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CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Senators Urge $7.5 Billion for NSF in FY 2015

On April 11, Senator Edward Markey (D-MA) led 20 senators on a letter urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to include $7.5 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The letter states, "The NSF is the only federal agency specifically responsible for supporting essential education and research across all science and engineering fields—a role that is vital to cultivating a workforce capable of keeping pace with global demand."

More than 130 Members of the House of Representatives sent a similar letter on April 1 (see Update, April 7, 2014). The President’s FY 2015 budget request for NSF is $7.255 billion, which is 1.2 percent over the FY 2014 enacted level. The $7.5 billion requested in the House and Senate letters—which is the amount supported throughout the scientific community, including COSSA—would represent an increase of 4.6 percent. The FY 2015 CJS Appropriations Bill could be one of the first bills marked up in the House this year, perhaps soon after the House returns from its two-week recess later this month.

House Appropriations Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Agricultural Research

The heads of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) research agencies faced questions on the President’s fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request from the House Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee on March 26. The panel consisted of Catherine Wotecki, Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics; Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service; Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA); Mary Bohman, Administrator of the Economic Research Service (ERS); and Cynthia Clark, outgoing Administrator of the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) (see related story). In his opening statement, Chairman Robert Aderholt (R-AL) noted the subcommittee’s "strong tradition" of supporting research, but expressed concern that some of the proposals in the FY 2015 request might represent a departure from the 2014 Farm Bill. Ranking Member Sam Farr (D-CA) emphasized the importance of the research enterprise and asserted that "investment in research is probably the distinguishing factor of how America can stay ahead of the world in economic development."

Aderholt asked about the proposal in the President’s budget to create three new Innovation Institutes to be funded at $25 million each (they would focus on pollination and pollinator health, manufacturing innovation, and antimicrobial resistance research) and observed that such institutes were not included in the 2014 Farm Bill. Wotecki explained that the proposal is a response to the recommendations of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) on how to improve the nation’s agricultural research infrastructure (see Update, January 14, 2013). Rep. David Valadao (R-CA) inquired about the how the research priorities of the new Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, would be determined. Wotecki noted that the Foundation will be an independent organization, so its priorities will be identified by the external organizations that participate in the Foundation.

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) questioned Wotecki and Clark on the Adverse Effect Wage Rate,
USDA measurement that determines what farmers must pay foreign laborers. Fortenberry asserted that the rate for Nebraska is unfairly high and asked what would need to be done to change it. Clark explained that because this data comes from a survey funded by the Department of Labor, the Department dictates the methodology used by NASS and would need to be the one to initiate changes. The panel also fielded questions on security procedures for sensitive data, the National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey, and data indicating declines in the obesity rate.

**FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES & NEWS**

**Kaplan to Leave OBSSR for AHRQ; Riley of NCI to Serve as Acting Director**

On April 11, James Anderson, director, Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), announced that Robert M. Kaplan, Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), will be leaving NIH and moving to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), effective May 5, 2014. At AHRQ Kaplan will serve in a new position as Chief Science Officer.

In a memo to the NIH's behavioral and social sciences research (BSSR) community, Anderson pointed out that "support of BSSR is a priority for the NIH." He also noted the "important role" OBSSR plays in "stimulating, initiating, and promoting such research," and affirmed that DPCPSI understands "the need to provide continued leadership following Dr. Kaplan's departure."

Anderson highlighted Kaplan's numerous contributions to BSSR at the NIH, including bringing together leaders in mobile technology, behavioral sciences, and clinical research to forge new partnerships in mHealth; leading a variety of activities in dissemination and implementation research in health; providing support for training in systems science methodologies to facilitate the study of behavioral and social dimensions of health; and representing the NIH with stakeholders, including scientific societies, international organizations, and scientific leaders in the BSSR community. Kaplan also co-chaired the NIH Behavioral and Social Sciences Opportunity Network Steering Committee. "We thank Dr. Kaplan for his service to the NIH and to the BSSR community," said Anderson.

