

NSF DIRECTOR: 21st CENTURY FOR THE SBE SCIENCES *AS*

"The 21st Century will be the century of the social, behavioral and economic sciences," declared National Science Foundation director Rita Colwell on May 26 during her appearance before the Advisory Committee to NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate. She called the SBE Directorate "one of the most important directorates of NSF in the next 20 years and beyond." Seeking to understand how and why people behave will become a greater focus of research as we move through this new millennium. With new tools and a new infusion of research funding, these sciences will become newly invigorated, Colwell said. She voiced her continued commitment to a major initiative for the SBE directorate in the NSF's FY 2003 budget.

The Director's other message focused on her clear disappointment at the House Subcommittee action on the FY 2001 NSF budget request. Instead of the proposed 17.3 percent increase, the panel recommended only a 4.3 percent boost (See *UPDATE*, May 29, 2000, No. 10). She reminded the Advisory Committee members that without the strong support of the science community the requested budget increase will not become a reality. She noted that NSF's service to the country is largely unrecognized. NSF's considerable impact on industry and its role in education are not fully appreciated, Colwell stressed. NSF's help for community colleges through the Advanced Technology Education program is another area where the Foundation has met the challenges facing the country today, she added.

Communicating scientific results to Congress and the public is important, emphasized Colwell. With this in mind, she counseled SBE scientists to be non-confrontational, explain their efforts in lay language, and make sure that their titles and abstracts are not easy prey for opponents of SBE research and the NSF.

The Fiscal Year 2003 Initiative

The Advisory Committee, chaired by Penn State economist Irwin Feller, spent considerable time discussing the possible initiative. Although 2003 seems far down the road, given the budget process timeline, a proposal needs development by April-May 2001 for consideration for inclusion in the FY 2003 budget.

Norman Bradburn, Assistant Director for SBE, who hopes to double SBE's budget, called the initiative the "grand adventure." He announced that Miron Straf, former director of the Committee for National Statistics at the National Academy of Sciences, was joining SBE to coordinate the effort. He also suggested that workshops would occur, probably this summer, to focus on substantive ideas. SBE would consult with its program officers, the Advisory Committee, and the SBE community, including COSSA. He hopes the community will be expansive and open-minded enough to think big.

The initiative, Bradburn said, should provide a theme to integrate the sciences and energize the imaginations of the research community. The proposal, he continued, should also link to the other directorates at NSF, have an education component,

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and be capacity building, in the human capital sense. Straf suggested the process should focus on developing questions, integrating themes, and developing bold new ideas.

The Advisory Committee also heard Education and Human Resources (EHR) Interim Director Judy Sunley describe new efforts at cooperation between her directorate and SBE. For many years, the two directorates have not worked well together. Areas for joint efforts include, according to Sunley: research on the science of learning; research on barriers to participation in science and technology; research on the social and economic dimensions of workforce issues; collaboration on international opportunities; evaluation of EHR's programs; and more SBE participation in the EPSCOR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) program that helps states build capacity to compete for research funds.

ATTEMPT TO INCREASE NSF FUNDING FAILS IN APPROPRIATIONS PANEL *MS*

The full House Appropriations Committee considered the FY 2001 VA, HUD, Independent Agencies spending bill on June 7. As part of numerous attempts by Democrats on the Committee to increase funds for agencies in the bill, Ranking Democrat Representative David Obey (D-WI), offered an amendment to increase the allocation

recommended for NSF by \$508 million. Obey's intention was to boost the funding to the President's requested level of \$4.6 billion, providing the Foundation with the full proposed increase of \$675 million or 17.3 percent.

Although sympathetic to Obey's desire to provide more resources to NSF, VA, HUD, IA Subcommittee chair, Representative James Walsh (R-NY) rejected the plea for the increase, since the bill remained constrained by the allocation it had received, and any increase would require a corresponding decrease in some other account in the bill. Obey argued that in a time of budget surpluses such restraints needed to fall by the wayside. He could not, however, convince the Republicans to agree, and his amendment fell.

