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# COSSA Washington Update

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## MYRON GUTMANN, FORMER COSSA PRESIDENT, NEW HEAD OF NSF'S SBE DIRECTORATE



Myron Gutmann, director of the Interuniversity Consortium on Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan, has been selected to become the new Assistant Director for the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate. Gutmann will replace David Lightfoot, who has served since 2005. Gutmann was COSSA's President from 2005-06 and served on its Board of Directors from 1999-2001 representing the American Historical Association and then as an At-Large member from 2005-2008.

Besides heading the ICPSR, Gutmann also held appointments in Michigan's Department of History, the School of Information, and the Institute of Social Research's Population Studies Center. His major work over the years has been interdisciplinary, including the Great Plains Research Project, a wide-ranging, multi-year effort to study the long-term history and environment interactions in that region. The study involves ecologists, demographers, historians, sociologists, geographers and anthropologists from several universities.

Before coming to Michigan in 2001, Gutmann led the Population Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin. In addition, he was a professor of history at Texas for 13 years. He has served on numerous National Academies' committees and he recently edited a volume with Paul Stern, *Putting People on the Map: Protecting Confidentiality with Linked Social-Spatial Data*. He also was a member of the Academies' Committee on the Human Dimensions of Global Change for six years.

Aside from his service to COSSA, Gutmann has also served on: the Board of Directors of the Population Association of America; the Panel on New Research on Population and Environment, National Research Council; the Advisory Board of the Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science, University of California, Santa Barbara; and as Treasurer of the Social Science History Association. For the National Institutes of Health, he chaired the SNEM-3 Study Section, and the Social Sciences and Population Study Section. In addition, Gutmann has been Associate Editor of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* for the past 11 years.

He has a B.A. in History from Columbia, and a Ph.D. in History and Demography from Princeton. Gutmann will join NSF in early November. Until then the directorate will be led by current SBE Deputy Director Judy Sunley.

## HILL BRIEFING HIGHLIGHTS NSTC REPORT: REPRESENTATIVES BAIRD AND LIPINSKI SPEAK

In January 2009 the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy issued the report *Social, Behavioral and Economic Research in the Federal Context* (see Update, [January 26, 2009](#)). On July 16, COSSA, in conjunction with the Federation of Associations on Behavioral and Brain Sciences, brought four social and behavioral scientists to Capitol Hill to discuss their research and to highlight the report's emphasis on the importance of these sciences to the national science and policy agenda.

To further call attention to the report and its showcasing of the social and behavioral sciences, Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA), a Ph.D. psychologist, and Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL), a Ph.D. political scientist, presented remarks. Baird discussed his efforts as head of the Research and Science Education Subcommittee in the last Congress and the Energy and Environment Subcommittee in the present Congress to infuse the social and behavioral sciences into the discussions regarding the nation's energy and environmental problems as well as defense and national security policy (see story below).

Lipinski, who is the current Chairman of the Research and Science Education Subcommittee, discussed his undergraduate background as an engineering student and his switch to political science for graduate school. He also noted that his Subcommittee will soon start the process of reauthorizing the National Science Foundation (NSF) and stressed the importance of that agency to research in the social and behavioral sciences and science education (see story below).

David Lightfoot, Assistant Director for NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate, provided an overview of the report. He emphasized the importance of understanding human activity through examining the brain and the mind. The report also looks at the social and behavioral sciences' contribution to understanding individual, group and organizational behavior. In addition, the report, Lightfoot noted, connects the research to various policy challenges including providing high quality education, fighting terrorism, developing better health care, and responding to natural and man-made disasters.



L-R: Weber, Poeppel, Wilkenfeld, Lightfoot, and Morris. (Photo by Robert Stevens)

David Poeppel of New York University spoke on "Mapping the Mind and Brain." The brain, he declared, "lies at the basis of everything we do." He suggested that in the last 20 years the dominant brain research program has been to map out the "localization of function." Using imaging techniques provided by new technology, we have discovered what parts of the brain influence certain learning and behavior. Yet, Poeppel warned, this is just a beginning. Illustrating through examining the brain-language interface, he demonstrated that "even the most basic aspects of speech comprehension are driven by highly complex and articulated brain systems." He suggested that further research in the brain and cognitive sciences will help the U.S. cope with three key challenges: the aging population; the kid population; and the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic population.

