



COSSA

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COSSA Colloquium on Social and Behavioral Sciences and Public Policy, November 29 and 30



The COSSA Colloquium on Social and Behavioral Sciences and Public Policy will take place on November 29 and 30. Speakers include: former Census director **Ken Prewitt** (COSSA's current President), Commissioner of Education Statistics **Jack Buckley**, National Science Foundation (NSF) Assistant Director for Social Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) **Myron Gutmann**, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Principal Assistant Director for Science **Philip Rubin**, National Institute of Health (NIH) National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Director **Griffin Rodgers**, congressional staff, and American Enterprise Institute Scholar **Norman Ornstein**, who will assess the results of the 2012 election. Click [here](#) to view the agenda. [Register now!](#)

Early Registration has been extended until **November 12**. Fees increase to \$175 after that date.

NRC Releases Report on Science Evidence and Public Policy

The National Research Council (NRC) has released a report entitled *Using Science as Evidence in Public Policy*. Produced by a committee chaired by COSSA President and Columbia University Professor Ken Prewitt, the report focuses on trying to develop a research agenda for the key issue of "when, how, why, even whether science is used in public policy making." Prewitt will discuss the report in his presidential address at the COSSA Colloquium on November 30. A following panel will provide examples of social science use in public policy (see above).



The NRC panel suggested that "Science has five tasks related to policy: 1) identify problems such as endangered species, obesity, unemployment and vulnerability to natural disasters or terrorist acts, 2) measure their magnitude and seriousness, 3) review alternative policy interventions, 4) systematically assess the likely consequences of particular policy actions-intended and unintended, desired and unwanted, and 5) evaluate what, in fact, results from policy." The report admits that factors "outside the scope of science" such as politics and values also impinge on policy making.

In developing this research agenda, the report notes that the social sciences have a significant role to play because "the need to consider the human actor is seldom absent when considering policy options." The social sciences "share an analytic focus on the behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of people and their organizations, communities, and institutions." In addition, these sciences also have the "methods and theories applicable to investigating the use of science in policy."

The report argues for a distinction between *evidence-based policy* and *evidence-influenced policy* and suggests the latter is more useful. The panel cites the Urban Institute, which suggests political and social values are "largely outside the scope" of evidence-based policy. The authors claim that policy making "far from being a sphere in which science can be neatly separated from politics, is a sphere in which they necessarily come together." In a representative democracy, they suggest, there is no way to examine using science in public policy "apolitically."

The report declares that the time is ripe for examination of this critical question because there is a

broader focus on data-driven decision making across government agencies, exemplified by the Office of Management and Budget's instructions to government agencies "to demonstrate the use of evidence throughout" their FY 2014 budget submissions. At the same time, the social sciences have advanced to examine big questions, aided by significant improvements in research methods, with more sophisticated computational techniques, and the collection and analysis of "big data." Yet the report also indicates that discerning the connection between science and public policy making remains elusive.

In proposing a new framework, the panel suggests a number of explorations. The first focuses on policy argumentation. Thus, "understanding how science is used in policy requires investigating what makes reliable, valid, and compelling policy arguments *from the perspective of policy makers and those they need to persuade*" (emphasis in the report). The second included a focus on psychological processes of decision making, examining how people make judgments, decisions, and choices. The report notes that "it is becoming clear that cognitive science and behavioral economics can directly address policy design."

Thirdly, the report strongly argues for a "systems perspective." The broad goal is "to provide insights into the way in which people, programs, and organizations interact with each other, their histories, and their environments." The report quotes Norman Bradburn, former Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences at the National Science Foundation, who said: "I approach [this issue] from the perspective of a social systems theorist and fault applications of social science analysis and research that fail to think through the dynamics of social systems and to pursue research that enables us to model more completely the effects of policy changes." He added, "I do not underestimate the difficulty of this task, but it is the direction that I think social sciences must be going."

The report concludes with a call for enhanced research training, particularly at public policy schools, on examining the use of science in the public arena. It even suggests possible dissertation/research topics for students to pursue. Among them:

- Challenges in linking the natural and social sciences in the policy context;
- How variability in the quality of scientific evidence affects its use;
- The role of intermediaries in promoting evidence use;
- The responsiveness of policy makers to commissioned research;
- The interaction of scientific claims and value claims in policy argument; and
- Comparative research that considers how different government systems produce and use scientific evidence for policy and how this relate to differing political systems and beliefs about the role of government.

The full report is available at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13460.

