

**HOUSE, SENATE PRAISE,
GUIDE NIH BEHAVIORAL AND
SOCIAL SCIENCE** AS

The reports accompanying the Fiscal Year 1998 House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS) appropriations bills offer praise and guidance for behavioral and social science research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. The reports, while not having the force of law, are still taken quite seriously by federal agencies as a signal of congressional intent.

The spending bills, to be considered by the full and House and Senate in September, each award increases for NIH. The House LHHS Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. John Porter (R-IL) provides \$13.5 billion, an increase of \$764 million or 6 percent over FY 1997 and \$427 million more than the President's request. Porter's Senate companion, Sen. Arlen Specter, drafted a version giving NIH \$13.7 billion, an increase of \$952 million or 7.5 percent increase over last year's level.

Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research -

The Senate Committee notes that it is "pleased that OBSSR is fulfilling its mission to coordinate behavioral and social sciences research at NIH and leveraging its modest budget to ensure that cross-directorate research and training initiatives are more easily funded." It also asks "NIH to evaluate the possibility of realigning OBSSR within an existing Institute such as the National Institute for Nursing Research," removing it from the Office of the NIH Director. The OBSSR is further encouraged to "develop proposals for methodological research that would follow up on the successful conference, *The Science of Self Report*."

The House Committee lauded the OBSSR's efforts to provide "support to individual Institutes to supplement their National Research Service

(continued on page four)

**SOCIAL SCIENCE DATABASES
WILL BE RECOMPETED** HS

Three major databases currently supported by the National Science Foundation will face "major competition" when they come up for renewal in the 1999-2001 time period, Bill Butz, Director of NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Research (SBER) Division recently announced. The Panel Study on Income Dynamics (PSID), the General Social Survey (GSS), and the National Election Studies (NES), are long time recipients of NSF grants, which have been reevaluated periodically, but have not faced competition from alternative proposals. Butz intends to change that, "unless someone can convince me otherwise."

The announcement came at a meeting of the Forum on Research Management, sponsored by the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences, in Washington, D.C. on July 31 and August 1. The Forum brings together federal agency managers, researchers, and interest group representatives to discuss issues affecting research management. The future of large-scale, long-term longitudinal databases has been under discussion for some time (see *Update*, June 2). Federation executive director David Johnson wanted to provide an opportunity for stakeholders, such as database users and managers, to communicate with NSF's decision makers as they try to determine: "How Should Federally Supported Databases Evolve Over Time?"

(continued on page three)

INSIDE UPDATE...

- Congress Focuses on Management Issues at Science Agencies
- Washington News in Brief
- Stanford Rejoins COSSA

CONGRESS FOCUSES ON MANAGEMENT ISSUES AT SCIENCE AGENCIES HS

With the budget, tax and appropriations processes moving toward settlement, Congress has turned to its oversight function to focus on management issues at federal science agencies. The House Science Committee examined how agencies will meet the first requirement of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the development of strategic plans by September 30, 1997

Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), chairman of the committee, relied on a General Accounting Office (GAO) analysis of the current drafts promulgated by NSF, NASA, the Department of Commerce (particularly the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration), and the Department of Energy, to declare that so far, "all the plans are deficient either in that they are missing required elements or the completed elements are insufficient." A chart suggested that NASA had done the best job; the Energy Department, the worst, with NSF and NOAA somewhere in between.

The Chairman also focused his attention on the broad missions of these agencies whose "goals and objectives . . . overlap." He urged the agencies to coordinate their efforts and to explain their

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences. *Update* is published 22 times per year. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. 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.

collaboration and crosscutting activities. "Left unexplained, Congress and the American public can only assume that such overlap is duplicative and wasteful," Sensenbrenner said. Susan Kladiva, Acting Associate Director for Energy Resources and Science Issues at GAO, testified that the Office of Management and Budget should be responsible for coordinating the overlapping functions of the science agencies. This only made Sensenbrenner more frustrated at OMB's refusal to send a witness to the hearing.

