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COSSA to Celebrate 30th Anniversary at Annual Meeting on November 2 and 3: Price, Marrett, Groves, Mann Among Distinguished Speakers

On November 2 and 3, 2011, in Washington, DC, the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), founded in the midst of a budget crisis in 1981, will celebrate its 30th Anniversary with a day and half symposium on the Social and Behavioral Science Contributions to Public Policy and how the current budgetary situation impacts those contributions. The event will also include the presentation of COSSA Founder Awards and a joyous reception.

Participants include: Congressman and political scientist David Price, NSF Deputy Director Cora Marrett, Census Bureau Director Robert Groves, Brookings Congressional Scholar Tom Mann, NIH's Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Science Research Robert Kaplan, NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate head Myron Gutmann, Carnegie Mellon criminologist Al Blumstein, Brookings Senior Economic Fellow and former head of the Council of Economic Advisers Charles Schultze, American Psychological Association head Norman Anderson, and COSSA's first Executive Director Roberta Balstad. The President's Science Adviser John Holdren has been invited. COSSA's current President, former Census Director Ken Prewitt, will preside.

For the agenda so far, more information, and to register for the event go [here](#).

Congress Returns: Focus on FY 2012 Spending Bills, Jobs, and Waiting for the Super Committee

The 112th Congress returned from its August recess on September 6 facing a fall session that will test any further détente between the White House and the Republican leadership of the House. After listening to President Obama's address on job creation on September 8, the focus again turned to working on the FY 2012 spending bills, while keeping an eye on the Super Committee of 12 appointed as a result of the Debt Ceiling Agreement that will make proposals by Thanksgiving to further reduce the nation's debt.

The Super Committee, co-chaired by Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), held its opening meeting on September 8. Each member gave an opening statement and the panel adapted rules for its operation. It will hold its first hearing on September 13 with Congressional Budget Office Director Doug Elmendorf as the witness to explain how we got into the budget mess the nation faces. The Committee has a deadline of November 23, 2011 for its proposed solution and according to the provisions of its establishment, the Congress must vote up or down on these by December 23, 2011. Failure to adopt the Committee's recommendations would lead to automatic across-the-board (ATB) spending cuts that would take effect in FY 2013. As Frances Lee of the University of Maryland pointed out at a panel at the recent American Political Science Association meeting in Seattle, the FY 2013 date means that whatever the Super Committee comes up with will not affect FY 2012 spending and there is a lot of political wiggle room for Congress and the Administration to try and avoid the ATB cuts.

Another facet of the Debt Ceiling deal was setting the cap on FY 2012 discretionary appropriations at \$1.043 billion. This is \$7 billion below FY 2011 level, but \$24 billion above the figure in the Budget Resolution in the House, which that body used to allocate spending in ten of the twelve FY 2012 appropriations bills.

Although no one expects Congress to finish the FY 2012 spending bills by the start of the fiscal year on October 1, 2011, the new cap has led the Senate to at least try and get the bills through its Appropriations Committee. The House and Senate expect to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) next week to keep the government funded until mid-November, while they try and complete the FY 2012 appropriations process.

Last week the House turned to the two bills it has not completed action on at the Subcommittee level. The Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) bill was marked up at the Subcommittee level on September 8th. An attempt to mark up the massive Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill on September 9 was cancelled, with some reports suggesting there were objections to using the higher allocation created by the Debt Ceiling agreement. In addition the State Department-Foreign Operations bill has been through a Subcommittee markup, but its full Committee consideration scheduled for August 3 was postponed.

The other expectation is that no more appropriations bills will face consideration on either the floor of the House or Senate until Congress assembles an Omnibus bill that will include all the FY 2012 spending bills later in the fall. With no floor action on individual bills it is less likely that mischief amendments regarding funding for social and behavioral science research will occur.

In addition to the jobs proposal and the spending bills, the first session of the 112th Congress has a number of substantive pieces of legislation left on its plate. The respective committees in the House and Senate will continue their work on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, although the prospect of a bill emerging in 2011 is slim. The legislation creating a five-year term for the director of the U.S. Census Bureau and removing Senate confirmation requirements for a large number of Presidential appointees including the heads of the National Center on Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the members of the National Science Board, has passed the Senate, but the House has taken no action so far.

Senate Appropriators Get to Work; House Appropriators Try to Finish

With only one of its twelve spending bills completed before leaving for the August recess, the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), moved swiftly the first week of the post-recess session to complete action on three more bills. As it has in the past, with two of those bills Subcommittee action was bypassed and the full committee marked up. The bills would provide FY 2012 funding for the Agriculture, Homeland Security, and Energy Departments as well as water projects.

On September 7th the Senate Appropriations Committee advanced legislation that would provide 16 percent more in FY 2012 discretionary spending for agriculture programs than the House approved in June ([see Update, June 27, 2011.](#)) The Subcommittee Chairman Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) noted that the Committee had attempted to balance priorities in the face of the large federal deficit.

The bill, approved 28-2, would provide \$19.78 billion in FY 2012 discretionary spending authority for the Agriculture Department and related agencies, a roughly \$138 million, or 0.7 percent, cut from current spending. All told, including mandatory funding, the Senate version would total \$136.6 billion, compared with the House's \$125.5 billion overall figure.

The FY 2012 bill provides \$2.3 billion for the National Institute on Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Agricultural Research Service, as compared to \$2.35 billion in FY 2011. Within NIFA, the Committee funded the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) at \$266 million compared to the House's \$229 million. The Committee allocated \$236 million for Hatch Act Formula Grants compared to the House's \$208 million. The Committee also recommended that the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) receive \$152.6 million, a decrease of \$3.8 million from FY 2011, but above the House FY 2012 allowance of \$148.3 million. The panel appropriated \$77.7 million for the Economic Research Service (ERS), down from \$81.8 million in FY 2011, but considerably above the House figure of \$68.7 million.