Former Representative Baird Addresses DBASSE Advisory Committee



The National Academies' Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE), whose Executive Director is Robert Hauser, convened its Advisory Committee for a meeting on November 1 and 2. The panel, chaired by COSSA President and Columbia University Professor Ken Prewitt, has a number of new members including former Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA).

Baird, who served in the House from 1999-2011 and is a Ph.D. psychologist, was invited to share his experiences in Congress related to supporting the social and behavioral sciences. During his tenure, Baird served on the House Science and Technology Committee where he chaired its Subcommittees on Research and Science Education and Energy and the Environment. He recollected the hearings he held that highlighted the importance of social and behavioral science research to energy, national security, and health (see Update, [October 8, 2007](#), [May 5, 2008](#), and [September 22, 2008](#)).

He also recounted how he successfully defended attacks on individual peer-reviewed NSF grants on the House floor (see [Update, May 14, 2007](#)) and insisted on language in the COMPETES conference report that includes the social sciences in a list of NSF priorities (see [Update, August 6, 2007](#)).

Baird, who also served on the House Budget Committee, noted six major problems that supporters of science funding will face in the near future, particularly for the social and behavioral sciences:

- 1) The U.S. deficit and debt situation will result in budget cuts, and science will not be immune.
- 2) Scientists must make their research agendas compelling to taxpayers. Constituents need to understand why "their tax money" is worth spending on science and not on other things.
- 3) There is a clear anti-science bias among some members of Congress, some of whom serve on the Science Committee and will deal with the National Science Foundation's reauthorization, perhaps next year.
- 4) Scientists and their supporters need to admit that some of the attacks on particular science projects are legitimate. "Some research is not worth" the funds spent on it, he alleged. He did not suggest who decides which projects are illegitimate.
- 5) Scientists need to become more effective at explaining science and its benefits.
- 6) The media climate makes it easy to deride certain scientific endeavors, especially in the "he said, she said" approach to controversial issues. Thus, he again called for better explanations of why science is important in the face of budget challenges that will necessitate trade-offs.

Reflecting on the new NRC report ([see other story](#)), Baird suggested that we use our research to "heal ourselves," and change behavior. He also made a strong suggestion that scientists indicate how their research is relevant to national and international problems.

Census Bureau Appoints New Advisory Committee

The U.S. Census Bureau has announced a new Census National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations. The new committee's charter provided for 30 members, half of which would be selected from the now-defunct five Racial and Ethnic Advisory Committees (REACs). None of the non-REAC members on the new committee served on the 2010 Census Advisory Committee, which the new group replaces. COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver served on the 2010 panel.

In announcing the committee, Acting Census Bureau director Thomas Mesenbourg indicated that "We expect that the expertise of this committee will help us meet emerging challenges the Census Bureau faces in producing statistics about our diverse nation." He added that "By helping us better understand a variety of issues that affect statistical measurement, this committee will help ensure that the Census Bureau continues to provide relevant and timely statistics used by federal, state and local governments as well as business and industry in an increasingly technologically oriented society."

The National Advisory Committee will advise the Census Bureau on a wide range of variables that affect the cost, accuracy and implementation of the Census Bureau's programs and surveys, including the once-a-decade census. The committee will advise the Census Bureau on topics such as housing, children, youth, poverty, privacy, race and ethnicity, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other populations.

The National Advisory Committee members, the Bureau explained, serve at the discretion of the Census Bureau director and were chosen based on expertise as well as knowledge of the cultural patterns, issues and/or statistical needs of hard-to-count populations.

The new Committee's Chairman is [Paul Watanabe](#), director, Institute for Asian American Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston. The Vice-Chair is [Karen Pittman](#), co-founder, president and CEO, The Forum for Youth Investment.



Paul Watanabe, new
CAC Chair

The other members include a number of distinguished social science researchers, including Sheldon Danziger and Kathleen Mullan Harris, who have spoken at COSSA Congressional Seminars, and Sandra Newman, who testified for COSSA to the House Appropriations Committee during the 1980s. The full list is below. The Committee held its first meeting on October 25 and 26.