Thus, the bill emerged from the full Appropriations Committee with the recommended funding level for NSF remaining at \$4.064 billion, a \$167 million or 4.2 percent increase over last year. The bill is now expected to go to the House floor the week of June 12.

The Senate has not been heard from yet. It was originally scheduled to begin the mark up process at the subcommittee level the week of June 12, but that has been postponed. The allocation levels for the Senate VA, HUD, IA subcommittee are not much better than they were in the House. Conventional wisdom still expects no final resolution of the NSF spending for FY 2001 until early October.

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NO INCREASE FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH AND STATISTICS *DK*

In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 budget request, the last budget request of the Clinton era, the administration requested sizable increases for education research, evaluation, and statistics. The effort to increase funds for these efforts, however, has thus far largely fallen on deaf ears. Like its Senate counterpart, the House Appropriations Committee, in the recently passed bill that provides funds for the Education Department's research and statistics functions, level-funded these activities.

For education research, supported by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI),

the House Committee approved \$103.5 million. Education statistics, collected and analyzed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), received \$68 million and will not receive the 25 percent increase to \$84 million requested by the administration.

Despite level-funding OERI's research and statistics functions, the Committee praised the OERI for its "significant contributions" to the Interagency Education Research Initiative (IERI) undertaken in conjunction with the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The Committee also praised OERI and NICHD for the collaborative work which produced the National Reading Panel report (See *UPDATE*, April 17, 2000, No. 7). The final Reading Panel report, said the Committee, has made "a significant contribution by making widely accessible rigorous research-based evidence on reading development, reading difficulties, and reading instruction."

Committee Nixes Proposed Research Agency

The President's request also included language and the requisite funding for a new National Institute on Education Research (NIER) to replace the often maligned OERI. It does not appear, however, that the new research agency will be established through this year's budget process. If a replacement agency for the OERI is established it will have to occur outside the budget process, according to the report accompanying the Appropriations Committee's funding bill.

The Appropriations Committee also level-funded the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program at last year's level of \$31 million. The Javits Fellowship program received \$10 million — equal to the request. For the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), often a repository for funding for Members' special projects, the Committee provided an amount equal to the request of \$31.2 million which is \$43 million below the current year funding level. Not all the news was bad for the Education Department. The Committee increased funding for International Education programs. Domestic programs received \$67 million, a \$5 million increase from the request

and the FY 2000 level, while Overseas programs received the requested amount of \$10 million.

Labor Statistics Receives Increase; But Less Than President's Request

The same bill that funds the Education Department's research and statistics functions also provides funds for the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The BLS, whose principal surveys include the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the monthly unemployment series, received total funding of \$440 million from the House Appropriations Committee. This amount is more than \$6 million more than the current year funding level but well below the requested amount of \$453 million.

HOUSE CJS APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES FUNDING MEASURE; SLASHES NIJ FUNDING PH

By a voice vote late in the evening of June 6, the House Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary Appropriations Subcommittee approved its Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 funding measure. The bill, which will next go the full Appropriations Committee, provided a total of \$34.9 billion for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary, \$2.7 billion less than the President's request and \$2.8 billion less than the FY 2000 level.

The panel provided the Census Bureau \$392.9 million to complete the 2000 Decennial Census — over \$4 billion less than the current year funding. However, funding is always much less the fiscal year after the census is conducted since most of the preparations have already been performed. The amount approved by the Committee reflects the transition from actually collecting the data to reporting and disseminating the data.