In the interim, William T. Riley, Chief of the Science of Research and Technology Branch, Behavioral Research Program, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the National Cancer Institute, will serve as the Acting Director of OBSSR, beginning May 5. Riley's research interests include behavioral assessment, psychosocial health risk factors, tobacco use/cessation, and the application of technology to preventive health behaviors and chronic disease management. He earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Florida State University, and has experience in both academic medical centers and the private sector. Prior to his position at NCI, he served at the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Anderson indicated that a national search will soon commence to identify the next OBSSR director.

**Scientific Advisory Committee Discusses Progress in Planning 2020 Decennial Census**

On April 10-11, the Census Scientific Advisory Committee (CSAC) of the U.S. Census Bureau held its spring meeting to discuss progress being made towards designing the 2020 Census. The Committee heard from Census officials about the fiscal year (FY) 2014 and 2015 budgets for the agency, the upcoming 2014 Census Test, and other ways the Census Bureau is working to modernize and streamline its programs and data collection. Read on for COSSA's summary of the meeting.

**Social and Behavioral Scientists among Presidential Early Career Award**
**Recipients**

On April 14, 102 early career scientists and engineers were presented the 2014 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), including social and behavioral scientists. The award, created in 1996, is presented annually to researchers in the early stages of their independent careers. Scientists are nominated by a dozen participating federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health. Twenty of the 2014 awards were nominated by NSF, and each was a recipient of NSF’s Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) program.

**Cynthia Clark to Retire as NASS Administrator**

Cynthia Clark has announced her retirement from the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS), where she has served as Administrator for six years, effective May 3. During her tenure, Clark encouraged the use of administrative records and statistical modeling to improve the data produced by NASS and oversaw the most recent Census of Agriculture. Prior to taking over at NASS, Clark led the methodological directorate of the UK’s Office of National Statistics. She also spent time at the U.S. Census Bureau and NASS’ Census and Survey Division. Clark is a global leader in improving national statistics worldwide. She is the U.S.’s representative on the UN Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, chairs the International Statistical Institute’s Committee of Women in Statistics, and has served as an advisor to Statistics Netherlands and Statistics Canada. She is a fellow of the American Statistical Association and the Royal Statistical Society, and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. No announcement has yet been made regarding her successor.

**New NCHS Estimates on Problems Paying Medical Bills**

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has released estimates from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) on Problems Paying Medical Bills. The report covers the five six-month periods from January-June 2011 through January-June 2013 and is published as part of the NHIS Early Release Program ahead of final release of microdata. Key findings include:

- Nearly two percent fewer Americans reported difficulty paying medical bills in early 2013 (19.8 percent) compared to early 2011.
- Those without insurance were most likely to have trouble paying medical bills (34.3 percent), but significant numbers of people with public coverage (24.7 percent) and private insurance (14.1 percent) also experienced problems.
- A greater proportion of the “near poor” had problems paying their medical bills (33.3 percent) than those below the poverty line (28.6 percent).

**NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**CNSF Capitol Hill Exhibition & Reception - May 7**

On May 7, members of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) will participate in the 20th Annual CNSF Exhibition and Reception on Capitol Hill, entitled Investments in STEM Research and Education: Fueling American Innovation. Exhibitors will include several COSSA members who will showcase important social and behavioral science research funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), including the American Economic Association, Population Association of America, American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, American Statistical Association, National Communication Association, Society for Research in Child Development, as well as several COSSA university members. The event, which often attracts Members of Congress, Congressional staff, and federal agency officials, is free and open to the public. Attendees are asked to RSVP by May 2 to tspady@aspb.org or 301-296-0934. COSSA is a

On April 29, the National Research Council's (NRC) Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) will host the 2014 Henry and Bryna David lecture. This year's lecture-21st Century Inequality: Does Discrimination Still Matter?-features Dr. Roland Fryer, Robert M. Beren professor of economics at Harvard University. His talk will highlight educational inequality within the broader discussion on discrimination. The lecture will take place at the Keck Center of the National Academies in Washington, DC. It is free and open to the public, but participants must register in advance.