Rural development funding also sustained a cut of \$34 million from FY 2011 to \$654 million. However, the Senate restored funding of \$988,000 for the Regional Rural Development Centers, which the House had zeroed out for FY 2012. In addition, the report accompanying the Senate Committee action calls on the Director of NIFA to consult with the Office of the Chief Economist in

USDA to develop a competitive grant process that would continue to fund the Policy Research Centers that had been in the past an earmark to certain states.

The Senate Appropriations Committee in marking up the FY 2012 appropriation for the DHS reduced funding for Research and Development, Training and Services within the Science and Technology directorate. In FY 2011 this account received \$1.586 billion. The Senate panel provided \$1.461 billion for FY 2012, \$180 million above the House level. The Senate Committee adhered to the Administration's request, as did the House, to cut the University Programs from its FY 2011 level of \$39.9 million to \$36.6 million for FY 2012.

Acceding to the Administration's request to rearrange the accounts for Research, Development and Innovation, the line item for Human Factors research has disappeared. There are six new programs: Border Security; Counter Terrorism Defense; Disaster Resilience; Cyber Security; Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear; and Apex R&D. These six programs receive \$659.9 million from the Senate panel with DHS in charge of dividing up the pie with consultation and information provided to the appropriations panel.

Meanwhile in the House, the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, chaired by Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA), marked up its FY 2012 spending bill on September 8. For the Office of Policy Development and Research, the panel provided FY \$47.9 million for research and technology. In addition, the Subcommittee accepted the Administration's request for a one percent set-aside under its Transformation Initiative for research, evaluation, program metrics and demonstrations, technical assistance, and capacity building. These funds would amount to another \$49.8 million.

Cutter Discusses Human Response During NSF Hazards Event



Former COSSA President and University of South Carolina geographer Susan Cutter was among the speakers at a National Science Foundation (NSF) event on Capitol Hill, "Which Hazards Are in Your Backyard," that recognized National Preparedness Month and the recent natural disasters that have hit the nation in the past month - earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and fires. The event provided a showcase for NSF-funded hazards research.

Cutter, who also directs the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute at the University, discussed her research and studies by others that focused on what NSF Director Subra Suresh called the "important, critical" issue of how people respond to these events. She also highlighted the development of "resilience science," studying how people bounce back from disasters.

She noted that most folks are "awful" at probabilistic interpretation, so that rare events are much more feared than common occurrences. Noting the concept of "shadow evacuations," Cutter related that in many disaster situations more people than necessary have left their homes resulting in more crowded roads.

She summarized the research by indicating that in disaster situations, households evacuate as units and pets are part of that unit, they use private transportation, only older and low-income people use shelters, most stay with friends or in motels, and distance becomes a protective measure.

She also remarked that geographic and social disparities in recovery efforts exist and that social vulnerability is a very important concept for planning for disaster response. Responding to a question from the audience, Cutter acknowledged that the use of social networks and social media have changed the way people hear about disasters, accelerating information dissemination, and how they respond to them. Also speaking at the session were Greg Beroza and Ann Kiremidjian, both of Stanford University.

The event included more than 30 research exhibitor teams demonstrating how their NSF-supported work impacts and enables policymakers and disaster responders to better predict, prepare for, mitigate and respond to significant hazards that affect life, property, societal infrastructure and natural assets. The exhibits displayed research relating to tornados, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, oil spills and hurricanes, as well as the human response to these events.

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL), an event co-sponsor, addressed the assembled crowd and decried proposed budget cuts to the National Hurricane Center. He also acknowledged the importance of social science research, particularly on communication during disasters. Jason Unger, a key staff member for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), a co-sponsor of the event, welcomed the crowd on behalf of his boss. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) was also a co-sponsor. The American Geophysical Union, whose past President Tim Killeen is now the director of NSF's Geosciences Directorate, helped organize the event.

NIH-Commissioned Study Identifies Gaps in NIH Funding Success Rates for Black Researchers

According to the recently released NIH-commissioned study, [Race, Ethnicity, and NIH Research Awards](#), black applicants (from 2000-2006) who submitted grant proposals to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) were 10 percentage points less likely than white applicants to receive research project grants after controlling for factors that influence the likelihood of a grant award. The study was published in the August 19th edition of the journal *Science*.

"NIH commissioned this study because we want to learn more about the challenges facing the scientific community and address them head on," explained NIH director Francis Collins. He acknowledged that the "results of this study are disturbing and disheartening," and pledged that the NIH is "committed to taking action. The strength of the U.S. scientific enterprise depends upon our ability to recruit and retain the brightest minds, regardless of race or ethnicity. This study shows that we still have a long way to go. It is imperative that NIH and its partners in the biomedical research community take decisive steps to identify causes and implement remedies. NIH is already moving forward with a framework for action," said Collins.

The study was initiated in 2008 by NIH with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). University of Kansas Professor of Economics Donna Ginther was the lead author of the study which is part of a larger effort by NIH to examine and improve the diversity of its funded biomedical research workforce. According to the agency, "diversity includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, disabilities, and socioeconomic status."

According to NIH, the study was designed to determine if researchers of different races and ethnicities with similar research records and affiliations had similar likelihoods of receiving a new NIH research project grant, known as a Type 1 R01. It found "that typical measures of scientific achievement did not translate to the same level of application success for black applicants." Education, citizenship, country of origin, training, employer characteristics, prior research awards, and publication record were controlled for in the study.