Martina Morris of the University of Washington discussed "Modeling HIV and STI Transmission Dynamics: The Importance of Partnership Network Structure." Her research focuses on the massive and persistent disparities in HIV prevalence. She illustrated that there are differences in prevalence rates by areas of the world, within regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, and even by population subgroups within a specific country. Why does this happen? She demonstrated that genetic and biological differences were not the answer and neither was traditional risk behavior. What does matter, Morris found, is having sex with concurrent partners. These multiple contacts create connectivity networks that transmit HIV. Morris showed how even slight increases in the number of concurrent partners lead to enormous changes in these networks. She concluded that this could account for the racial disparities in the HIV epidemic in the U.S.

Elke Weber of Columbia University addressed "Decisions Matter: Understanding How and Why We Make Decisions About the Environment." Starting with the premise that human behavior is causing environmental problems and that behavior changes are necessary to deal with them, Weber asserts that "environmental decisions are crucial." The research suggests there are multiple ways of making decisions: 1) by the head - calculation-based decisions; 2) by the heart - emotion-based decisions; and 3) by the book - rule-based decisions. The first will not work in this arena because people's analytic evaluations are biased toward inaction. The second will not work because most people do not have visceral reactions to environmental risks. The third may work, Weber indicated, if the rules create new habits. The new rules, which should be nudges, Weber suggested, need issuance by a respected authority, concrete behavior prescriptions, and capitalize on imitation of certain role models.

Jonathan Wilkenfeld of the University of Maryland, discussed "Conflict, Terrorism and Resilience," through the work of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism (START), one of the Department of Homeland Security's Centers of Excellence. Wilkenfeld reported that the Center has four broad research areas: Terrorism Group Formation and Recruitment, which focuses of research on radicalization; Terrorism Group Persistence and Dynamics, which stresses research on operations and interventions including counterterrorism strategies; Societal Impact of Terrorism, which studies community preparedness, response capability and resilience; and Integrative Research, which includes event-level data and actor-level data collection and analysis. In the latter, START has Global Databases, including the GTD, which has 85,000 terrorist events, national databases that include a community resilience index developed by former COSSA President Susan Cutter of the University of South Carolina, and data from international surveys in Muslim and Arab countries.

## HOUSE PASSES LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION SPENDING BILL; ACCEPTS DEFUNDING OF THREE NIH GRANTS

On July 24, the full House of Representatives approved the FY 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill by a vote of 264-153. The bill provides \$31.258 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), \$941.8 million above the FY 2009 funding level and \$500,000 more than the budget request.

The House accepted an amendment by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) which rescinds or prohibits NIH from spending money on three currently-funded, peer-reviewed grants that focus on HIV/AIDS prevention among vulnerable populations. In explaining his amendment to the House, Issa noted it "simply prohibits what is clearly becoming an endless stream of repeating and repeating and repeating and repeating studies of HIV at ever-greater cost...As a matter of fact, we have studied HIV contraction from dangerous behavior, particularly drug and alcohol, over 200 times. We've studied HIV at the National Institutes of Health over 1,400 times. We've studied just about everything one could imagine." Not one member of the House defended the grants or the peer review system that led to the funding of the grants.

The rescinded grants, totaling \$5 million funded by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Institution on Drug Abuse (NIDA) focused on: Substance Abuse Use and HIV Risk among Thai Women, HIV prevention for Hospitalized Russian Alcoholics, and Venue-based HIV and Alcohol Use Risk Reduction among Female Sex Workers in China. The Senate now has to decide whether to accept this attack on peer review and prevail in the House-Senate conference committee in order to restore the funding. It will begin consideration of its bill with Appropriations' Committee action the week of July 27.

In the report accompanying the bill, the House noted that is "convinced that investing now in NIH research will generate untold breakthroughs that will improve health and reduce health care expenditures in the future." The report also noted Congress' concern with "the harmful precedent established in the Administration's budget of setting specific funding levels for particular diseases," referencing the Administration's budget request for cancer research. "The Committee believes it is more appropriate to allocate funding in a way that permits scientific peer review to decide the most promising research to support. The serendipitous nature of science is documented each year, with

breakthroughs in one disease are emanating from a finding in a completely unrelated field," notes the report. It seems scientific peer review is important except for research on sex.