The Committee was not as generous with the Department of Justice's research and evaluation platform. The base budget for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) was slashed to \$41.4 million from \$43.4 million in FY 2000. The administration had requested \$49.2 million. This was the second year in a row that the House Subcommittee has cut NIJ's funding. In more bad news for the NIJ and criminal

justice researchers, the Committee did not support the administration's proposal for a one percent research and program evaluation set-aside. This would have provided as much as \$40 million for the NIJ to support criminal justice research and to conduct evaluations of crime fighting initiatives at the national, State, and local levels. NIJ, though, will still receive considerable funding from other programs.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) received the same amount that it did in FY 2000: \$25.5 million, much less than the request of \$33.2 million. As it did for the BJS, the Committee level-funded the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at last year's level of \$287 million — \$2 million less than the request of \$289 million.

The Committee also provided \$213.8 million for the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the State Department, a slight increase over last year's level of \$204.2 million but less than the \$225 million request.

The full House Appropriations Committee is scheduled to consider the Subcommittee-approved bill in a mark-up session on Tuesday, June 13.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS APPROVES MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR YOUTH VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

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The massive funding bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS-Education) has passed both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and awaits floor action. As it did in last year's bill, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved funding for the Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, a collaborative effort of several Federal agencies and the White House.

Last year, the Senate Appropriations Committee provided nearly \$900 million for the initiative. This year, the Committee provided \$1.2 billion which, according to the panel, "will improve research, prevention, education, and treatment strategies to address youth violence."

Noting that youth violence is a public health problem, and that "many familial, psychological, biological, and environmental factors contribute to youths' propensity toward violence," the initiative is a collaborative and coordinated approach to "eliminate the conditions which cultivate violence." The funds, reallocated from existing programs, come largely from the National Institutes of Health, particularly the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), and the Department of Education.

Given its collaborative approach, the Initiative has several research foci. The Committee calls on individual agencies to support and conduct research on various issues related to youth violence. For instance, the NIMH is called upon to undertake research on child abuse and neglect, both of which, claims the Committee, contribute to youth's violent behaviors. NIMH is also requested to support research to determine the most cost-effective features of proven programs for resource-poor communities. The NIAAA is requested to support research on the link between alcohol abuse and violence as well as research on prevention efforts, while NIDA is requested to undertake similar studies on drug abuse and youth violence. The Committee report accompanying the funding bill also identifies four cross-cutting areas in need of further research, including: 1) community interventions, 2) media and its impact on youth violence, 3) health provider training, and 4) information dissemination.

Education as a Key Component

A running theme in the report language is the importance of education. Therefore, the Committee devotes a lot of attention and resources to research on education and how it can be used to prevent the violent behavior of some youth. The Committee points to sociological and scientific studies which suggest that the "first three years of a child's cognitive development sets the foundation for life-long learning and can determine an individual's emotional capabilities." Citing the importance of parents to a child's cognitive development and educational attainment, the Committee provides funds for the Education Department's parent information and resource centers program. It also provides funds for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The Committee decided to provide funds for this

program based on Justice Department research that shows that 50 percent of all juvenile crime occurs between the hours of 2 pm and 8 pm. The 21st Century Centers provide after-school programs for youths that emphasize safety, crime awareness, and drug prevention. Finally, in the area of education, the Youth Violence Initiative directs resources to youth literacy programs since "studies show that literacy is one tool to prevent youth violence."

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CALLS FOR MORE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AS

On Thursday, June 8, the House began consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill (H.R. 4577). To allow debate on other legislation, discussion of the funding bill, annually one of the most contentious appropriations bills, was tabled. Consideration of the bill is expected to resume the week of June 12, 2000. However, because of lack of funds for his education and job training initiatives, President Clinton has indicated that he will veto the bill.

Like the Senate, the House urged the agencies under its jurisdiction to increase funding for the social and behavioral sciences. The Committee also emphasized that the spending levels in its version of the bill reflect its attempt to establish priorities within very stringent budgetary limitations.