Additionally, the study focused solely on race and ethnicity addressing the reality that there are "few studies on the racial and ethnic composition of federal research funding applicants." Accordingly, it serves as a "solid benchmark" for further research of grant success rates and against which we can measure progress. "The study shows that researchers of all racial and ethnic backgrounds improve their award probability by participating in NIH fellowship and traineeship programs. However, NIH training programs did not reduce the differences in award probability for black applicants. According to the study, this may suggest that current NIH graduate and postdoctoral training programs do not equally benefit all racial and ethnic groups." There is agreement that a closer examination of the review process is warranted.

The agency also expressed its concern with the low number of applications for NIH R01 grants from non-white applicants. "Of the 40,069 individual applicants included in the 2000 to 2006 study, 1.5 percent self-identified as black or African-American (598), 3.3 percent as Hispanic (1,319), 13.5 percent as Asian (5,402), 71 percent as white (28,456), and 11 percent as other/unknown." These data are consistent with data showing that the number of underrepresented populations in the fields of science and medicine remains small.

NIH admits that it needs further research to identify the causes of this discrepancy and points to possible factors under consideration for further examination: 1) Quality of educational and mentoring experiences - these may differ for applicants of different races and ethnicities; and 2) A possibility of conscious or unconscious bias in the grants process - even though information on race and ethnicity of the applicant is not available to reviewers, an applicant's name or institutional affiliation included in the application biography could suggest their race or ethnicity.

Participating in a March 2009 Congressional [briefing](#) sponsored by a group of [organizations](#) led by COSSA and cosponsored by more than 60 diverse organizations, then Acting NIH Director Raynard Kington and one of the authors on the *Science* paper, forewarned the audience in his [presentation](#), *The Challenge of Achieving Diversity in the NIH-Funded Biomedical Workforce*, "to be prepared for unpleasant evidence, evidence that might raise uncomfortable questions and uncomfortable issues." At the briefing, Kington emphasized that it is a "complicated story" and "we will have to be willing to hear unpleasant things if we are finally going to have an important serious discussion about what we can do to correct the problem."

To address these and other concerns, the NIH has announced its intention to implement a "framework for action." Specific actions include:

- **Increase the number of early career reviewers including those from underrepresented populations.** NIH has initiated the new [Early Career Reviewer program](#) to encourage promising junior faculty to participate in peer review panels, and learn how these groups discuss, evaluate, and score grant applications. The agency recently requested nominations of faculty or researchers, specifically including those at less research-intensive institutions who are actively involved and established in biomedical research and have published in high-quality scientific journals, but who may not yet have received major peer-reviewed research support. The aim is to have 50 early career reviewers assigned to each of NIH's three rounds of grant review in the 2012 fiscal year.
- **Examine the grant review process for bias and develop interventions.** NIH intends to "conduct innovative experiments" designed to shed light on possible sources of bias in the grant review process, and to develop appropriate interventions.
- **Improve support for grant applicants.** The agency plans to assess the value of providing additional technical assistance to applicants in grant preparation, and supporting innovative approaches to encourage more extensive and effective local mentoring of junior faculty.
- **Gather expert advice on additional action steps.** NIH plans to gather expert advice through two high-level advisory groups that have been formed by the NIH Director: the NIH Diversity Task Force led by NIH Deputy Director Lawrence Tabak and part of the NIH Director's Steering Committee; and an external panel of distinguished experts on a newly formed Diversity in Biomedical Research Working Group reporting to Collins through the Advisory Committee to the Director (see Update, [July 28, 2003](#) and related story).

Collins and Tabak also responded to the study's conclusions in a companion paper: [Weaving a Richer Tapestry in Biomedical Science](#).

NIH Establishes ACD Diversity in Biomedical Research Working Group

On August 18, National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins announced the creation of the Diversity in Biomedical Research Working Group (DBRWG) of the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD). The DBRWG's charge is to "focus on five key transition points in the pipeline:"

1. Entry into graduate degree programs;
2. The transition from graduate degree to post-doctoral fellowship;
3. The appointment from a post-doctoral position to the first independent scientific position;
4. The award of the first independent research grant from NIH or its equivalent in industry; and
5. Award of tenure in an academic position or its equivalent in an industrial setting.

The Committee is tasked with providing "concrete recommendations to the NIH Director on ways to improve the retention of underrepresented minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons from disadvantaged backgrounds through these critical periods." The DBRWG's analysis is to include both the NIH intramural extramural research communities.

The Working Group is further charged with producing interim recommendations by December 2011. Final recommendations are due June 2012. In recognition of related tasks within the NIH campus, the DBRWG is expected to collaborate and coordinate with the ACD Biomedical Workforce Working Group, the NIH Diversity Task Force, and the NIH Women in Biomedical Research Careers Working Group (see Update, [May 2, 2011](#), [July 13, 2011](#), and [June 25, 2007](#)).

Diversity in Biomedical Research Working Group Roster

- **Reed Tuckson**, Executive Vice President and Chief of Medical Affairs, UnitedHealth Group, co-chair
- **John Ruffin**, Director, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, co-chair
- **Lawrence Tabak**, Principal Deputy Director National Institutes of Health, co-chair
- **Ann Bonham**, Chief Scientific Officer, Association of American Medical Colleges
- **Jordan Cohen**, President Emeritus, Association of American Medical Colleges
- **José Florez**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- **Gary Gibbons**, Director, Cardiovascular Research Institute and Chair, Department of Physiology, Morehouse School of Medicine
- **Renee Jenkins**, Chair, Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Howard University
- **Tuajuanda Jordan**, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Lewis and Clark College
- **Wayne Riley**, President & Chief Executive Officer, Meharry Medical College; Chair, National Advisory Council on Minority Health & Health Disparities, National Institutes of Health; Chairman, Board of Directors, Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
- **Samuel Silverstein**, John C. Dalton Professor of Physiology & Cellular Biophysics, and Professor of Medicine, Columbia University Medical Center
- **Dana Yasu Takagi**, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Santa Cruz
- **Maria Teresa Velez**, Associate Dean of the Graduate College, Professor in Psychology, University of Arizona
- **M. Roy Wilson**, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
- **Keith Yamamoto**, Executive Vice Dean, School of Medicine, Professor Departments of Cellular/Molecular Pharmacology and Biochemistry/Biophysics, University of California, San

