



# COSSA Washington Update

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## APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS TRUDGES ON

Almost one month into fiscal year 2006, Congress keeps moving the appropriations process forward. With the President having signed the Homeland Security spending bill on October 18, three of the bills are now law.

The House-Senate conference committee proceedings on the Agriculture and Rural Development spending bill are almost complete and that bill could become law by this week's end. The Senate approved its version of the Transportation, Treasury, HUD, and Judiciary spending bill on October 20, attaching the Senate's DC funding legislation to it, which includes the marriage encouragement provisions (See *UPDATE*, October 10, 2005).

The Senate expects to pass its version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill this week as well. The threat of a presidential veto has been removed now that Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), who heads the subcommittee that shepherds this bill, has agreed not to attach his proposal expanding stem cell research. When this legislation passes, the Senate will have completed the last of its FY 2006 funding bills.

House-Senate conference committees will likely move into high gear over the next few weeks as the congressional leadership tries to avoid combining several spending bills into another Omnibus Appropriations bill. At the same time, the leadership in both Houses is pushing for overall spending reductions. Much of its efforts have been focused on the mandatory spending programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security,

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## CENSUS BUREAU FACES DIFFICULT CHOICES AS FUNDING CUTS LOOM

With the House and Senate funding marks for the U.S. Census Bureau differing greatly, the Bureau appears to be one of the agencies bearing the brunt of spending cuts, especially in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The House appropriation for the Census Bureau stands at \$812.2 million, while the Senate's funding figure is \$17 million below the FY 2005 level at \$727.4 million. This is also \$150 million below the Administration's request. According to Census Bureau director Louis Kincannon, FY 2006 funding that falls below the House mark may endanger

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higher education loans, and food stamps. The Senate seems to have come up with about \$35 billion in cuts, while the House is seeking \$50 billion in reductions. On the discretionary spending side, a simple solution such as an across-the-board cut looms. For the moment, a proposed \$70 billion tax cut is still under consideration.

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on November 18. The leadership has announced that Congress will have Thanksgiving Week off as well as the following week. Another CR and an adjournment close to Christmas also appears in the offing.

## **CENSUS (Continued from Page 1)**

key census programs such as the American Community Survey (ACS), automated data collection in 2010, and the 2006 census field test, or “dress rehearsal,” in Travis County, Texas. The ACS would be one of the heaviest losses to local governments as well as the social science and statistical communities. The ACS is a short-form version of the census that collects and disseminates data on an ongoing basis, every year. In contrast to the decennial census, the ACS provides researchers and public policy makers with more recent and therefore more accurate data on populations (See *UPDATE*, May 16, 2005).

In an October 14, 2005 *Washington Post* article, Kincannon speculated that without adequate funding, the ACS would be lost and the Bureau would be forced to go back to the long-form only census given every ten years. Already, over \$700 million has been invested in changing the long-form census over to the short-form. According to Kincannon, to revert back to the long-form at this juncture would involve spending \$1.3 billion more than originally projected for 2010.

On October 14, the Brookings Institution held a briefing entitled, “What Will a Cut in Census Bureau Funding Mean for America’s Cities?” The briefing was mediated by Andrew Reamer, the deputy director of the Urban Markets Initiative, Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings.

One of the more notable presentations was made by Denice Warren of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) and a Hurricane Katrina evacuee herself. Warren explained that the GNOCDC gathers data about New Orleans, much of which is directly or indirectly derived from the Census Bureau’s data, and offers it as a resource for local decision

makers, policy makers, businesses, and citizens to use. During her presentation, Warren bemoaned being forced to use 2000 census data for many areas that lack more recent, accurate data. In addition, Warren showed images of the GNOCDC’s website, which generally averages about 5,000 hits per month, but received a whopping 40,000 hits in August and approximately 80,000 in September – during the aftermath of Katrina. The data was used by first responders as well as public health officials to determine the areas that might sustain the most damage after the waters receded. Warren touted the utility of ACS data in its heightened accuracy compared to the 2000 census data, which she characterized as being “totally historical” and “inaccurate” in 2005.

Appointments to the House and Senate Conference Committee that will attempt to reconcile the two figures for the Census Bureau’s FY 2006 budget are not yet complete. Senate conferees have been appointed, while the House lags behind. However, it is anticipated that the House conferees will be comprised of members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, and Commerce. A further logjam may occur in this committee due to the fact that the House and Senate no longer have parallel jurisdictions for this subcommittee (See *UPDATE*, March 7, 2005).