The members of the new Census Advisory Committee:

- [John Bouman](#), president and advocacy director, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- [Jerlean Daniel](#), executive director, National Association for the Education of Young Children
- [Sheldon H. Danziger](#), Henry J. Meyer Distinguished University Professor of Public Policy, University of Michigan
- [Neil Donovan](#), executive director, National Coalition for the Homeless
- [Angelo Falcón](#), president and founder, National Institute for Latino Policy
- [Saeed Fahia](#), executive director, Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota
- [Irwin Garfinkel](#), Mitchell I. Ginsberg Professor of Contemporary Urban Problems, Columbia University School of Social Work
- [Eric Hamako](#), doctoral candidate in social justice education, University of Massachusetts
- [Kathleen Mullan Harris](#), James E. Haar Distinguished Professor of Sociology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- [Hassan Jaber](#), executive director, ACCESS
- [Jacinto P. Juarez](#), dean emeritus, Laredo Community College
- [Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni](#), director, Public Education Support Division, Kamehameha Schools
- [Ditas Katague](#), chief of staff, California Public Utilities Commission
- [Akram Khater](#), director, Middle East Studies Program, North Carolina State University
- [Wei Li](#), professor, Asian Pacific American Studies and geography, Arizona State University
- [Don Loudner](#), first commander, National American Indian Veterans Inc.
- [Linda Marc](#), education and curriculum development director, Harvard School of Public Health
- [Kirsten Martin](#), assistant professor, School of Business, George Washington University
- [Leigh McGee](#), co-owner, OSIYO Consulting and Council House Institute
- [Mary A. McGehee](#), survey unit section chief, Arkansas Department of Health
- [Bernie Miller](#), pastor, New Covenant Fellowship Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- [Sandra Newman](#), professor of policy studies, Johns Hopkins University
- [Gloria O'Neill](#), president and CEO, Cook InLet Tribal Council Inc.
- [Sela Panapasa](#), assistant research scientist, University of Michigan
- [Victor Kaiwi Pang](#), past president, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Alliance
- [Charlotte Patterson](#), professor, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia
- [Altagracia Ramos](#), founder, Ohio Hispanic Chambers of Commerce
- [Neel Saxena](#), grant manager/program coordinator, Government of the District of Columbia
- [Shane Snowdon](#), director, LGBT Health and Aging Program, Human Rights Campaign Foundation
- [Barry Steinhardt](#), chair, Friends of Privacy USA

IOM Workshop Summary: Reducing Tobacco-Related Cancer Incidence and Mortality

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, causing more than 440,000 deaths annually and resulting in \$193 billion in health related economic losses each year. Additionally, more than 29 Surgeon

General's reports, "drawing on data from thousands of studies, have documented the 'the overwhelming and conclusive biologic, epidemiologic, behavioral, and pharmacologic evidence that tobacco use is deadly."

In recognition that progress in combatting cancer will not be fully achieved without addressing the tobacco problem, the National Cancer Policy Forum of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) convened a public workshop, *Reducing Tobacco-Related Cancer Incidence and Mortality*, in June to discuss the issue. Despite the widespread agreement on the dangers of tobacco use and considerable success in reducing tobacco use prevalence more than 40 percent at the time of the first U.S. Surgeon General 's report on smoking in 1964 to less than 20 percent today, recent progress in reducing tobacco use has slowed.

Roy Herbst, Yale Cancer Center and Smilow Cancer Hospital, served as the planning committee chair. The workshop examined the current obstacles to tobacco control and to discuss potential policy, outreach, and treatment strategies that could overcome these obstacles and reduce tobacco-related cancer incidence and mortality.

The workshop also discussed the research and infrastructure needs related to reducing tobacco-related cancer incidence and mortality, including a rapid research capability to assess the use and health effects of new tobacco products, more funding for research on lung cancer and tobacco cessation therapy, more systems integration, and coordination of tobacco assessment in clinical trials of pharmaceutical products and diseases and processes. Workshop participants called for more funding for behavioral and social science research on tobacco control, including how to best to change social norms and implement policies, areas that have contributed substantially to the success of tobacco control programs. There were also calls for "more integration of tobacco control efforts and oversight." The evaluation of communication strategies to determine the most effective ways to inform the public about the risks of tobacco use and to encourage quit attempts was also highlighted by workshop participants.

A free copy of the workshop summary is available for download [here](#).

SBE and NIJ Formalize Collaboration

The Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate at the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research component at the Department of Justice, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines a framework for cooperation and collaboration in the social, behavioral, and forensic sciences.

The MOU indicates that the two agencies can build on one another's strengths and leverage resources to identify and support innovative social and forensic science research on crime, violence and victimization.

The MOU provides an opportunity for joint review and co-funding and for seamless communication with Principal Investigators whose work may better fit the mission of the other agency. As initial steps to facilitate this partnership, NSF's Law & Social Sciences Program will coordinate with NIJ to share information about workshops and symposia of common interest; identify reviewers and workshop participants from the other agency's network of scholars; co-sponsor sessions at professional conferences; and share information about the other agency's programs with our communities.

In the future, SBE and NIJ hope to jointly fund topical workshops and research proposals, and develop new initiatives designed to catalyze high-quality, original scholarship in the area of criminology and criminal justice.