Francisco

- **Clyde Yancy**, Magerstadt Professor and Chief, Division of Medicine-Cardiology, Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

DHS' START Center Event Examines Terrorism Ten Years After 9/11

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and responses to Terrorism (START), a Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) led by COSSA Board Member Gary LaFree, held an event on September 1 to discuss the ten years since the attacks of 9/11 and progress, or lack thereof, in dealing with terrorist attacks. The event had many high caliber speakers - Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) gave the keynote address, CNN's Peter Bergen participated in a debate on the safety of the Nation, and many other noted authors and thinkers spoke.

LaFree kicked off the day-long event with a discussion of myths that surround terrorism. He concluded that due to the atmosphere of misunderstanding and fear that surrounds terrorist attacks they are frequently not seen in proper context and that exceptional cases that play upon the population's fear tend to drive policy. He cautioned that we must guard against this.

The first panel came after a brief address from Wallace D. Loh, President of the University of Maryland. The panel discussed the process of radicalization, a topic not new to START events (see Update, [May 31, 2011](#).) John Horgan of Penn State University seemed to bring something new to the discussion, however, by noting that he was not sure radicalization should have been allowed to take the center stage of research in the way that it did after the 9/11 attacks. He blamed a failure to make progress in other areas of study as pushing academics towards radicalization topics. He went on to say that despite the serious efforts and superb work by many, radicalization remains poorly understood.

Lieberman began his speech by noting that legislators are currently more focused on the economy than terrorism, which he attributed in part to our success against terrorism. He called the ten-year mark since there has been a large scale attack against the U.S. a major victory, but noted that policy makers would now be asked to defend their strategy against calls that the danger was overestimated and the response too drastic. The Senator, without equivocation, declared the response was correct and that the enemy is weakened though not vanquished. He noted that the Congressional Research Service (CRS) said that over the past two years there have been over 30 arrests of Americans or permanent legal residents in relation to terrorist activities. While he proposed that this rise in homegrown terrorism is the result of broadening our guard, he noted the strong need to address internal radicalization by facilitating new partnerships between government and Muslim-American communities.

The debate between Peter Bergen and author Daveed Gartenstein-Ross on whether the United States is safer today than it was ten years ago seemed to echo many of the sentiments of Lieberman. Bergen argued, like the Senator, that we are indeed safer today than we were thanks to aggressive policies to combat terrorism. Gartenstein proposed, as he does in a book released this month, that we are in fact weaker and thus less able to defend ourselves and less safe. The two sparred on these issues, with Gartenstein noting the recent attempted terrorist attacks and Bergen defending the American response and pointing out that no one died in these attempts. Ultimately, Gartenstein's argument was that our capacities are diminished due to a bruised and battered economy so we are less safe, while Bergen countered that we have aggressively targeted key terrorist actors and have not been the victim of another major attack since 9/11. The audience, via a text message voting system, sided with Bergen by a narrow margin.

A final panel composed of former radicals, men and women who had been associated with violent organizations, discussed the allure and their eventual descent into the groups. All of the speakers shared the view that their own "radicalization" was a long process that could not be attributed to a

single event or day.

More information on START can be found [here](#).

George Alter Appointed Director of ICPSR



The University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (ISR) has announced that George Alter is the new director of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Alter, who has been ICPSR's Acting Director since the departure of Myron Gutmann to the National Science Foundation in November 2009, has accepted a five-year appointment beginning in September.

Founded by the late Warren Miller and now celebrating its 50th Anniversary, ICPSR is a major data archive in the social sciences. It is an international consortium of about 700 academic institutions and research organizations, providing leadership and training in data access, curation, and methods of analysis for the social science research community.

The data archive has more than 500,000 files of research in the social sciences and includes specialized collections of data in education, aging, criminal justice, substance abuse, terrorism, and other fields. ICPSR sponsors the Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research, a comprehensive curriculum of intensive courses in research design, statistics, data analysis, and social methodology. The Consortium also leads several initiatives that encourage use of data in teaching, particularly for undergraduate instruction.

Along with his position at ICPSR, Alter has two other academic appointments at the University of Michigan - Professor of History and Research Professor at ISR's Population Studies Center. He is also the current President of the Social Science History Association, a COSSA member.

He has held important administrative roles at ICPSR since 2007, when he started as Associate Director of ICPSR and Director of the Collection Development unit. Before coming to ICPSR, Alter was a professor in the History Department at Indiana University.

He has a bachelor's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Master's in Applied Economics from the University of Michigan.

National Science Board Solicits for Nominees for its 2012 Awards

The National Science Board (NSB) seeks nominations for the 2012 Vannevar Bush Award, the Alan T. Waterman Award, and its Public Service Award. **The deadline for the Waterman Award is October 31, 2011 and for the Bush and Public Service awards, November 2, 2011.**

The **Vannevar Bush Award** is awarded annually to exceptional lifelong leaders in science and technology who have made substantial contributions to the welfare of the Nation through public service activities in science, technology and public policy.