The Committee provided \$3.29 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), \$326.4 million above the FY 2000 funding level and \$156.7 million above the President's budget request. Included in the Committee-approved figure is \$125 million for a National Campaign to Change Children's Health Behaviors. The Committee noted its belief that if the Federal government wants to have a positive impact on the future health of the American population, we must change the behaviors of our children and young adults by reaching them with important health messages. The Committee directed the CDC, in collaboration with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to plan,

implement, and evaluate a campaign designed to clearly communicate messages that will help kids develop habits that foster good health over a lifetime, including diet, physical activity, and avoidance of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.

The Committee agreed with the CDC's assessment that obesity is an important public health issue because of its correlation with a wide range of debilitating and chronic health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, arthritis, and cancer. Accordingly, the CDC was urged to continue its efforts to promote healthy eating and physical activity and thereby prevent obesity.

The Committee provided \$90.1 million for CDC's injury control program, the same as the FY 2000 funding level and \$4.9 million below the President's request. The bill retains the limitation included in previous appropriations acts to prohibit the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control from engaging in any activities to advocate or promote gun control. The panel encouraged the CDC to extend the development and implementation of Best Practices for the Prevention of Youth Violence to include culturally sensitive social-cognitive, mentoring, parenting, and nurse home visits programs. The Committee noted that culturally responsive interventions and programs should be developed through evaluation research and demonstrations to address the disparities in morbidity among racial and ethnic minorities that is attributable to violence. (See related story on the Youth Violence Prevention Initiative).

Funding for the National Institutes of Health

For the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the House noted that because of "limited funding within the allocation, funding increases in the bill are constrained to the amount proposed by the President." The House provided the NIH a \$1 billion increase (a 5.6 percent increase) bringing its total to \$18.8 billion. The House, which believes that decisions about appropriate levels of funding and appropriate avenues of research are best left to the scientific managers at NIH, was much more restrained than the Senate in the amount of report language directing the agency. The funding levels in the House bill for each of the Institutes and Centers reflect what the Committee "would have provided if it were able to

provide a 15 percent increase for NIH, the third year installment of the doubling effort.”

The Committee noted its concern with the disproportionately high incidence and/or mortality rates of many cancers in ethnic minorities, rural poor, and other medically underserved populations. The House panel encouraged the NIH to develop a strategic plan to address the recommendations in the Institute of Medicine's *The Unequal Burden of Cancer* report (See related story). In addition, the Committee encouraged NIH to enhance funding for population, behavioral, sociocultural, communications, and community-based research. Recognizing that “economic status may also have an impact on health outcomes,” the Committee urged the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to include the rural population in its efforts to eliminate health disparities.

The Committee urged the NIH, in coordination with the Office of AIDS Research, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), NICHD, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the Office of Research on Women's Health, to expand its behavioral research on use, acceptability, and compliance with microbicides through all available mechanisms. The Committee requested the NIH Director to be prepared to testify on the progress of this effort at the FY 2002 appropriations hearings.

The Committee encouraged the NIH to support more research on “religiousness and health.” The Committee emphasized that the research may prove helpful in reducing health care costs, increasing longevity, improving the quality of life for chronically and seriously ill patients, and reducing risky lifestyles.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) was urged to enhance research on innovative theories about behavioral, cultural, social, psychological, and environmental methods to increase adherence to lifestyle and medical regimens. The Committee also encouraged the Institute to examine behaviors that influence obesity, weight loss, and weight loss maintenance.

Like the Senate, the House commended NICHD for its support of research examining the causes of demographic trends and their impact on society, and

encouraged NICHD to enhance its efforts in training and developing new demographic scientists.

The Committee lauded the National Institute on Aging (NIA) for its research program on demography and economics of aging which provides insights into changing risk factors for chronic disease, including socio-economic health inequalities, and disease processes at the population level.

Similarly, the panel commended the National Institute of Dental and Cranofacial Research (NIDCR) for its collaboration with other NIH Institutes and Centers, including the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), and Federal agencies in developing centers for research to reduce oral health disparities. NIDCR was encouraged to implement the initiative to the fullest scientific extent possible.

