

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume VIII, Number 18  
October 6, 1989

## COSSA MOVES TO NEW OFFICES

Effective October 10, COSSA will move to new Washington offices. Our new address, phone number and fax are:

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## FISCAL YEAR BEGINS; SEQUESTRATION LOOMS

The 1990 Fiscal Year began October 1, but Congress is still at work on twelve of its 13 annual appropriations bills. Only the Energy and Water Development measure has been signed by the President, while all the rest are at various stages of conference committee action. To keep the government operating while negotiations continue, legislators have enacted a Continuing Resolution that funds government programs through October 25.

One of the major obstacles to finishing appropriations work has been the deadlock over a funding mechanism for Congress's major anti-drug initiative. That roadblock, however, was cleared late in September when negotiators agreed to pay for the measure with a 0.43 percent across-the-board cut in all other programs.

Meanwhile, Congress is working on an omnibus reconciliation bill that includes provisions necessary to meet the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings (GRH)

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COSSA Washington Update is published 20-24 times per year, normally biweekly, by the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), 1625 I Street, NW, Suite 911, Washington, D.C. 20006 (202/887-6166). Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$50.00; institutional subscriptions, \$90.00; overseas airmail, \$90.00. ISSN 0749-4394. COSSA Members, Affiliates, and Contributors are listed on the back. The Update is written and produced by the Consortium's staff: Howard J. Silver, Stacey E. Beckhardt, Brian Daly, and Katrina R. Styles.

The Consortium represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community.

deficit reduction target of \$110 billion. Major arguments over revenue raising -- capital gains, revival of tax deductions for Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), and other proposals -- will probably keep Congress from acting before October 16, the date when OMB provides the final determination for GRH purposes of next year's deficit. But without the reconciliation bill, the deficit target will not be met and sequestration (automatic across-the-board reductions) will occur for all programs. Current thinking is that the sequestration will be short-lived; when the reconciliation measure and all appropriations bills become law, the reductions will likely be voided.

The VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations bill with funding for the National Science Foundation cleared the Senate on September 28. The Senate made no changes to the committee recommendations for NSF (see UPDATE September 22, 1989).

The conference committee on the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations bill agreed to allocate \$159.1 million to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), a \$6 million increase over FY 1989. The Interior bill includes some of the language proposed by Senator Jesse Helms prohibiting the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the NEH from funding projects that involve "obscene" materials, but the conference committee removed the ban on funding for works that "denigrate" any particular group or class. In an effort to placate Helms and his supporters, the bill as approved by the committee would establish a commission to examine the NEA grant making procedure.<<

#### SIMON MAKES CASE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AT SENATE HEARINGS

"The social sciences have much to contribute to our society, and could contribute much more than they do if they were supported at a more adequate level," according to Herb Simon, Nobel Laureate in Economics and Richard King Mellon University Professor of Computer Science and Psychology at Carnegie-Mellon University.

Appearing September 29 before the Senate Science, Technology and Space Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Al Gore (D-TN), Simon offered his views as the panel began its second day of oversight hearings on American science policy. He was joined by National Science Foundation Director Erich Bloch and three former Presidential Science Advisers: George Keyworth II, H. Guyford Stever, and Frank Press. Most of the testimony focused on establishing scientific priorities among people, instrumentation, and facilities and between big science projects (Space Station, Human Genome, Superconducting Supercollider) and small science (individual and small group investigations).

Other topics of discussion included the role of the university in science, especially its relations with business and industry. The subcommittee also examined ways to transfer scientific discoveries into high technology products (something the Japanese seem to do better than Americans lately), an issue of

particular concern to Gore and Sen. Richard Bryan (D-NV). Simon had views on these issues, but unlike the others, spoke with vigor about the role of the social and behavioral sciences. He disputed the simplistic dichotomy between "hard" (natural and physical) and "soft" (social and behavioral) sciences, suggesting that meteorology and low-temperature fusion might fit into the latter category, while knowledge about the operation of competitive markets or the capacity of human short-term memory might well be considered "hard."