According to the NSB, candidates for the Vannevar Bush Award must be U.S. citizens and should have demonstrated outstanding leadership and accomplishment in meeting at least two of the following selection criteria: distinguished him/herself through public service activities in science and technology; pioneered the exploration, charting, and settlement of new frontiers in science, technology, education and public service; demonstrated leadership and creativity that have inspired others to distinguished careers in science and technology; contributed to the welfare of the Nation and mankind through activities in science and technology; and/or demonstrated leadership

and creativity that has helped mold the history of advancements in the Nation's science, technology, and education.

Recent recipients include: Charles M. Vest, President of the National Academy of Engineering and President Emeritus of Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Bruce Alberts, Editor-in-Chief, *Science Magazine*; Mildred Dresselhaus, Institute Professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Norman Augustine, former Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board, Lockheed Martin Corporation.

Congress established the **Alan T. Waterman Award** in August 1975 to mark the NSF's 25th Anniversary and to honor its first Director. The annual award recognizes an outstanding young researcher in any field of science or engineering supported by the National Science Foundation. In addition to a medal, the award recipient gets a grant of \$500,000 over a three year period for scientific research or advanced study in the mathematical, physical, biological, engineering, social, or other sciences at the institution of the recipient's choice. Lawrence Summers, then a Harvard economics professor, and Dalton Conley, Professor of Sociology at NYU, have been the two social scientists who have won the Waterman Award.

The **Public Service Award** honors individuals and groups that have made substantial contributions to increasing public understanding of science and engineering in the United States. These contributions may be in a wide variety of areas that have the potential of contributing to public understanding of and appreciation for science and engineering-including mass media, education and/or training programs, and entertainment. The award is typically given to one individual and one group (company, corporation or organization) each year.

According to the NSB, candidates for the Public Service Award should have demonstrated outstanding leadership and accomplishment in meeting the following selection criteria: increased the public's understanding of the processes of science and engineering through scientific discovery, innovation and its communication to the public; encouraged others to help raise the public understanding of science and technology; promoted the engagement of scientists and engineers in public outreach and scientific literacy; contributed to the development of broad science and engineering policy and its support; influenced and encouraged the next generation of scientists and engineers; achieved broad recognition outside of the candidate's area of specialization; and fostered awareness of science and technology among broad segments of the population.

Past recipients include Moira Gunn, host of "Tech Nation;" San Francisco's Exploratorium; NUMB3RS, the CBS television drama series; Ira Flatow, Host and Executive Producer of NPR's "Science Friday;" Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; Bill Nye, the Science Guy; and NOVA, the PBS television series.

For detailed nomination instructions and further information about the Vannevar Bush and Public Service awards visit the NSB [website](#).

The Waterman Award fact sheet, prepared by the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs, is available at: http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=102999. All inquiries about nomination procedures and the awards should be directed to Ann Ferrante, aferrant@nsf.gov, 703-292-4520.

SBE Seeks Projects to Create Metadata for its Major Surveys

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) funds three long-term major surveys - the American National Election Studies (ANES), the General Social Survey (GSS), and the Panel Study on Income Dynamics (PSID). In recent years the NSF has held a series of workshops that produced reports on the future of these surveys: [The GSS: The Next Decade and Beyond](#) and [NSF Cyberinfrastructure Vision for the 21st Century Discovery](#)

[Report.](#)

One of the major recommendations from these activities was to collect ANES, GSS and PSID legacy metadata in machine actionable formats to enable interoperability across surveys. The ultimate goal is to make major methodological and technical advances in survey data access, including searchability, extraction, documentation, analysis, and dissemination.

NSF is now soliciting proposals to either present a plan for creating a metadata system for all three surveys, or for only the cross-sectional surveys (GSS and ANES) or for only the panel survey (PSID). **The deadline for the full proposal is January 31, 2012.**

According to NSF, successful applications will demonstrate the ability to mount a viable pilot together with plans to extend the pilot to the entirety of the subject survey collections. Therefore they will demonstrate the research team's ability to coordinate with the principal investigators leading the three large surveys. Successful applications will also include provisions for (1) appropriate documentation of any software developed and a user guide; and (2) communication of the findings to the scientific community. The project should include clearly written and readily accessible documentation and user guides for people unfamiliar with the surveys.

NSF expects to make one or two awards, depending on the scope of projects submitted. It notes that proposals which incorporate metadata for all three surveys are preferred. However, given the additional complexity of metadata for panel surveys, NSF will consider proposals which code metadata for the PSID alone or for the cross-sectional ANES and GSS together, excluding the PSID.

The anticipated budget for FY 2012 is \$1 million. The grants will have a duration of 24 months. Grantees may be eligible for supplemental funding after the initial two-year project based on the outcomes after the first year and NSF review of evaluation and performance reports.

For more information contact: Patricia E. White, (703) 292-8762, email: pwhite@nsf.gov; or Katherine Meyer, (703) 292-4780, email: kmeyer@nsf.gov; Nancy A. Lutz, (703) 292-7280, email: nlutz@nsf.gov; Brian D. Humes, (703) 292-7284, email: bhumes@nsf.gov; or Rob Pennington, (703) 292-7025, email: rpenning@nsf.gov

For the full solicitation: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11583/nsf11583.htm?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click

NSF Seeks Proposals at Interface of Computer and Social Sciences

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is soliciting interdisciplinary research and education proposals that develop new knowledge at the interface between Computer Science and Economics and Social Sciences. Projects should advance knowledge on both sides of the interface. Projects that use known techniques and results from Computer Science or Economics and Social Sciences to advance only one field are not of interest to the program.

According to NSF, an important research interaction has emerged at the interface of computing and economics and social sciences. The synergy between these fields creates a rich opportunity for studying questions that involve interconnected systems with economic and social aspects. This research interaction has already led to the identification of a number of underlying principles and research themes. These include network structures in economic interaction, theories of learning in the context of such networks, welfare properties of equilibria, the design of mechanisms with constraints, the complexity of computing equilibria, the robustness of equilibria, and the roles of information, reputation, and trust in economic and social interactions. These principles provide lines of attack on a set of important applications, including the emergence of new kinds of online markets, the roles of economic issues in the architecture of the Internet, the design and analysis of

markets in the developing world, and the roles of social and economic networks in innovation and knowledge creation.