Rep. Constance Morella (R-MD), noting that world leadership in science and engineering was a goal of all the agencies, wondered how much coordination there was between NSF and the other agencies. Acting NSF Deputy Director Joe Bordogna admitted that "not much" was occurring in putting together the GPRA strategic plans, but that informal contacts occur daily.

Although most of the questions from Science Committee members focused on NASA, Bordogna fielded a number of inquiries regarding NSF's draft strategic plan (see *Update*, July 14). The Committee's Ranking Democrat, Rep. George Brown (D-CA), wondered how NSF was going to measure its goal of a "productive workforce." He reminded NSF of its difficulties a number of years ago in forecasting science and engineering workforce needs. Brown also expressed concern with NSF's promotion of diversity in that workforce as well as among its own staff.

Rep. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) asked about the difficulty in developing measures for basic research in the performance plans also required by GPRA and due with the presentation of the FY 1999 administration budget next February. Stabenow wondered how "annual" measures could provide performance results for an agency supporting research whose payoff is often long-term. Bordogna responded by noting that NSF "was struggling with this." He suggested that assessments of the agency's performance will rely on outside experts to judge whether discoveries, which occur all the time, can be linked to NSF support. The outside experts will include already-in-place merit review panels, directorate advisory committees, and the Committees of Visitors currently used to evaluate programs. He

also noted that NSF will use "process results," such as time to turn around proposals, as another way of measuring performance.

Brown noted that the Science and Technology Policy Act of 1976 created the Office of Science and Technology Policy to help provide coordination among science agencies. He admitted that "the law is clear, but has not been carried out." The current administration's coordination apparatus, the National Science and Technology Council, "is not working," Brown asserted. Sensenbrenner admonished the agencies that there were still "pretty large holes" to fill in order to come into GPRA compliance before the end of September. He warned them that the committee "will continue on your back," to get these done.

MAJOR DATABASES TO FACE COMPETITION

(continued from page one)

Spend More on Infrastructure

Butz expressed his view that the SBER division should spend more than the approximately \$13 million it now allocates to databases and other infrastructure. He believes that there are a number of social and behavioral science research areas that are data-starved. This had led him to ask a number of questions regarding the current projects. These included: How these fit into NSF's overall strategic plan? How do you generate new ideas for data and other infrastructure to compete against them? How often should the competition occur? How do we define the competition? Who should answer all these questions?

He admitted that the current projects are capital investments whose benefits are spread widely. They are large data systems that are widely shared. This view was reinforced by speakers who lauded the projects for their uniqueness, historical perspective, richness of data, democratization of research information, service as platforms enabling other research, use as training tools, significantly higher response rates than media-sponsored surveys, and attention to important issues and the American public's views on those issues. Robert Moffit of

Johns Hopkins University defended the PSID, Mike Hout of the University of California, Berkeley the GSS, and Clyde Wilcox of Georgetown University, the NES. Norman Bradburn of the National Opinion Research Center and Bill Shay of the University of Michigan focused on the importance of the continuity of management of these long-term projects.

"Shared and Science Sustaining Resources"

David Featherman, Director of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, asserted that infrastructure should consist of "shared and science sustaining resources." These would have multiple and flexible uses, economies of scale and multiplier effects, and would have cumulative impacts on the science, he said. Featherman argued for a separate budget account and review process for infrastructure that would take the databases out of the current structure where they compete in the same review panels with individual investigator grants. The role of the Boards of Overseers (each of the current projects has an NSF sanctioned panel) needs clarification and better definition, Featherman stated.

Responding to Featherman's assertion that "science communities, not NSF" should determine policies, Bennett Bertenthal, Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate, noted the constraints currently facing NSF. He mentioned a "two cultures" situation where the "bottom up" approach of the scientific community defining the research agenda must now take into account the "top down" inclusion of the pressures facing the NSF leadership from a variety of sources. Bertenthal referred to relatively stagnant budgets, but this could also include congressional oversight and the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (*see previous story*).