## **ZERHOUNI MEETS WITH NIH STAKEHOLDERS**

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Elias Zerhouni met with agency stakeholders on October 20 to maintain an “open dialogue” regarding “many things that are happening” to and at NIH. Welcoming the NIH’s advocates to the town-hall styled meeting, NIH Deputy Director Raynard S. Kington noted that these are “challenging times” for the agency, referencing the recent scrutiny that the NIH has endured from Congress regarding both its organizational structure and how the 27 institutes and centers function.

The NIH is experiencing what Zerhouni diagnoses as “post-doubling guilt syndrome,” referring to the period during which Congress was doubling NIH’s budget each year – a period that came to an end in the past two fiscal years. As a result, the agency is required to dynamically assess its priorities and address them in a cogent way, he stressed. Such a systematic approach will permit the NIH to “follow the scientific opportunities but also be responsible to

public health needs,” he explained. There is a need to accelerate discoveries, find better ways of translating the research, and remain more focused on the emerging trends, Zerhouni contended.

If medicine is not transformed over the next 25 years, we will be “unable to sustain the societal costs,” he further argued, clarifying that he was not referring to the costs surrounding managed care. The challenge for NIH is to accelerate the basic, translational, and applied research, and there is a need to “practice a new kind of medicine,” he maintained. Accordingly, coordination is required to speed this discovery, he explained, citing the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research as an example of such a coordinating mechanism.

### **The NIH is Not Broken**

Zerhouni assured stakeholders that the “NIH is not a broken organization and serves the Nation well.” It is his view that “key authorities should not be modified,” and that the agency needs to reflect the science of today, which is being driven by chronic, long-term, multi-factorial diseases. It is hard to see these diseases affecting only one NIH institute or center, he explained, adding that it is also “critical” for the agency maintain the trust of the public and to make its findings publicly available. Zerhouni noted that it is not clear how that will come about.

Zerhouni stressed that the NIH has a “historical record of success.” Building on the agency’s strengths, according to the Director, does not require wholesale change. He also conveyed his struggle with how to “convey that NIH investment is not a cost,” noting his disappointment to see that the agency is seen as such. NIH is at the crossroads of medicine and its protection is paramount, Zerhouni emphasized.

According to the Director, the NIH is currently experiencing stress in a number of areas: a convergence of science, public demand for speeding the transformation of discoveries, demand for increased disaster funds, specific research in a time of budget restrictions, as well as a reexamination of NIH’s statutory authorities and organizational structures. What is needed, he argued, “is a change in cultural norms and lower barriers to cooperation.” He explained that in an effort to eliminate the “silos” at NIH and to create areas of synergy, the agency recently formalized the ad hoc priority-setting process that led to trans-NIH initiatives on obesity and the Neuroscience Blueprint.

Zerhouni also discussed the latest NIH initiative in clinical and translation science awards (CTSAS). “These are sciences that you cannot learn on the job,” he explained. Accordingly, an intellectual home is needed for the next generation of clinical science. He emphasized that the CTSAs are not designed to be an M.D.-centric world, and would require including many disciplines, such as behavioral science and nursing. The goal of the CTSAs, said Zerhouni, is to eliminate the barriers that have prevented creativity in the past and create a place where clinical and translational science will be researched.

### **Developing the Office of Policy Analysis and Strategic Initiatives**

Explaining the function of the newly created Office of Policy Analysis and Strategic Initiatives (OPASI), Zerhouni once again emphasized the NIH’s need to improve its methods and the information needed to improve management, identify important areas of emerging scientific opportunities or rising public health challenges (See *UPDATE*, March 21, 2005). The Office, he explained, is designed to assist in accelerating investments in these areas.

Providing more detail about the office than previously available, Zerhouni announced that OPASI would consist of three divisions: 1) Resource Development and Analyses, 2) Strategic Coordination (Roadmap), and 3) Evaluation and Systematic Assessments.

### **The “Common Fund”**

Zerhouni also discussed the common fund, an issue that has concerned many in the advocacy community, especially with regard to how such a fund would operate and what it would mean for the budgets of the individual institutes. According to Zerhouni, it would allow a “prospective planning process to fund initiatives.” The fund would not be a transfer fund, and the current funding levels would serve as the baseline for further subsidies. Most importantly, he stressed, the common fund should be seen in the context of the total NIH budget. The fund would increase to up to five percent of the total NIH budget over time, depending on and consistent with trans-NIH scientific opportunities and public health needs. Also, given that science evolves in cycles lasting about 20 years, Zerhouni explained that the budget should, at a minimum, call for such a five percent investment.