For further information contact: Marjorie S. Zatz, Law and Social Sciences Program, mzatz@nsf.gov, 703-292-7808; Susan Sterett, Law and Social Sciences Program, ssterett@nsf.gov,

703-292-7267; or Katrina Baum, Office of Research Partnerships, NIJ, Katrina.Baum@usdoj.gov, 202-307-5889.

For funding opportunities in the Law and Social Sciences program go to:
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=504727.

For funding opportunities at NIJ go to: <http://www.nij.gov/nij/funding/forthcoming.htm>.

NSF's SBE Directorate to Participate in International Social Science Funding Collaboration

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) has announced that it intends to participate in the Open Research Area (ORA). ORA was started in 2009 by four European funding agencies: the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR, France), Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, Germany), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, UK), and the Nederlands Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO, Netherlands) as a joint funding scheme for collaborative international research projects in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences. After two successful rounds of competition, in 2013 ORA will expand to include the SBE directorate.

One of the chief objectives of ORA is to reduce barriers to international collaborative research by making collaboration among the partners as seamless as possible through a single review process and joint decision-making. This is an important goal as the growth of international collaborations has indicated that working with the best scholars across national borders can produce high quality research.

The program will accept proposals for research projects in any area of the social and behavioral sciences involving researchers from any combination of three or more of the participating countries. Bilateral applications are excluded. Further, proposals must clearly demonstrate the added value of transnational collaboration.

Interested researchers are asked to contact the NSF/SBE program officer for ORA, Elizabeth Tran, (etran@nsf.gov) to discuss the fit of their proposed research to ORA.

The Call for Proposals is posted at <http://www.nwo.nl/ora>.

Siddle Walker Delivers AERA Brown Lecture



The American Educational Research Association (AERA) held its 9th Annual Brown Lecture on October 25. This year's lecture featured Vanessa Siddle Walker, the Samuel Dobbs Professor of Educational Studies at Emory University. Siddle Walker is an education historian, who throughout her career has explored the effects of historical and cultural influences on the teaching and learning of African American children.

Siddle Walker's lecture, "Original Intent: Black Educators in an Elusive Quest for Justice," focused on the role black educators in the South played in combating the inferior education system of Jim Crow. She also discussed the court challenges that eventually brought the system down.

A video of the complete lecture can be found on the AERA website at:
<http://www.aera.net/AnnualMeetingOtherEvents/AnnualBrownLectureinEducationResearch/tabid/10210/Default.aspx>.

Conference Discusses Evaluating Educator Effectiveness

On October 24, the Graduate School of Education & Human Development at George Washington University held a conference on "Evaluating Educator Effectiveness."

Research has shown that teachers are the most important school-based factor in student achievement. Due to reform incentives like Race to the Top, and efforts to provide increased flexibility through waivers, states are designing and implementing teacher and principal evaluation systems. Policymakers, educators and other stakeholders have called for these new assessments to be robust and comprehensive with the capability of generating meaningful feedback.

Pearson Education, Inc., has created a guide, "Evaluating Teachers and Principals: Developing Fair, Valid and Reliable Systems" that would assist stakeholders in developing effective evaluation systems. The guide states that crafting a valid and reliable educator evaluation system begins with clearly defining teacher effectiveness, and an "accurate definition of effectiveness needs to focus on the impact of the work educators do in practice." The guide also offers six considerations:

- Define the construct: what is an effective educator?
- Deploy multiple indicators: what evidence characterizes good teaching and school leadership?
- Develop a clear composite rating: what weights should each indicator have and who should be involved in the decision?
- Clarify differentiated performance levels: what distinguishes varying levels of educator effectiveness?
- Build strong data analysis and reporting tools: what does the information reveal about student, educator, and school performance?
- Improve instructional and leadership practice: how can the information target professional development to boost educator practice, student learning outcomes, and school efficacy?

Kelly Burling director of the Center for Educator Effectiveness at Pearson spoke at the conference, "if we want to move the needle for students we need to move the needle for teachers." Burling stated that by supporting better teacher evaluation and meaningful feedback we could help teachers better help their students. Burling suggested that to do this we need to personalize data for teachers in the same way we do students to help teachers track their progress over time and provide constructive feedback based on the data.

The panelists at the conference saw a problem with *No Child Left Behind's* highly qualified teacher requirement, which focuses only on inputs, such as educator degrees and years of experience, but fails to factor in all the elements that a teacher brings to the classroom. They believe the highly qualified teacher requirement is an insufficient standard for teacher quality since no single measure can capture a teacher's contribution to student learning and growth.

