
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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OMB FY 1985 'ADJUSTMENT' EXTENDS TO NIMH

In an attempt to slow down and spread out biomedical research funding, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has directed the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to fund only 277 new extramural research grants in FY 1985 instead of the 352 new grants called for in this year's congressional appropriation. OMB's mechanism is the same as that reported in the January 25, 1985 issue of Update with regard to the National Institutes of Health (NIH): 'forward-funding' of certain grants (to be determined by NIMH program staff) where future-year continuation monies are paid out of FY 1985 funds. Obligating renewal funds in this way will mean that the total 'new budget authority' for NIMH extramural grant funds can be reduced over the next two or more years, the overall effect being to reduce the total number of grants in the system to levels below those of FY 1983 or FY 1984.

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Risa I. Palm, *President*

David Jenness, *Executive Director*

Although the selection of which grants are to be forward-funded will not be made until the last quarter of FY 1985, NIMH officials point out that basic behavioral and biobehavioral (e.g., neuroscience) grants are likely to be hard-hit. The main reason is that large-scale clinical research, which may involve special populations and elaborate procedures, tends to be more expensive than laboratory-based projects. Thus, forward-funding projected renewals of grants of this type would tie up relatively more funds. In addition, second- and third-year continuation costs for clinical research projects are difficult to predict accurately, since changed conditions and 'prudent management' by both investigators and NIMH grants officials often lower these costs. These budgetary fluctuations occur less often with basic, non-clinical research projects.

Postponing the selection of forward-funded grants until the last quarter of the fiscal year may give Congress a chance to act against the OMB strategy. So far, congressional reaction to the OMB maneuver has been loud, but cautious. Senator Lowell Weicker (R-CT), chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that determines NIH funding, has asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) for a ruling on the legality of OMB's move. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), Chairman of the Health Subcommittee in the House, has introduced Joint Resolution 136, which calls for overturning OMB's directives to NIH agencies. The resolution says, "...the administration's attempt to ignore the Congress' directives is cavalier and totally unacceptable." Congressional offices have been receiving heavy mail regarding this matter from scientists across the country. Readers of Update who wish to voice their opinions should write or call Senator Weicker and Representatives Waxman and William Natcher (D-KY), chairman of the appropriations subcommittee on NIH and NIMH in the House.

SCIENCE COMMITTEE RELEASES STUDY AGENDA

The House Science and Technology Committee has completed the task of setting the agenda for its two-year study of science policy in the United States. In a report released last week, the Committee stated the study would not examine the state of individual scientific disciplines. However, the agenda will include the "role of the social and behavioral sciences."

In examining the role of the social and behavioral sciences the Committee seeks the answers to six questions: 1) In making decisions about the support of the social and behavioral sciences by the federal government, what criteria should apply? 2) To what extent do the social sciences help the nation make informed use of the discoveries and technologies produced by the physical and life sciences? 3) To what extent has past social and behavioral science research in any of the disciplines contributed to the formulation of social and other policies and what are the prospects for the future? 4) What contributions to national priority setting should the social sciences be making

that they are not now making? 5) What is the role of the government in facilitating or inhibiting the contributions of the social sciences to the resolution of issues of national importance? 6) To what extent should support distinguish between the individual disciplines within the field of the social and behavioral sciences.

The Committee has commissioned the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to conduct a study of the contributions of the social and behavioral sciences. CRS will gather data on the size of the social and behavioral science research community in the United States, the past expenditures by federal agencies for this research, and non-governmental funding of these disciplines. It expects to conduct limited case studies of how social and behavioral science research has been used in public and private decision-making on policy issues. In addition, CRS will examine the criteria that have been used to justify federal support for these sciences and the extent to which the distinction between basic and applied research applies to the social and behavioral sciences.

COSSA will continue to interact with both the Science and Technology Committee and the CRS as the science policy study continues. Update readers with insights or thoughts about the questions raised by the Committee should forward them to the COSSA office.

HOUSE COMMITTEES FINALLY ORGANIZE FOR 99TH CONGRESS

The House of Representatives finally completed committee and subcommittee assignments in early February. As Update went to print, the Senate still was not finished with its organizational arrangements. Listed below is the membership of the House Science and Technology Committee (with members of the Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee and the Task Force for the Science Policy Study also noted), which has jurisdiction over the National Science Foundation's authorization. The Committee has 15 new members this year; 12 of these are freshmen Members of Congress, including 11 of the 17 new Republican Representatives. The Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee, which acts on NSF's authorization before it is considered by the full committee, has a new Ranking Republican, Sherwood Boehlert. Boehlert was the only Republican to vote against an amendment in last year's committee deliberations to reduce a \$5 million increase for social and behavioral science research.

The House Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, which will handle the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act this year and next, has a new Chairman, Rep. William Ford (D-MI). Rep. E. Thomas Coleman (R-MO) remains the Ranking Republican. The Select Education Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Pat Williams (D-MT), will take up the reauthorization of the National Institute of Education. Rep.

Steve Bartlett (R-TX) will be the Ranking Republican on this subcommittee. Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI) will replace Rep. Ike Andrews, who was defeated in 1984, as Chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee. Rep. Thomas Tauke (R-IA) has been named Ranking Republican. This Subcommittee has oversight jurisdiction over programs at the Office of Human Development Services at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the Department of Justice.

The House Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Subcommittee has the same leadership it had in the 98th Congress -- Rep. William Natcher (D-KY), Chairman, and Rep. Silvio Conte (R-MA), Ranking Republican. The House HUD/Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, which appropriates money for the National Science Foundation and the HUD Office of Policy Development and Research, also remains unchanged from last year -- Rep. Edward Boland (D-MA), Chairman, and Rep. William Green (R-NY), Ranking Republican.