DBASSE Seeks Director for Board on Human-Systems Integration

The Divisions of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) of the National Academies is seeking a director for its Board on Human-Systems Integration (BOHSI). The position is located at the National Academies headquarters in Washington, DC.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

IES Releases FY 2015 Funding Announcements for Education Research

This month, the Institute for Education Sciences released its announcements for grant competitions in education research. The grants fall under the National Center for Education Research and the National Center for Special Education Research. For more information and the grant applications, click here.

NIJ Releases New Solicitation for Social Science Research on Implementation, Dissemination, and Translation

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) recently released a new solicitation calling for research and a research fellowship to examine how scholarly research influences criminal justice implementation practices through dissemination and translation. More specifically, the NIJ proposes two research activities in this solicitation: Incorporating the Use of Research in Policy Decisions, and a Translational Criminology Research Fellowship. For the full solicitation and application instructions, click here. The deadline for applications is June 9.

NIJ Releases Dear Colleague Letter on Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) acting director Greg Ridgeway recently issued a Dear Colleague Letter related to the "Investigator-Initiated Research: The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative" solicitation released last month. The letter seeks to provide more details about the solicitation and the initiative, stating "NIJ will consider any research topic that can add to our knowledge base about school safety."

The 2014 Department of Justice Appropriations Act included funds for NIJ to conduct research related to school safety. The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, created to fulfill this obligation, will make use of criminology and other social sciences to study school safety. Research could include "data collection and analysis, school culture and climate, training of staff, involvement of law enforcement, effective school discipline policies, mental health services, evidence-based prevention programs, student involvement, and engagement of parents and
community groups.”

For the entirety of the letter, click [here](#). Proposals are due by May 20, 2014. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by September 30, 2014.

## COSSA MEMBER ACTIVITIES

### AAPSS Lecture: Inequality In America: A Policy Agenda for a Stronger Future - May 8

On May 8, the American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS), a COSSA member, will host the 2014 Daniel Patrick Moynihan Lecture on Social Science and Public Policy. This year's lecture-- *Inequality in America: A Policy Agenda for a Stronger Future*-- will be presented by Nobel Laureate and 2014 Moynihan Prize winner Joseph E. Stiglitz, Columbia University. The lecture will take place in the Jack Morton Auditorium at George Washington University. The event is free and open to the public, but participants must [register](#) in advance.

## COSSA ACTION & OUTREACH

### COSSA Weighs in on Ongoing FIRST Act Debate

In an April 14 *Boston Globe* piece, COSSA Executive Director Wendy Naus cautions about the "slippery slope" that would be created for the scientific community should the *Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science and Technology Act*, or FIRST Act, become law (see [March 10, 2014 Update](#)). Referring to the provisions in the legislation that would authorize NSF's individual science directorates, Naus states, "Even for the scientific disciplines that would actually see an increase at the expense of social sciences, it's a slippery slope. It may work out for them this year, but in future years, who's to say?" A mark up of the FIRST Act by the full House Science, Space and Technology Committee could occur shortly after the House returns from its two week recess at the end of the month.

### Consortium of Social Science Associations

#### Members

**Governing Members**

- American Anthropological Association
- American Association for Public Opinion Research
- American Economic Association
- American Educational Research Association
- American Historical Association
- American Political Science Association
- American Psychological Association
- American Society of Criminology
- American Sociological Association
- American Statistical Association
- Association of American Geographers
- Association of American Law Schools
- Law and Society Association
- Linguistic Society of America
- Midwest Political Science Association
- National Communication Association
- Population Association of America
- Society for Research in Child Development

**Colleges and Universities**

- Arizona State University
- Boston University
- Brown University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- Carnegie-Mellon University
- University of Chicago
- Clark University
- University of Colorado
- Columbia University
- University of Connecticut
- Cornell University
- University of Delaware
- Duke University
- Georgetown University
- George Mason University
- George Washington University

**Membership Organizations**

- Arizona State University
- Boston University
- Brown University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- Carnegie-Mellon University
- University of Chicago
- Clark University
- University of Colorado
- Columbia University
- University of Connecticut
- Cornell University
- University of Delaware
- Duke University
- Georgetown University
- George Mason University
- George Washington University
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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