eliminate funding for the Corporation for National Service and appropriations levels for HUD and EPA remain significantly below the President's request. The conferees did agree to remove the legislative riders hindering environmental enforcement.

The Commerce, Justice, State bill still faces a presidential veto because of insufficient funding for peacekeeping operations, the folding of the community policing program into a block grant, and the elimination of the Department of Commerce's technology support programs. Although the conference committee has reached an agreement, they have not met the President's requirements for passage.

The Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriation has still not reached the Senate floor. The Democrats are insisting on the removal of a provision overturning the President's Executive Order on striker replacements; the Republicans are refusing. The President is also seeking more funding for education and health programs.

The Foreign Operations and District of Columbia bills are stalled because of disputes over abortion. The House has rejected two Interior appropriations conference reports over the selling of mineral rights in the West for below market value.

As noted by the speakers at the COSSA Annual Meeting (see other story), this year was only the opening salvo in a debate over the future role of the

federal government and its funding responsibilities. So far, the difficulties in reaching agreements have been enormous, but to quote Ronald Reagan quoting Al Jolson, "You ain't seen nothin' yet."

WALLER NAMED TO LEAD STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION MB

Ray A. Waller has been named the new Executive Director of the American Statistical Association, replacing Barbara Bailar, who became a Vice President at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago last January. Dan Horvitz had been serving as Interim Director.

Most recently a consultant in statistical analysis, reliability analysis, risk analysis, and customer-directed short courses, Waller spent nearly twenty years in several capacities at the Los Alamos National Laboratories. He has also served as Associate Professor of Statistics at Kansas State University.

He received his B.A. in mathematics from Southwestern College, his M.S. in statistics from Kansas State University, and his Ph.D. in mathematical statistics from The Johns Hopkins University.

COSSA congratulates Waller on his selection and looks forward to working with him in the future on issues of common concern.

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