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+ Chairman, Science Research & Technology (SRT) Subcommittee

* Member SRT Subcommittee

Member Science Policy Study Task Force

ETHICS AND VALUES RESEARCH: NOT "MAINSTREAM"?

Even in a year when the administration's FY 1986 budget is generally favorable to the social and behavioral sciences in the National Science Foundation (NSF), there are some disappointments. One particular community of researchers is dismayed at the proposed elimination of the program entitled Ethics and Values in Science and Technology (EVIST), lodged in the Directorate for Scientific, Technological and International Affairs. Presumably the program is an example of what the director of NSF has called "programs that are not in the mainstream of science." EVIST, whose total funding level has been about \$1 million, has supported research by social scientists, especially sociologists.

Faced with the news that this program may cease as of October 1, one sociologist commented: "The research funded by EVIST has been among the limited investigations into cultural and ethical dilemmas underlying many current policy issues -- investigations which have attempted to bring objective and disciplined attention to bear on possible solutions to these dilemmas....An equally important concern is the extent to which the EVIST program has provided a bridge between the physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The work it supports is truly interdisciplinary -- for example, involving sociologists like myself with other social scientists, lawyers, philosophers, engineers, physical scientists, and, in my present grant, a scholar from comparative literature....The program has been a source of innovative extension of theory and important new methodology. It has enriched all the disciplines it has funded."

In principle, specific research of the sort currently funded by EVIST can be supported through other programs in NSF. The various basic research programs in NSF are able to fund different sorts of project formats (e.g., critical studies, assessments of impact, research on public attitudes, etc.) if the research proposal is directed to the appropriate program officer and if peer review is positive. Some proposals that might have been funded by EVIST may be eligible for funding from information science, history and philosophy of science, sociology, computer research, biotechnology, or several others.

In dealing with NSF program officers and in framing proposals for support, investigators probably need to make the point explicitly that the health of science itself requires studies dealing with controversial social issues in science and the impact of science in the world of affairs. It is the argument on which program officers and peer reviewers will need to be convinced if proposals are to compete for funding with more conventional empirical research.

Beyond sharpening their proposals, scholars in the field may want to challenge NSF officials on the general proposition that ethics-and-values research is not "in the mainstream." In a post-positivist age, that argument should not be impossible to construct.

In addition, social scientists should explore possibly unfamiliar avenues of research support. The National Library of Medicine can support the preparation of monographs and conference volumes in the general area of bioethics, but not empirical research. As the sociologist's comments above suggest, there has recently been joint funding of multidisciplinary research through the NSF EVIST program and a program entitled Humanities, Science and Technology in the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Unfortunately, one of the ground rules of the NSF-NEH cooperation has been that NEH's own funds for research per se would go primarily to humanists (sometimes working with physical scientists and other professionals). The current NEH program announcement in this area says: "Grant applications for support of purely empirical social scientific research, specific policy studies, or technical impact assessments are not eligible." This accords with the general NEH policy of supporting social science projects only insofar as they address humanistic concerns or use the methodologies of the humanities.

With the termination of the NSF EVIST program, NEH program officers may need to redraft their guidelines. Social scientists working in this general area may want to write the NEH to offer examples of empirical research incorporating methods congenial or familiar to humanists, and to suggest what NEH might do to bridge the gap. Comments should be addressed to:

Daniel Jones
Humanities, Science and Technology Program
National Endowment for the Humanities
Washington, DC 20506

SSRC OFFERS FELLOWSHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) is currently seeking applicants for its fellowship program in International Peace and Security Studies. Funds for the fellowships are provided by a grant to the SSRC from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The SSRC will make awards in two categories: (1) support for graduate training and dissertation research for students with training in the social/behavioral sciences, physical and biological sciences, or foreign area studies; and (2) support for one year of advanced training and one year of research for scholars holding a doctorate in one of the aforementioned fields.

Both fellowships are designed to encourage new approaches to the study of peace and security and to facilitate the application of theories and methods from diverse disciplines to issues of international peace.

Deadlines for the receipt of applications are March 31 and July 31, 1985. For further information contact the Social Science Research Council, Fellowship Program in International Peace and Security Studies, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158; 212/661-0280.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

National Center for Health Services Research
and Health Care Technology Assessment

New health legislation (the "Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Amendments of 1984") has strengthened the research and technology assessment functions for what is now the National Center for Health Services Research and Health Care Technology Assessment (NCHSR&HCTA). The legislation and name change emphasize the Center's primary mission as the focus for health services research in the Public Health Service, combined with its enhanced role to assess medical technology issues. A portion of the agency's extramural research budget has been earmarked for health care technology assessment. NCHSR has identified four areas that are likely to be of primary importance in the present decade and for which the knowledge base is especially deficient. They are: (1) primary care/health promotion and disease prevention; (2) technology assessment; (3) the role of market forces in health care delivery; and (4) studies relevant to the unique operational and policy issues faced by state and local governments. NCHSR expects to stimulate empirically based research in these areas, but also encourages proposals in a broad range of health services issues and methodologies.

FY 1985 Budget: \$12 million

Funding Mechanisms: Mostly grants (including dissertation support), small number of contracts

Review Process: Peer review

Disciplines Funded: Most funded projects are multidisciplinary

Restrictions on Awards: Projects may not exceed five years

Success Ratio: 20% - 25% of proposals are funded

Deadlines: March 1, July 1, and November 1

Contact: Director, Extramural Research Program
National Center for Health Services Research
3-18 Park Building
Rockville, MD 20857

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 Speech Communication Association

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