Proposers are invited to submit proposals in two project classes: Small Projects-up to \$400,000 total budget with durations up to three years; and Large Projects-\$400,001 to \$1 million total budget with durations up to four years. NSF expects to make 10-20 awards with anticipated total funding of \$6.5 million.

The submission window dates are: November 21, 2011 - December 06, 2011.

For more information contact: Nancy Lutz, (703) 292-7280, or nlutz@nsf.gov.

For the full solicitation: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11584/nsf11584.htm?WT.mc_id=USNSF_25&WT.mc_ev=click

Advisory Committee to the NIH Director Working Group on the Future Biomedical Research Workforce Seeks Input

The Advisory Committee to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director (ACD) Working Group has issued a [request for information](#) (RFI) seeking input from the extramural community, including students, postdoctoral fellows, scientists, scientific societies, and NIH grantee institutions, as well as from the general public, to assist it developing a model for a sustainable, diverse, and productive U.S. biomedical research workforce.

According to the RFI, the model will help inform decisions about how to train the optimal number of people for the appropriate types of positions that will advance science and promote health. The working group will recommend actions to the ACD and to the NIH Director.

In its initial deliberations, the working group identified the following issues as important to consider when developing a model of the future biomedical research workforce:

- The balance between supply, including the number of domestic and foreign trained PhDs and post-docs, and demand, i.e. post-training career opportunities.
- Characteristics of PhD training in biomedical research, including issues such as:
 - The length of the PhD training period,
 - Recommendations for changes to the PhD curriculum,
 - Training for multiple career paths (including bench and non-bench science).
- Characteristics of clinician-research training including issues such as:
 - The balance between MDs and MD/PhDs,
 - Career development of clinician-researchers,
 - Recommendations for changes to the curricula for training clinician-researchers.
- Length of Post-doctoral training.
- The ratio of PhD students and postdoctoral fellows on training grants to those supported by research grants.
- Possibilities for professional/staff scientist positions and the level of training required for such positions (e.g. PhD or MSc degrees).
- Issues related to the attractiveness of biomedical research careers (e.g. salary, working conditions, availability of research funding).
- The effect of changes in NIH policies on investigators, grantee institutions and the broader research enterprise.

The agency will accept responses to the RFI through October 7, 2011. Comments must be submitted

electronically to: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfi_files/bmw/add.cfm.

Systems Science and Health in the Behavioral and Social Sciences: Applications Wanted

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) and 11 of the NIH Institutes (Cancer (NCI); Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI); Aging (NIA); Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA); Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NBIB); Child Health and Human Development (NICHD); Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR); Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS); General Medical Sciences (NIGMS); Mental Health (NIMH); and Nursing (NINR), are seeking applications that propose to develop basic and applied projects utilizing systems science methodologies relevant to human behavioral and social sciences and health. The funding opportunity announcement, **Systems Science and Health in the Behavioral and Social Sciences** ([PAR-11-314](#)) intends to encourage a broader scope of topics to be addressed with systems science methodologies, beyond those encouraged by existing open FOAs. NIH will issue a companion FOA ([PAR-11-315](#)) in parallel and will utilize the R21 funding mechanism.

Systems science methodologies are specific methodological approaches that have been developed to understand connections between a systems structure and its behavior over time. "Systems science methodologies" is an umbrella term to refer to a variety of such methodologies including (but not limited to), agent-based modeling, microsimulation, system dynamics modeling, network analysis, discrete event analysis, Markov modeling, many operations research and engineering methods, and a variety of other modeling and simulation approaches.

Specific topics of interest to the NCI include:

- Develop decision models to assist states and communities in their efforts to promote effective dissemination, implementation of multi-pronged and coordinated approaches to cancer control and health promotion.
- Elucidate the relationships between healthcare delivery processes (e.g., network measures of referral patterns) and health outcomes across the entire system of care -from structural factors to healthcare process to patient health outcomes.
- Study features of complex social/environmental health behavior problems (e.g., physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and sun exposure) in order to identify leverage points for intervention.
- Examine multi-level effects of health promotion and disease prevention interventions, for example, to investigate whether the effects of interventions aimed at the individual level have effects on the network in which individuals are embedded.
- Build on traditional cancer surveillance models to examine the interactivity among units of analysis (e.g., social, political, cultural, economic, and individual determinants of risk factor changes, screening behavior, and treatment choices), and include dynamic feedback loops to provide a more comprehensive understanding the impact of trends across the cancer control spectrum.
- Capture the interaction of psychosocial and behavioral intervention mechanisms with genetic dispositions and stratification by condition. Such models could capture transmission of attitudes across networks, an understanding of the follow-through effects, and impacts on multiple related health behavior outcomes exhibited or avoided over time, and effects of social environments altered by interventions on all of the above as a dynamical system.
- Address problems related to health behaviors that seem to cluster together as there may be common causal pathways or complex interrelationships between them. For example, projects could examine how tobacco use is associated with other risk behaviors (poor diet and nutrition, physical inactivity, drug use, etc.) and how these associations serve to undermine effective interventions, programs, or policies.

- Address problems related to the undermining of policies designed to reduce smoking prevalence. For example, a project could develop a dynamic model to quantify the impact of cigarette discount coupons and new forms of tobacco products (exempt from taxes) on consumers' tobacco product purchase behavior, especially as these tactics (price discounting and new product release) serve to defeat the impact of tobacco tax increases designed to dissuade consumers from purchasing tobacco products.
- Examine community networks to determine how community cohesiveness affects people's health or feelings of isolation and the way a population's health (such as rates of obesity) is affected by interactions between the physical and social environments.