When pushed to suggest how the recompetition would take place, Butz demurred and mentioned continuing discussions on the subject. He talked about workshops at professional meetings, NSF sponsored workshops, and the continuing role groups like COSSA and the Federation can play in promoting the discussion. In the meantime, the projects face coping with reduced budgets and restructuring of their studies as they face uncertain futures.

APPROPRIATORS COMMENT ON NIH RESEARCH

(continued from page one)

Awards (NRSAs) for behavioral science researchers" and sees it as a "step in a broader, NIH-wide strategy for implementing the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences" in this area.

Office of AIDS Research -- Both the House and Senate Committee reports include the same provisions and bill language as the House FY 1997 bill, permitting the Director of OAR, jointly with the Director of NIH, to transfer up to three percent of AIDS funding within NIH.

Child Abuse and Neglect Research -- The House Committee urges the convening of a conference that includes other Federal agencies, experts and relevant outside organizations under the leadership of the NIMH to assess the state-of-the-art science, and make recommendations for a research agenda in this field. NIH should report on its current and proposed efforts in this area during the FY 1999 budget hearings.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

Health and Behavior -- Both the House and Senate Committees emphasize their support for health and behavior research at NICHD. The House report notes that "[s]even of the ten leading causes of death in the United States have large behavioral components, and most of these behaviors start during adolescence." The Committees note that they look forward "to learning the results of the first national longitudinal study about behaviors that place teens at risk. The data will yield a wealth of information invaluable in helping to understand how best to protect the health of our young people."

Demographic Research -- The Senate Committee stresses that it "continues to place a priority on demographic research and data collection that provide objective information for public policy related to the well-being of children and families."

Child Development -- Both the House and Senate Committees call for more behavioral research "to

increase the knowledge about the developing brain, basic processes of learning, and how changes in these processes occur as a result of a variety of experiences."

Child Care -- NICHD should pursue further research "examining the effects of nonmaternal care on a child's psychological and cognitive development and physical health." In addition, the Senate Committee urges NICHD to "conduct a study which will examine the quality of child care funded by Federal resources" and "to what extent recent research on brain development of young children is being applied by recipients of Federal child care funds and to make recommendations to ensure the use of best practices by those recipients."

Reading Development -- The Committees recommend that NICHD "work with the Secretary of Education in convening a national panel to assess the current status of research-based knowledge" on reading development and disability. The panel is directed to report to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, and Education, and the appropriate congressional committees.

Eating Disorders -- NICHD "in coordination with the National Institute on Mental Health, is urged to "investigate behavioral, social and cultural factors that affect adolescents' eating habits, with the goal of learning how to prevent and treat eating disorders."

Media and Youth -- The Senate Committee highlights its concern that "a recent review of the scientific literature on the factors leading to early sexual activity and pregnancy concluded that little empirical research has been conducted on the effects of growing up in an environment saturated by models of nonmarital sexual behavior, especially as portrayed in popular media." The Committee advocates that NICHD "stimulate research in this area [and] to consider the following three basic issues: (1) What sexual messages do youth pay attention to, and how do they interpret what they see and hear? (2) Does sexual media content affect youth's sexual beliefs and behavior? and (3) Can the mass media be used to promote responsible sexual behavior among youth? NICHD will prepare a report on its activities in this area for the FY 1999 budget hearings.

National Institute on Aging

Demographic Research -- The Senate Committee supports NIA studying trends in disability as well as the impact of the aging baby boom generation.

“Coordinated efforts in providing data for present and future studies are encouraged, as are sufficient funds for training and recruiting the professionals necessary to undertake such studies.”

Royal Centers for Research on Applied Gerontology - NIA is urged by the Senate to continue to place a high priority on funding for these centers, “designed to improve the quality of life of older adults by translating the results from basic behavioral and social research on aging into practical outcomes that will benefit the lives of older people.”