In addition, monies in the common fund would be opened to all of the institutes and centers, and the common funds would stay in each institute’s base. It is

important to realize, Zerhouni continued, that contribution to the common fund is not a tax. While noting that he did not want to speak for the directors, he said that the NIH leaders “feel that the fund is leverage.”

When asked if his vision was consistent with the draft NIH reauthorization bill being considered by the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee, Zerhouni answered that his priority was the common fund, which would be enough to change the cultural norms. He cited the NIH Director Pioneer Award as an example of the type of change he is seeking. The rest is secondary, he contended. While he does not need reauthorization to create OPASI, he explained that “to institutionalize the change,” it would require legislation.

Finally, responding to a question regarding how he saw the offices in the Office of the Director (OBSSR, OAR, and ORWH) working with OPASI, Zerhouni answered that he saw the “offices working cooperatively and synergistically.”

## NSF AWARDS TO EXAMINE NANOTECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has made four major awards to examine nanotechnology in society. NSF is one of 22 federal agencies funding the National Nanotechnology Initiative. In providing funding for this initiative, Congress stipulated that the legal, societal, and environmental applications of this much-anticipated technology need examination. Congress did not want a repeat of what Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) called “eurosclerosis,” or the unwillingness of certain elements of society, mostly in Europe, to accept new technologies, particularly genetically modified foods.

NSF has selected the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Arizona State University to create two new Centers for Nanotechnology in Society. These centers will support research and education on nanotechnology and social change, as well as educational and public outreach activities, and international collaborations. In addition, building on previously supported efforts, the Foundation has funded nanotechnology-in-society projects at the University of South Carolina and Harvard University.

According to NSF, the Santa Barbara center will receive about \$5 million over five years to focus on the historical context of nanotechnology; on the innovation process and global diffusion of ideas in the field; and on risk perception and social response to nanotechnology, with a special focus on collective action and the action of global networks in response to nanotechnology. The center will also explore methods for public participation in setting the agenda for nanotechnology's future.

The Arizona State center will receive \$6.2 million over five years to develop a broad program of “real-time technology assessment” (RTTA) for nanotechnology research. The center will use RTTA to map the research dynamics of nanotechnology; to monitor the changing values of the public and of researchers; to engage both these groups in deliberative and participatory forums regarding nanotechnology; and to assess the influence of these activities on the researchers. The center will organize its efforts around two broad nanotechnology-in-society themes: 1) freedom, privacy, and security; and 2) human identity, enhancement, and biology.

Building from a current Nanoscale Interdisciplinary Research Team (NIRT) award, the South Carolina project will receive about \$1.4 million over five years to examine the role of images in communicating about nanotechnology, and how research in this field is changing the scientific and engineering practices of the researchers themselves.

The Harvard project will receive \$1.7 million over five years to expand upon a prior NIRT award to UCLA. That project developed NanoBank, an electronically-accessible database providing information about nanoscale researchers, research organizations as well as groups, patents, and firms. The new project, called NanoConnection to Society, plans to add a NanoEthicsBank and NanoEnvironBank, integrating these and other databases into an overall NanoIndicator series. It will also study the flow and distribution of patents in nanotechnology.

### **Next Generation Cybertools Offer Opportunities for Social/Behavioral Sciences**

The new Assistant Director (AD) for NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), David Lightfoot, has noted that: “Over the past 15 years, the social and behavioral sciences have arguably been most transformed by new cyberinfrastructure... Many areas have undergone dramatic changes in the kind of research that has become possible.”

A new initiative, called the Next-Generation Cybertools, will help social and behavioral scientists push their research through the use of vast new webs of computers, networks, and data resources (i.e. cyberinfrastructure) that are becoming increasingly important to science.

NSF has now made two awards to research teams at Cornell University and the University of Chicago that will help extend the boundaries of social and behavioral research, leading to advances in these new tools. The two awards amount to about \$2 million each and last for approximately two years.

According to NSF, the Cornell project, headed by sociologist Michael Macy, will attempt to create a novel laboratory for social science research based on the vast Internet Archive. The archive's 40 billion pages represent snapshots of the Web that have been captured and stored every two months for nearly ten years — everything from corporate web pages to news groups and blogs. The archive has become a remarkably rich and detailed record of societal events and dynamics over that time. To meet the challenge of accessing and making sense of this enormous data source, the Cornell team plans to build an intelligent front-end for searching the archive; an effort that will require cutting-edge research in natural language processing and machine learning algorithms, as well as next-generation technology in privacy preservation. These front-end cybertools, operating on Cornell's NSF-funded Petabyte Data Storage facility infrastructure, represent an entirely new scale and new methodology for social science research.