NCI's RESPONSE TO IOM REPORT: FUNDING IS INADEQUATE *AS*

In its response to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *The Unequal Burden of Cancer: An Assessment of NIH Research and Programs for Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved*, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) concurs “with the view that overall funding to address the needs of ethnic minority and medically underserved populations is inadequate.” Consequently, the Institute will seek input from its various advisory committees and working groups to determine the appropriate level of funding for minority and underserved populations and how current resources might be redirected to meet these needs.

According to the response, “the disagreement between NCI and IOM over the allocation of funds to special populations research is based, in part, on the complexity of coding issues in a large organization such as the NCI, the lack of uniformly applied definitions and different organizational units within NCI and the National Institutes of Health carrying out coding and funding allocation procedures.”

The NCI agrees with the IOM report's conclusion that research and research funding on ethnic minority and medically underserved populations should be increased. Citing the IOM

committee's position that NCI alone will not solve the questions; NCI suggests that it is important to remember that the root of the unequal burden of cancer is, in part, a reflection of unequal resources, access, power and opportunities in our society. Ultimately, this unequal burden will only be redressed by taking responsibility to correct both historic and persistent inequities.

NCI acknowledges that "there is a critical need to improve the ability to address the needs of the underserved, and this need pervades all aspects of the health care delivery system, many social services, and in research to improve the knowledge of the special needs of these individuals." Many of the issues go well beyond the "scope of a single Institute at NIH," the NCI, therefore, maintains that it is committed to joining forces with colleagues at NIH as well as other federal and nonfederal groups to initiate discussion and develop strategies to attack "some of these seemingly intractable issues at the highest levels of organizational leadership."

Noting that "OMB-mandated racial and ethnic classification system is not scientifically based, and does not reflect the sole variables important to the cancer burden," NCI emphasizes that it has "gone well beyond" the OMB standards in attempting to monitor the burden of cancer, with the categorization of societally underserved people by their socioeconomic class, insurance, or cultural background, a subject for research.

Major priorities for NCI in the coming years include, "developing a national consensus on critical definitions (such as for "medically underserved" and "special populations") and creating systems to monitor and track the burden of cancer on populations identified on the basis of ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic characteristics rather than by the OMB Standard classification system." The highest priority is being placed on asking questions about unequal cancer burden in surveillance, epidemiology, prevention, detection, treatment, survivorship, training, and communications.

The Institute also agrees with the IOM report that the newly structured Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS) and the Division of Cancer Prevention "offer great promise in addressing behavioral and social science research within diverse populations. . . DCCPS is committed to increasing

funding to develop strategies to encourage behavioral changes conducive to health through culturally sensitive interventions."

The recent formation of the Applied Sociocultural Research Branch within DCCPS, notes the report, will support research that complements existing behavioral, etiologic and surveillance research activities in the rest of NCI. Activities of the branch include planning and conducting a program of grant supported research aimed at populations underserved due to excess cancer incidence and/or mortality rates or who are underserved due to the lack of inadequate cancer prevention and control services.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT DH

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

National Science Foundation Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences *Ethnographic Research Training Grants for Cultural Anthropology* Deadline: July 1

The National Science Foundation (NSF) supports ethnographic research training in graduate schools. The goal is to provide field research experience for a large number of students before their dissertation research. The program invites departments offering the Ph.D. in Sociocultural anthropology to apply for these awards. The awards (no more than \$50,000 over five years) may be used for fieldwork training schools, to support students' travel to a faculty mentor's research site, to support students' travel to potential dissertation field sites, or for any other purpose accomplishing the goal of advancing students' expertise in ethnographic science. For more information about the grants program, contact the NSF's Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Suite 995, NSF, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA, 22230; 703/306-1760 (Telephone). Interested individuals can also consult the BCS's web site at: <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs>.

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CONTRIBUTORS

American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
University of Arizona
Bowling Green State University
Brookings Institution
Brown University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
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Consortium of Social Science Associations

1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005