National Institute of Nursing Research

The Senate Committee “applauds the important contributions of NINR-supported work that explores the biological and behavioral parameters of pain.” NINR is encouraged to “actively investigate the role of cultural differences” in pain management. The Committee also expresses support for NINR’s “strong focus on developing effective caregiving strategies” related to chronic diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease. The Institute is further commended for its collaborative efforts with other NIH Institutes “related to end of life issues.” Lastly, the Committee notes that there is a need for an increase in the number of experienced nurse researchers “who are essential to securing further benefits to human health.”

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Behavioral Science — Both Committees praise NIAAA for “exploring ways to expand and strengthen its behavioral science portfolio and in particular for its investigations of the potential contributions of research in such areas as behavioral genetics, responses to stress, developmental psychology, cognitive science, organizational behaviors, evaluation and methodology, and motivation and craving.”

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) — The Committees urge NIAAA to “increase research support to better understand preventing and treating fetal alcohol syndrome.” The Committees note the importance of the need “to identify instructional conditions that must be in place to help FAS children develop competent academic and social skills.”

Alcohol Advertising Study -- The Senate Committee notes its concern regarding the “prevalence of underage use of alcohol and encourages the NIAAA to support studies to review the impact of alcohol advertising . . . and to develop recommendations on the potential options to combat the effect of alcohol advertising on young people.”

National Institute on Drug Abuse

The Senate Committee “congratulates NIDA for its recently released research-based guide” and backs the Institute’s developing “culturally appropriate research-based materials.”

Behavioral and Cognitive Science -- Both Committees commend NIDA on “its pursuit of a behavioral science research portfolio” and for its child and adolescent research initiative. The Committees “encourage additional research on the basic behavioral factor in processes such as peer pressure and decision-making at these age levels.”

Treatment Initiative -- Noting that behavioral therapies are “often the only available treatments for drug problems where no medication yet exists,” the Senate Committee “applauds NIDA’s treatment initiative which is directed toward transplanting the knowledge in behavioral science into new and useful therapies and for laying the groundwork for the integration of both behavioral and pharmacotherapies.”

Social Work Research -- The House Committee commends NIDA for its research on “families and drug abuse, behavioral and psychosocial treatment research and health services research,” and is encouraged to “explore possibilities to fund social work services research within graduate schools of social work.”

National Institute of Mental Health

Children and Adolescents -- The Committees praise NIMH and encourages it to strengthen research "about all childhood mental disorders, including autism, to establish a full range of preventive interventions and treatments based on behavioral approaches as well as medications."

Prevention — Both Committees express their support for the NIMH Advisory Council working group examining the "current state of NIMH prevention research, particularly with respect to mental disorders among children and adolescents, on identifying protective factors against the negative impacts of stress among young adults and on developing strategies to strengthen the family." NIMH is encouraged to "magnify its efforts to address the shortage of researchers in the area of prevention."

Eating Disorders -- The House Committee requests "a report on NIMH eating disorders research in the fiscal years 1992 through 1997, including the amounts expended in those years . . ." Both House and Senate Committees expressed interest in NIMH's plans for future research in this area.

NIMH Reorganization -- Both the House and Senate Committees applaud NIMH's reorganization efforts to "improve basic and clinical research and links between disciplines." The House Committee encourages NIMH "to implement its national advisory council's report on behavioral research, and to encourage new mechanisms to develop basic behavioral researchers who are sensitive both to clinical and biological issues."

Rural Mental Health -- Noting the "stigma" associated with "seeking behavioral and mental health services is particularly strong in rural areas," the Committees encourage NIMH "to continue to conduct research on effective clinical approaches and service delivery models that are appropriate for the needs of rural areas."

Social Work Research -- NIMH is encouraged to give consideration to expanding the number of social work research development centers.

Other HHS Programs Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Senate Committee recommends \$2.36 billion in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a \$66.0 million increase above the FY 1997 level and \$51.3 million more than the President's budget request. The House version of the bill includes \$2.38 billion for CDC, an increase of \$86.6 million over the budget request and \$73.0 million more than last year.