The Cornell group will develop, test, and refine their search tools through looking specifically at the issue of innovation diffusion. However, many other possible uses of these tools will enable studies of social life in cyberspace, ranging from pure research to practical applications for business and government.

The University of Chicago project, headed by psychologist Bennett Bertenthal, former AD for SBE, will develop tools for collecting and analyzing human behavioral data on an enormous scale and high level of sophistication. The multidisciplinary research team will track human behavior in both individual and group settings in real time. These data will help address research questions such as: How is social behavior correlated with the participants' neural activity? How is it connected with their movements, postures, gestures, facial expressions and speech--or for that matter, their state of development, environmental context and cultural norms? The

Chicago group will create a distributed data warehouse known as the Social Informatics Data Grid (SID Grid): a piece of cyberinfrastructure that will encourage data sharing and accelerate the development of standards for collecting and coding physiological and behavioral data. The SID Grid will be deployed as part of the larger TeraGrid, a suite of grid computing resources available to the scientific community.

The Chicago group will develop, test, and refine their data collection and analysis tools through research in three areas of inquiry: multimodal communication, neurobiology of social behavior, and cognitive and social neuroscience. The new analytic tools will also contribute to research on how human behavior can be automatically extracted, and even interpreted, from media such as audio and video recordings. This research could open the way towards examining the vast amounts of human behavior data that are recorded every day.

## AERA ADDRESSES BLACK EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

On October 20th, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) held a book forum and media briefing at the National Press Club for its newly-released volume, *Black Education: A Transformative Research and Action Agenda for the New Century*. The book is based on the work of the AERA Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE). The briefing featured a panel comprised of the book's volume editor, Joyce E. King, as well as its contributing authors, Carol D. Lee and Beverly Lindsay. Each panelist gave a short presentation on black education as an issue of scholarly importance throughout the world, and answered questions on black education research and reform during the question and answer session that followed.

Felice Levine, executive director of AERA, and Gloria Ladson-Billings, president of AERA, began the discussion with introductory remarks about the importance of the book and its subject matter. Lee, an associate professor of Education and Policy Studies and of African American Studies at Northwestern University, opened the panel with her presentation entitled, "Perspectives on Learning and Cognition."

The efforts aimed at addressing black education reform "try to situate issues about black education in the context of persistent cultural folk theories that inform education goals, research, and experience." Lee explained that "to understand issues related to black education, it is important to understand the history of African Americans in the U.S.," and their historical

patterns of education. “The goals of education go past simple access and knowledge acquisition,” she pointed out. Assumptions are formed about the role of cultural resources and norms on learning, and yet, for example, they deal with “profound and generic questions about what it takes to learn algebra.”

Issues including emotions in learning; the importance of attachment to people; cognitive, social, and emotional challenges to participants; and how we think about cultural orientation inform our understanding about the ways of learning, Lee argued. She explained that one important attribute of the book is that it challenges the assumption that “the cultural foundation of learning is about colored kids, but not about human learning.”

### **Obstacles to Equal Participation in Knowledge Generation**

Beverly Lindsay, professor of Higher Education and senior scientist at Pennsylvania State University, spoke about globalization’s impact on multi-disciplinary policy research and what that research conveys. “People of color have less access and less success in higher education all over the world,” Lindsay said. There is a different quality of education in areas once governed by persons of European descent as well as differential access and success where laws and practices historically limited participation, despite formal policies to end discrimination, she argued. There is also a difference in the quality of facilities, faculty, and technology in use among various demographic groups.

She went on to explain that the existing disparities in representation among demographic groups across ranks and positions in nations such as the U.S., Australia, and the United Kingdom, are due to academic cultures and policies of exclusion. According to Lindsay, in order to improve the representation of African Americans in higher education the world over, we must understand globalization, which is “how knowledge is disseminated to groups.” She believes that it is necessary to more carefully examine the obstacles that have “disallowed Blacks in various nations from participating equally in knowledge generation, production, and dissemination, including intellectual property.”

Joyce E. King, volume editor of *Black Education* and Benjamin R. Mays, the Endowed Chair for Urban Teaching, Learning, and Leadership at Georgia State University, delivered the final presentation entitled, “Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Research Agenda.”