Specific topics of interest to the NHLBI include:

- Improve our ability to reduce racial/ethnic disparities in heart, lung, blood, and sleep related disease by advancing our understanding of the complex etiology of disproportionate disease burden, taking into account multi-level interactions between socioeconomic, environmental/neighborhood, cultural, psychosocial, behavioral, biological/genetic, and health policy factors.
- Elucidate the impact of sleep disturbance in the early life origins of adult heart, lung, and blood diseases. Consider genetic, epigenetic, environmental, behavioral, psychosocial, and cultural factors that determine how early-life sleep impairments are coupled to the onset and progression of heart, lung, and blood disease pathophysiology during critical periods of development and across the lifespan.
- Analyze the complex social and environmental interactions among neighborhood stressors (e.g. exposure to violence, social isolation), and family/community health beliefs about seeking health care and managing chronic lung, heart, or blood conditions and sleep disorders (including adhering to recommended treatments), in order to better identify intervention targets.
- Model optimal interventions and linkages for coordinating medical care, self-management education, and school interactions for school age children who have chronic lung, heart, or blood conditions, sleep disorders, or co-morbid risk factors or conditions affecting them (e.g. being overweight).
- Elucidate the relative contributions, or added value in terms of cost and benefit, to improved outcomes for heart, lung, and blood conditions and sleep disorders that the following interconnected interventions and policies might have: improved access to guidelines-based medical care and appropriate medications, improved post-hospital discharge transitional care, home visit to promote supportive home environments and reduce exposures that may exacerbate the condition, and education on self-management skills.
- Evaluate the impact on health outcomes of different reimbursement policies for the care of chronic lung, heart, and blood conditions and sleep disorders.
- Better understand the complex web of social, cultural, environmental, biological, and heritable factors that influence lifestyle behaviors (including physical activity, diet, sleep, and smoking) related to prevention of heart-, lung-, blood-, and sleep-related disorders. Better identify the most promising intervention targets to improve lifestyle behaviors and identify possible causative pathways where more data are needed.

Specific topics of interest to the NIA include:

- Social Insurance Systems - including projects that develop models to describe and forecast costs and benefits of the Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid programs. Appropriate projects would also consider key factors such as the impact of population aging, health care cost growth, programmatic changes, and uncertainty on social insurance forecasts as well as decompose the impact of key factors on forecasts. Examination of regional and cross-

national differences to elucidate these issues is also encouraged.

- Race, Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status (SES) - including projects designed to elucidate the reciprocal causation between SES, race and ethnicity, health and morbidity across the life course. Improved understanding of the degree to which SES produces differences in health outcomes over the lifecourse, and the mechanisms involved. Identification and quantification of the SES, social and environmental factors which have the greatest implications for health outcomes in specific population sub-groups. Comparative cross-national approaches to understanding these issues are encouraged.
- Macroeconomic Impact of Population Aging - including projects that explore: 1) the relationship between population aging and economic growth and the effect of demographic change on savings, investment, and international capital flows, 2) the influence of aging populations on labor supply and other key macroeconomic variables such as real wages and interest rates, 3) the influence on the age structure of a country or countries on migratory flows, and 4) the effect of institutional arrangements on the macroeconomic consequences of aging.
- Aging and Agent-based Modeling - enhancing agent-based modeling to consider the impact of aging individuals and age-structured populations.
- Social and Economic Behaviors in Aging - Research that models how individual and group social and economic behaviors emerge from the interaction of affective, rational, and social contagion effects, particularly research that takes a life course perspective on these phenomena.
- Psychosocial Stress, Health, and Aging - Research on psychosocial stress that examines how social, behavioral, psychological, and biological factors interact, either through processes of biological embedding or cumulative effects over developmental time, to impact later life health.
- Coordinating Care Delivery in Complex Health Systems - Analysis of how to successfully implement medical care coordination strategies in complex health care systems. Improved coordination of medical care delivery offers the promise of better patient outcomes and lower costs. Several models, including accountable care organizations and medical homes, have been proposed as means for coordinating care delivery, but there is currently little practical experience in how to implement those ideas in health care markets characterized by multiple private and public payers and unaffiliated providers.

Specific topics of interest to the NIAAA include:

- Advance understanding of the causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of alcohol-related problems and alcohol use disorders, for example, through: modeling to characterize the linkages between personal or environmental risk factors, alcohol-related behaviors, and health outcomes; analyses of the role of alcohol in population-level health and economic outcomes; examination of determinants of drinking behaviors and outcomes on multiple time scales ranging from momentary decision-making to life-cycle and trans-generational influences; models of the causes and consequences of changes in drinking before, during, and after treatment; and studies of the determinants of treatment-seeking and utilization of health care services related to or caused by alcohol.
- Strengthen the research foundations for understanding how preventive interventions may reduce the adverse consequences associated with alcohol, for example through: studies of the causal mechanisms through which effective prevention measures affect individual behaviors and health outcomes; modeling of the interactions of individual, community, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to or inhibit effective preventive interventions; and research that characterizes the intended and unintended effects of public policies (such as alcohol taxes, availability restrictions, or ignition-interlock device requirements) on alcohol-related behaviors and outcomes as well as on economic and social outcomes that are not themselves directly related to alcohol.

- Extend knowledge of effective treatment and recovery from alcohol use disorders (AUDs), for example through: studies of the interactions of biological factors and contextual social factors as contributors to decisional processes involved in treatment and recovery; models of the differential action or interactions of different treatment modalities and interventions in the course of recovery, including pharmaceutical, behavioral, social, and personal factors; and models of alternative financial and organizational arrangements in the delivery of AUD treatment services to identify opportunities to enhance efficiency in service provision.