Both Committees recommend \$8.1 million in funding for prevention centers; the same as the President's budget request and FY 1997 funding.

For CDC's injury control efforts, the House Committee recommends \$455.9 million, an increase of \$12.8 million above FY 1997 and \$6.9 million more than the budget request. The Senate recommendation provides \$47.9 million for injury control efforts, \$1.2 million less than the President's request and \$4.7 million over last year's funding level. Both Committees express continued support for the limitation included in last year's bill "to prohibit the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) from engaging in any activities to advocate or promote gun control."

The Senate Committee expressed its support of the NCIPC's extramural research program and includes funds above the budget request for the Center to "conduct evaluations of interventions focused on the prevention of suicide among the elderly." NCIPC is further encouraged by the Committee to "give consideration to extending its focus on violence by supporting an initiative directed to the prevention of physical and emotional injuries associated with child maltreatment and neglect."

The House Committee also noted its support for NCIPC and "encourages CDC to build and sustain comprehensive multidisciplinary efforts to reduce the problem of youth violence and suicide." The House Committee also provides a funding increase for "CDC to strengthen and expand its youth violence prevention initiatives." The Committee suggests that CDC, the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Department of Education "consider hosting a

conference at which members of the justice, law enforcement, health and education professions can share their research, findings, and recommendations.”

For the **National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)**, the House Committee provides \$86.0 in funding, equal to last year's funding level and \$3.0 million below the budget request. For NCHS, the Senate provides \$88.1 million in funding, \$930,000 below the budget request, but \$2.1 million over FY 1997. The Senate notes that the increase is to provide full funding for the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey [NHANES].

Agency for Health Care Policy Research

The Senate Committee recommends \$139.6 million in funding for the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR), \$3.9 million less than FY 1997 funding and \$9.4 million less than the President's request. The House Committee provides \$142.6 million in funding for AHCPR, \$892,000 less than FY 1997 and \$6.4 million below the budget request. Both Committees encourage AHCPR to consider sponsoring a national conference to develop a research agenda on quality, effectiveness, and outcomes measures in children's health care. AHCPR is further encouraged to work with the Emergency Medical Services for Children Program at the Health Services Research Administration to evaluate the "potential impact of managed care on children's access to emergency services." Continued support for AHCPR's work in the area of rural health services research is reiterated by both Committees.

EDITOR'S NOTE *MB*

With Congress in recess until after Labor Day, the next issue of *Update* will be published on September 15.

Update will appear biweekly through December, and will provide extensive coverage of the ongoing congressional debate on the Fiscal Year 1998 appropriations bills funding federal research and education programs.

WASHINGTON NEWS IN BRIEF: *HS*

- **President Clinton** signs spending and tax bills. Congress triumphantly heads home for recess.
- Senate panel adopts **Agriculture Research** bill. Extension of Fund for Rural America and new evaluation provision included.
- **I. Miley Gonzalez** named Agricultural Undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics. The Associate Dean of New Mexico State's College of Agriculture and Home Economics replaces Catherine Woteki, now Undersecretary for Food Safety.
- **Woodrow Wilson Center** head Charles Blitzer announces retirement following Senate decision to continue federal funding. On heels on National Academy of Public Administration report criticizing the Center's leadership, House voted earlier this summer to close Center.
- Senate Judiciary Committee approves a **juvenile crime bill**. Legislation authorizes \$50 million for research, evaluation, and demonstrations on youth crime control and prevention.
- House cuts basic research in **Defense Appropriations** bill by nearly 5 percent. Senate had voted to increase by 9 percent; Administration asked for 8 percent.

STANFORD REJOINS COSSA *MB*

COSSA is pleased to announce that Stanford University has rejoined the Consortium as a contributor.

Stanford is the home of COSSA's current president, psychologist Eleanor Maccoby, and we look forward to working with the university on issues of common concern.

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