### **Need for More Black Involvement in Education Research**

King started by indicating that African Americans need to be clearly involved in both domestic and international research. This need, she explained, makes it imperative to “raise the issue of black education research and practice to scholars all over the world.” Unfortunately, many scholars in the academic community are oblivious to the consequence of the inequities in the long term, she opined, and went on to speculate that this deficit in thinking is the “logical outcome of a system of thought that limits our understanding of what it means to be human.”

According to King, the research shows that improving black education requires more than just teaching about cultures. Rather, “it’s about teachers finding ways to use experiences that poor Blacks bring to school from their homes...Black education builds on less well known excellence practices which suggest the need to incorporate culture into practice,” she said.

“There is lots of counter evidence that income distribution does not necessarily affect achievement,” Lee argued in response to a question from the audience. King followed up by stating that the “point of the book is to highlight existing research that doesn’t get the same spin as test scores...To look for strengths rather than deficits is a problem that continues...once we learn to teach Black children, we will learn to teach all children better.”

### **BERNANKE TO BE NEW FED CHAIRMAN**

On October 24, President Bush announced his intention to appoint **Ben Bernanke** as the new Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board replacing Alan Greenspan, who will step down on January 31, 2006. Bernanke, who currently is the Chair of the President’s Council of Economic Advisers, served on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Board from 2002-2005. Before that he was a Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University for many years. He has been the Director of the Monetary Economics Program of the National Bureau of Economic Research and he was the featured speaker at the recent NBER Tax Policy Seminar (see *UPDATE*, September 26, 2005). A fellow of the Econometrics Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Bernanke has numerous publications on monetary policy. He has a B.A. from Harvard and a Ph.D. in Economics from MIT. He has also served on the Montgomery Township, New Jersey Board of Education.

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

**Peter McPherson**, who served as President of Michigan State University from October 1993 to December 2004, has been selected as the new President of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC). On January 1, 2006 McPherson will replace C. Peter McGrath, who moves on to become a Senior Advisor to the College Board as well as a consultant. McGrath has led NASULGC since 1992. McPherson has also had a distinguished career in government, serving as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury from 1987 to 1989, the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) from 1981 to 1987, and Chairman of the Board of Overseas Private Investment Corporation from 1981 to 1987. He was also Special Assistant to President Ford and Deputy Director of the Presidential Personnel Office from March 1975 to January 1977.

**David McMillen**, longtime professional staff member for the minority staff of the House Government Reform Committee who has always shown a keen interest in the Census and the federal statistical system, has been appointed as external affairs liaison at the National Archives. McMillen begins his new job on October 31.

**Mark Schneider** has been confirmed by the Senate to be the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics. (For more on Schneider, see *UPDATE* August 8, 2005)

## AAG AND NIDA TO SPONSOR SYMPOSIUM ON GEOGRAPHY AND DRUG ADDICTION

The Association of American Geographers (AAG) and the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) are jointly sponsoring a research symposium on Geography and Drug Addiction. The symposium will be held March 8, 2006, in conjunction with the 2006 Annual Meeting of the AAG at the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, Illinois.

Medical researchers, epidemiologists, geographers, neuroscientists, geneticists, and others with experience in the geographical dimensions of drug addiction are encouraged to apply to participate in the symposium. Those interested in participating as a presenter should submit a one-page summary of their proposed topic, describing relevant research conducted, along with a brief resume or CV to Douglas Richardson, AAG Executive Director, at [dritchardson@aag.org](mailto:dritchardson@aag.org) and to Yonette Thomas, Ph.D., Chief, Epidemiology Research Branch, NIDA Division of Epidemiology, Services and Prevention Research, at [yt38e@nih.gov](mailto:yt38e@nih.gov). In addition, poster submissions are also welcome; poster applications need only be accompanied by an abstract. A book or special journal issue publication of the symposium results, including selected research papers, is planned for early 2007. Symposium participants should be prepared to develop a full paper for publication if requested by the editors. Presenter participation is limited to approximately thirty researchers.

Applications for Participation should be received no later than **November 8, 2005**. Earlier submission is encouraged. For more information on the NIDA/AAG Geography and Drug Addiction Symposium, contact Douglas Richardson at [dritchardson@aag.org](mailto:dritchardson@aag.org).

## RETURNING MEMBER

COSSA is proud to welcome back the Institute for Women's Policy Research as one of its members. We look forward to working with them in the coming year.

### CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS (COSSA)

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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.

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