"Teaching is an art and also a science. The challenge is doing better in recognizing what makes a good teacher," said Sabrina Laine of the American Institutes for Research.

Suzanne Wilson of Michigan State stated the current problem with education research is we tend to have a lot of innovation without a lot of learning. She called for more robust research and dissemination, and to actually learn from the experimentation. "Teachers need more information and data to be innovative however, they are not getting the kind of data they need," said Wilson.

Current evaluation systems are based largely on classroom observation, with the vast majority of teachers identified as satisfactory. The addition of multiple indicators and a focus on student outcomes would make it much more likely that evaluations would clearly distinguish levels of performance.

Erika Miller of the Education Trust echoed the sentiments of all the participants in stating that "we need to think about evaluation as the beginning of a conversation not the end point."

Fellowship Opportunity

For the past few years, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has championed its Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability (SEES) program. It is now offering a fellowship opportunity for post-doctoral students through the SEES program.

According to NSF, the SEES program seeks to advance science, engineering, and education to inform the societal actions needed for environmental and economic sustainability and human well-being while creating the necessary workforce to address these challenges. The program's emphasis is to facilitate investigations that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries and address issues of sustainability through a systems approach, building bridges between academic inquiry, economic growth, and societal needs.

In applying for the award, the potential Fellow's proposed investigation must be interdisciplinary and allow him/her to obtain research experiences beyond his/her current core disciplinary expertise. Fellows are required to develop a research partnership(s) that will advance and broaden the impact/scope of the proposed research, and present a plan for their own professional development in the area of sustainability science and engineering.

The full proposal deadline is November 26, 2012.

The cognizant program officer for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate is Fahmida N. Chowdhury, (703) 292-4672 or fchowdhu@nsf.gov. For the Education and Human Resources directorate Paul "Wyn" Jennings, (703) 292-5307 or pjennin@nsf.gov.

For the full solicitation go to: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?WT.z_pims_id=504673&ods_key=nsf12601.

Education Department Offers Summer Seminar in China

Although funding for the Department of Education's international education programs has been reduced significantly in recent years, there are still funds left to offer opportunities for educators to spend time abroad.

The Fulbright-Hays Program has announced a solicitation for applications for U.S. K-12 educators, administrators, and media resource specialists who have responsibility for curriculum and instruction in the social sciences, humanities, foreign languages and area studies to spend four weeks during the summer of 2013 in China. **The application deadline is December 10, 2012.**

The Department notes that China's growing influence presents a need for U.S. educators to fully understand its transformation into a worldwide economic powerhouse and related challenges. This Program will provide a unique in-country study experience for U.S. educators and administrators to examine China's history, culture, society, and economy.

The awards include round-trip economy airfare, room and board, and program-related travel within the host country. Participants are responsible for a cost share of \$450, travel insurance, and personal passports.

The application package will be available starting Oct 24, 2012 at www.G5.gov.

For more information, please go to www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpssap/elsecseminars.html.

NLM Grants for Scholarly Works in Biomedicine and Health

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Library of Medicine (NLM) awards Grants for

Scholarly Works in Biomedicine and Health for the preparation of book-length manuscripts and other scholarly works of value to U.S. health professionals, public health officials, biomedical researchers, and historians of the health sciences. Grants are awarded for major critical reviews, state-of-the-art summaries, historical studies, and other useful organizations of knowledge in clinical medicine, public health, biomedical research, and the informatics/information sciences relating to them. The scholarly work may be prepared for publication in print or electronic media, or both.

The grants are designed to support scholarly works that will ultimately be published by a commercial or academic press or similar print or electronic dissemination service that assures quality and availability of the product. Recognizing that the work of scholarship--discovery, thoughtful analysis, synthesis and lucid presentation of findings from such materials--requires protected time and support for incidental costs, including materials, staff assistance, and travel, the grants are intended to help defray such expenses.

The grants can be used to support several types of scholarly projects, including but not limited to:

- Scholarly works in the history or philosophy of medicine, public health and the life sciences, the development of medical research and health services, bioethics, and studies on the interrelationship of medicine and society
- Scholarly works in the history or philosophy of biomedical informatics, computational biology, health information sciences, health communications, or health sciences librarianship
- Analytical and comprehensive critical reviews which identify the present status of research and practice in various health-related fields, addressing advances which have been made, problems requiring examination, and emerging trends.

For more information, see: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-13-014.html>.

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Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
Association of Research Libraries
Council on Social Work Education
Economic History Association
History of Science Society
Justice Research and Statistics Association
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Social Science Research Council
Vera Institute of Justice

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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