Furthermore, Simon noted, "inadequacy of basic data is the most serious impediment to social science research in most domains today, and the data are not going to become noticeably better without substantial increases in the level of research funding." He continued: "Economics, sociology, and political science need to collect, on a more or less continuous basis, more facts about the way in which our society operates, and the ways in which its human actors behave. Psychology needs increased opportunities to study behavior in the laboratory, and organization theory and business economics need more extensive and detailed observation of what goes on daily in the decision-making work of business firms and government organizations."

Simon concluded his testimony with a tribute to political scientists conducting research on political institutions, saying "they can help us know ourselves as citizens and actors in the political arena; can provide the realistic knowledge of ourselves that is essential if we are to preserve and improve the democratic institutions that are the foundation of our national life."<<

#### NIA COUNCIL HEARS ABOUT BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Despite the continuing focus on Alzheimer's disease as the central mission of the National Institute on Aging (NIA), the psycho-social approach to the study of aging must complement the biomedical approach. That was the message Matilda White Riley, director of the Behavioral and Social Research (BSR) Program, sent to members of the National Advisory Council on Aging at their September 21 meeting.

As part of her report on the BSR program, Riley stressed the role of research on psychological and social interventions to meet the needs of the elderly in terms of their health and physical condition, their intellectual functioning, and their sense of self-worth. She said her program continues to focus on special populations including: the rural elderly who are often poor and socially isolated; the elderly from minority populations who often remain disadvantaged; and the oldest old (those over age 85), who face increasing disability and institutionalization and who tend to be women living alone.

Reporting on some of the research supported by BSR, Riley

noted the positive impact a sense of independence and self-control can have on physical well-being. She also discussed the perception of the relative burden between caretakers and caregivers, and the evidence indicating that increased attention does not help the elderly in nursing homes maintain their sense of independence. In addition, Riley offered the panel information on the increasing results from BSR-supported longitudinal studies that focus on the long-term consequences of parental divorces and unhappy childhoods.

Riley was followed by David Mechanic of Rutgers University who discussed the need to improve the quality of data and the measurement tools used to examine perceptions of risk by the elderly. (Mechanic, a former member of the panel, suggested that a better understanding of this phenomenon may have avoided the current policy disaster over catastrophic health insurance.) According to Mechanic, improved data are also needed to assess the impact of societal changes on the elderly, and the differences among and within aging cohorts.

John Nesselrode of Penn State discussed BSR-supported research on adult psychological well-being and the need to refine concepts such as ability, motivation, and temperament to provide better predictions and explanations of age-related personality changes. George Kaplan of the University of California at Berkeley described the need for more research on the role of external environment change on the health of the elderly, and Larry Bumpass of the University of Wisconsin outlined research on the impact of family life on the aged.<<

#### U.S. NEEDS MORE RESEARCH ON MINORITY EDUCATION, WITNESSES SAY

"The challenge is to make knowledge and information useable and workable." With that gauntlet thrown, House Subcommittee on Select Education Chairman Major Owens (D-NY) opened his panel's September 14 hearing on minority education research needs. Witnesses called for increased research into education issues concerning minority students, and a number of experts faulted the federal government for failing to provide sufficient research support.

"A number of issues are begging for programs of research," charged Dr. Wornie Reed of the University of Massachusetts. Citing in particular the need for information on intradistrict inequalities and school dropouts, Reed contended that federal funding for many educational research projects has dried up during the last decade.

Among the remedial actions Reed suggested were (1) congressional restoration of federally-funded research on problems of minority education, (2) resumption of the federal publication of current racial-ethnic data in education and publication of related data withheld during the Reagan administration, and (3) initiation of state-financed programs of research on equity

concerns.

Dr. Robert Dentler joined Reed in calling for boosted federal research funding, arguing that inner-city schools could be improved substantially by federal investments in research and development. Offering the committee a chronicle of declining federal efforts in minority education research, Dentler suggested a comprehensive solution, featuring a "network of well-funded labs and centers, with the latter being based at universities and in vigorous symbiotic collaboration with one another and with labs."

Among the criticisms made of the Bush Administration was its failure to appoint promptly an assistant education secretary to head the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Committee chairman Owens was particularly pointed about the need for a prompt appointment: "We have been waiting now for nine critical months for a permanent Bush nominee to be sent up for confirmation. It is inexcusable to have this position vacant while an important competition of regional laboratories and national research centers is taking place."

