



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

**GRADUATE TRAINING IN  
THE SOCIAL AND  
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES:  
A WEBINAR**

**MARCH 6, 2018**

# TODAY'S EVENT

- **Robert Kaplan**, Chair, Workshop on Graduate Training in the Social and Behavioral Sciences (June 2017)
- **Amy Stephens**, National Academies

## Questions for you:

- (1) Where does graduate training in the social and behavioral sciences need to go in order to meet modern-day needs?
- (2) What can you/your institution/your association do to continue the discussion?



# ABOUT COSSA

- Advocacy for the shared policy interests of all fields of social & behavioral science
- Audiences: Congress, Executive Branch, scientific & higher ed communities, and the general public
- Formed in 1981 amid attacks on NSF social science funding



## MEMBERSHIP

### ORGANIZATIONS

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RTI International  
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- Sign up for the **COSSA Washington Update** and **Why Social Science?** blog.
- Make sure you're receiving our **members-only resources**, including action alerts (Email me at [wnaus@cossa.org](mailto:wnaus@cossa.org))
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- Attend **COSSA Science Policy Conference & Social Science Advocacy Day** in Washington, DC – April 30 - May 1, 2018

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# Graduate Training in the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Proceedings of a Workshop—in Brief

Robert Kaplan, Planning Committee Chair  
Amy Stephens, Study Director

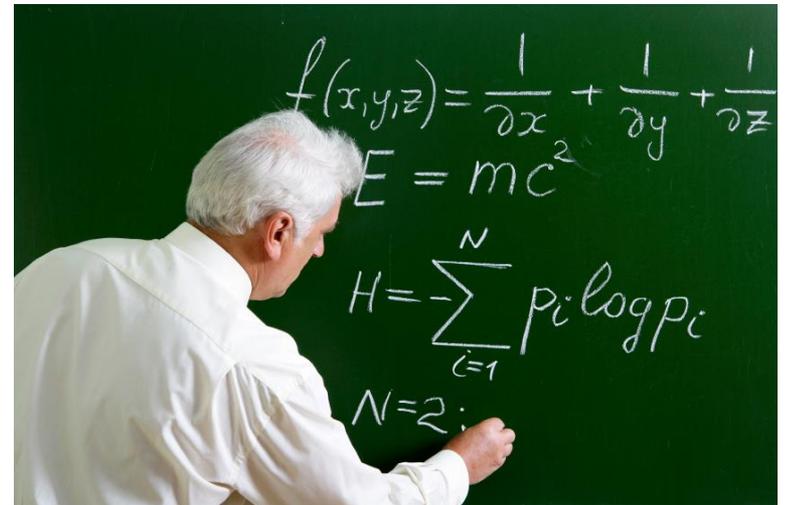
Sponsors: National Science Foundation and  
National Institutes of Health

# The Context

- Remarkable advances in SBS
- Nature of data/data analysis rapidly changing
  - Small lab studies being replaced by electronic data capture
  - Use of “big data” making traditional small sample inferential statistics obsolete
- Stronger emphasis on interdisciplinary & multidisciplinary investigation

# Current PhD Production

- Training largely unchanged over last several decades
- Most programs train people to be professors
- Only ~40% of current graduates ever hold tenure track position



# SBE PhDs Employment Patterns

- Variability among SBE disciplines in employment & pay
- Although SBE PhDs significant portion of workforce
  - lower pay than physical & engineering PhDs
  - graduate with more debt
- New PhDs tend to seek employment outside academia (better pay)

# Industry Experiences



- Recent Grads
  - High degree of job satisfaction & adequately prepared for industry challenges
  - Liked applicability of research findings, good pay, & better work-life balance
  - Disconnect between basic science completed as grad student & industry-relevant problems
- Industry Leaders
  - Positions require speed, thoroughness, & adeptness in communication
  - Apply interdisciplinary thinking to policy problems

# Industry Needs



- Opportunities to engage in program/project management
- Early preparation to gain competency in data science & data management
- Develop skills in
  - Flexible thinking
  - Ability to formulate problems that can be answered quickly
  - Selecting right tool to inform decision makers

# Academic Leaders Vision for SBS Graduate Education

- Multiple mentors, opportunities to teach, & individual development plans
- Initiatives focus on interdisciplinarity, team work, & leadership skills
- **Barrier** – changing faculty culture that emphasizes replicating training & career path



# Take Aways

- Programs role - train responsible scientists
  - Prepare PhDs for a wider range of careers ← understand how to market skills
  - Communicate across disciplines & broader audiences
  - Continue effort to increase diversity
- Achieving interdisciplinary science remains a significant challenge likely requiring a culture change in academia

# What's Next?

- NASEM Report *Revitalizing Graduate STEM Education for the 21st Century* expected Summer 2018
  - Visit [www.nas.edu/GradEd](http://www.nas.edu/GradEd) for updates
- **Associations** - Hold a town hall or roundtable discussion with students/faculty/ administrators at your conference or a stand-alone event.
- **University faculty/administrators** - Review your programs against the workshop findings; where are the gaps, low-hanging fruit? Are there other considerations unique to your institution?
- **Students** - Reflect on what you think you will need from your graduate education to be competitive in the (traditional AND nontraditional) research workforce.
- **Everyone** - Think about ways to engage non-academic employers in the discussion.

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**Thank you!**