Specific topics of interest to NIBIB include:

- Develop new systems science methodologies to address issues in behavioral and social sciences and health, such as methods to reduce medical errors and affect clinical decision support.
- Develop new systems science methodologies to complement technology development in all program areas of the NIBIB with relevance to behavioral and/or social science.

Specific topics of interest to the NICHD include:

- Understand child, maternal, and population health from an ecological perspective. Of particular interest is research on vulnerable populations including children, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, and racial and ethnic minorities at high risk of obesity and other chronic diseases.
- Model developmental issues over the life course. For example, research that examines how psychological development influences health trajectories or disparities.
- Model the ways in which families may influence the health trajectories of their children, including biological and familial selection effects; clarify the reciprocal relationship between families (e.g., parental choices and behaviors, parenting styles) and child health outcomes to inform policy/program decisions.
- Address policy resistant problems such as the connections between sexually transmitted diseases and/or chronic disease risk factors within individuals and communities, and the trajectories of development of these diseases over time. For example, modeling the connection between the various factors that influence nutrition in the context of HIV infection or metabolic disorders, with outcomes that relate to programs or policies that could improve the health of persons afflicted with these conditions.
- Examine issues related to health and the environment. For example, transdisciplinary research that tests scientific questions and/or develops simulation models to examine how environmental exposures (physical, chemical, and biological) interact with social and behavioral conditions to influence the development and progression of human disease and social development. Equal in consideration would be projects that use innovative systems science methodologies to examine how harmful (and beneficial) aspects of the social and physical environment are differentially distributed by neighborhoods and how these conditions interact with other factors to compound (or mediate) the effects of environmental exposures.

Specific topics of interest to the NIEHS include:

- Examine how environmental pollutants interact with both harmful and beneficial aspects of the social and physical environment that are differentially distributed by neighborhoods and how such interactions may result in a greater impact of environmental exposures on certain groups (e.g., by socio-economic status or ethnicity).
- Examine the cumulative health impacts of multiple environmental exposures (physical, chemical, biological, social, and psychosocial) at multiple levels (i.e., the home,

workplace, neighborhoods, and community/population).

- Understand why the prevalence of certain chronic illnesses have continued to rise despite the implementation of policies, programs, and/or interventions designed to reduce exposure to environmental contaminants that are known to cause or exacerbate these illnesses (e.g., asthma and ambient air pollution.)

Specific topics of interest to the NIGMS include:

- Develop innovative methods for modeling across multiple levels/scales of analysis (molecular to cultural multiscale modeling) including at least one behavioral/social level.
- Improve the variety, quality, and applicability of computational, mathematical, and statistical approaches and tools for modeling individual and emergent social/population level behavior.
- Integrate basic biological sciences with behavioral/social sciences to deepen our understanding of the causes of and interventions to alleviate health disparities.
- Examine dynamical social networks including internet-based communities.

Specific topics of interest to NIMH include:

- Model the relations among the multi-level (e.g., biological, behavioral, social, environmental) risk factors associated with different self-harm behaviors, including self-mutilation, suicidal ideation, suicide attempt, and suicide death.
- Model the onset and trajectories of self-harm behaviors that culminate in suicide attempt or death and identify key intervention points.
- Develop a model for achieving maximum reductions in U.S. suicide attempts or suicide deaths by testing various suicide prevention strategies with well-defined subpopulations of individuals at risk for suicide.
- Develop decision models to assist states and communities in selecting and promoting the implementation, dissemination, and sustained use of evidence-based interventions to (a) prevent the onset or escalation of mental illness or (b) improve functioning for individuals with a mental disorder.
- Better understand the relations between mental health care organizational factors, delivery processes, and mental health outcomes in different mental health service settings (e.g., specialty care, schools, primary care, emergency departments, criminal justice, etc.).
- Model and assess relations between intended and unintended outcomes associated with policies and funding strategies proposed to (a) expand patient access to mental health care and (b) improve the quality of mental health care under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Specific topics of interest to the NINR include:

- Assess behavioral and social risk factors and responses to treatment, including the identification of biomarkers (e.g., neurohumoral markers for differential responses to behavioral interventions); identify susceptibility genes for such risk factors, and design interventions to moderate risk.
- Develop or improve biobehavioral methods, measures, and intervention strategies to optimize health.
- Identify and understand factors that influence decision-making that results in behavioral changes that promote health and prevent disease and disability.
- Identify and develop individual and family interventions designed to sustain health-promoting behaviors over time (e.g., prevention of obesity; prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission).

- Design intervention studies using community-based approaches to facilitate health promotion/risk reduction behaviors (e.g., families with special needs, such as parents or caregivers of persons with chronic illness or developmental disabilities).
- Investigate opportunities to identify and ameliorate the long-term behavioral and social consequences of premature birth, including near-term infants at risk for complications.
- Elucidate mechanisms underlying health disparities and design interventions to eliminate them, with particular attention to issues of geography (rural and remote settings), minority status, underserved populations, and persons whose chronic or temporary disabilities limit their access to care.

NIDCR supports research that examines community characteristics, the organization of health care systems, and the social contexts that contribute to oral health. Many of the opportunities for improving oral health lie in achieving behavioral, lifestyle and social changes-objectives that are shared with many other scientific areas. Drawing from the expertise of diverse fields within the social and behavioral sciences presents an important opportunity to develop models and approaches that will produce meaningful improvements in oral health.

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The University of Texas at San Antonio has become COSSA's newest member. We welcome the University and look forward to working with them to promote and defend the important work of their social and behavioral scientists.

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