Bush has subsequently nominated Christopher T. Cross, a former Republican staff director of the House Education and Labor Committee, to fill the vacant post. Cross's appointment has received a generally warm reception among educational researchers.<<

#### HOUSE OKS SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP BILL

By voice vote on September 12, the House of Representatives passed a bill that establishes congressional scholarships for science, mathematics, and engineering. The bill provides support for undergraduates willing to commit themselves early in their college careers to studying and teaching these subjects.

The measure authorizes the National Science Foundation (NSF) to establish three types of competitive, merit-based undergraduate scholarships: (1) a four-year scholarship of \$5,000 per year for one male and one female from each congressional district; (2) 500 two-year scholarships of \$7,500 per year for the junior and senior years for students willing to commit to teaching science and mathematics in elementary or secondary schools that receive aid for disadvantaged students from the Department of Education; and (3) 500 two-year scholarships of \$5,000 per year for the junior and senior years for students willing to commit to working as a scientist or engineer for two years or willing to complete two years of graduate education in science, mathematics or engineering.

Eligibility for the first two programs is open to students studying all disciplines supported by NSF. The third program is open to students in those academic fields NSF designates as

having projected shortages in the U.S. scientific and engineering work force. A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate. The White House, meanwhile, is supporting similar scholarships in its education initiative for the Department of Education.<<

**STATE DEPT. BLASTS UNESCO WHILE RESEARCHERS CALL FOR U.S. RETURN**

A senior State Department official has harshly criticized the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and warned that U.S. return to the agency is unlikely if its current draft plan for future activities is approved. At a September 19 hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations, Assistant Secretary of State John R. Bolton charged that UNESCO Director General Frederico Mayor has failed to implement the significant financial and administrative reforms he has promised. The U.S. withdrew from the organization in 1984 in response to concerns about the agency's bloated administration and increasing politicization.

Bolton noted that UNESCO's draft 1990-95 activities plan was a "disappointment" to the Bush Administration because it fails to significantly reduce the size of the agency's bureaucracy. Bolton also contended that Mayor has not effectively curtailed UNESCO's politicization, specifically citing 31 pages of amendments to the activities plan that are "negative from the U.S. point of view." Adoption of the amendments, Bolton said, would virtually preclude future U.S. participation in the agency.

While Bolton sounded his warning, a variety of witnesses from the research community called for a U.S. return to UNESCO. "There is a consensus in the U.S. science and technology community that UNESCO is important and worth supporting under Frederico Mayor," according to National Academy of Sciences President Frank Press. The agency is valuable, he argued, "because of its broad perspective and concern with cooperation in the basic natural sciences, social science, engineering, science education, and public understanding of science." Furthermore, Press contended, U.S. participation in UNESCO is crucial to the agency's reform: "We cannot be players on the international scene if we are standing on the sideline."

Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, assistant secretary for external affairs at the Smithsonian Institution also called for U.S. re-entry, citing a collection of programs unique to UNESCO that play an important role in the emerging issue of global change. UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere program, which integrates the natural sciences with the social sciences to provide information for environmental administration and policy making, was among the initiatives Lovejoy described.<<

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**SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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

**Field-Initiated Studies Program**

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) is seeking grant applications for awards under the Field-Initiated Studies Program. Proposals on any topic are encouraged, with the sole requirement that studies be research-oriented and designed to advance educational theory and practice. The program is intended, according to OERI officials, to attract proposals on topics not included under topic-specific award programs.

Successful proposal topics in past years have included school desegregation, parental involvement in education, literacy skills among disadvantaged children, and school resource utilization.

**Budget:** Approximately \$500,000 to \$700,000.

**Funding Mechanism:** The agency expects to award 15 grants ranging in size from \$30,000 to \$70,000. Average grant size is projected to be \$50,000.

**Review Process:** Peer review.

**Deadline:** Applications will be available November 13, 1989. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than February 7, 1990.

**Contact:** Delores Monroe  
U.S. Department of Education  
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW  
Suite 610  
Washington, DC 20208-5573  
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**BROMLEY AND GREEN TO SPEAK AT COSSA ANNUAL MEETING**

COSSA is pleased to announce that D. Allen Bromley, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Rep. William Green will be the featured speakers at the Consortium's November 6 annual meeting.

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