The bill provides the \$300 million transfer to the Global Fund for AIDS Malaria and Tuberculosis as requested by the Administration. It also provides \$534.1 million for the Common Fund within the Office of the Director. For the National Children's Study the bill provides \$194.4 million. The NCS is "projected to exceed its original budget by a substantial margin," the Committee noted and believes "NIH is prudent in taking the step to 'pause' the research before initiating the full study in order to test in advance the feasibility, acceptability, an cost of each element." The Committee emphasized, however, that it "remains firmly committed" to the Study.

Demonstrating that it shares the NIH's concern regarding the pipeline for new investigators, the bill provides \$102 million for the Pathways to Independence program and \$80 million through the Common Fund for the New Innovator awards. For the Director's Pioneer Award, the bill provides through the Common Fund \$40.6 million. The bill does not provide funding for the Bridge awards for investigators who either are being considered for their first award renewal or have just missed the funding payline and lack other sources of support. Five million dollars are provided for the new bioethics research and training initiative proposed in the budget request, but funds it throughout the institutes and centers rather than in the Office of the Director. While the Committee believes it is important to have each NIH entity engaged in the bioethics effort, it expects the Office of the Director to maintain central oversight of this initiative. The bill also includes \$25 million for a flexible research authority modeled on the Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

The Committee stated that it is pleased "to learn the NIH leadership has launched an initiative to develop a basic behavioral research blueprint modeled after the Neuroscience Blueprint to help ensure the funding of the basic behavioral research necessary to advance and improve health outcomes." It asks to be kept informed of progress and expects the development, review and implementation of the basic behavioral research blueprint to be completed by March 2010. The Committee also expressed its desire that the 13 institutes and centers that support basic behavioral research continue to do so as appropriate with their respective missions. "However, the Committee continues to believe that DPCPSI [Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives], through the OBSSR [Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research], should take scientific leadership for this research portfolio."

The Committee also noted that it has been 11 years since the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), along with the National Institute for Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) published guidelines on the identification, evaluation and treatment of overweight and obesity for the adult population. It recognized that since 1998 "a great deal of scientific advancement has occurred. Accordingly, "the Committee believes NIH's obesity guidelines should be updated and reissued." The Committee, however, acknowledged that NHLBI had begun the process of updating the guidelines in September, 2008.

#### **NICHD Encouraged to Continue Support for Large Scale Data Sets**

The *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Diseases (NICHD) is encouraged by the Committee to "continue its support of trans-NIH behavioral and social science research initiatives on disasters and health outcomes to develop more data on the consequences of disasters on the health of children and vulnerable groups." NICHD is also encouraged to continue its "investment" in large-scale data sets, such as the New Immigrant Study and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), "because of their value and accessibility to researchers worldwide." NICHD is urged to "continue research on how the structure and characteristics of the work environment affect child and family health and well-being and how health and well-being in the early years affect health and well-being later in life." Recognizing the "important contributions" of NICHD's Eunice Kennedy Shriver Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRC) toward understanding why child development goes awry, discovering ways to prevent developmental disabilities, and discovering treatments and interventions to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and the family, the Committee urged the institute to strengthen its support of the Centers.

The Committee noted its awareness that in 2010 the National Institute on Aging (NIA) will be making five-year awards as part of its Demography of Aging Centers and Roybal Centers for Research on Applied Gerontology programs. NIA, with support from its funding partners, is encouraged to consider expanding the program if it receives "enough high quality applications." NIA is further encouraged to "increase the minority sample size of the Health and Retirement Study to understand the impact of the economic downturn on pre-retirees and retirees in those groups."

The appropriators urged NIAAA to "study alcohol advertising issues as an underage drinking prevention research priority." The Committee requested a description for the House and Senate appropriations committees "of NIAAA's plans to conduct such research, as well as a detailed breakdown of NIAAA's research activity in the area of underage drinking prevention by subject area by February 1, 2010."

NIDA is commended for its encouragement of research in minority populations, predominantly African American populations, particularly in geographic areas where HIV/AIDS is high and/or growing among African Americans, including in criminal justice settings.

The John E. Fogarty International Center is commended for its continuing work to strengthen biomedical research capacity in the developing world. The Committee notes that it is aware that having a trained and expert local workforce as well as research infrastructure for them to use has significant benefits for efforts to research and combat disease of global priority.

The Committee also recognized the role of NIH in researching primary care and prevention interventions in order to improve health outcomes, reduce health care associated infections, and reduce the overall costs of health care. It requests that NIH director work with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Office of the Secretary to develop a coordinated approach to research in primary care practice, with specific focus on improving health among populations with disparate health outcomes.

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

For the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the bill provides \$6.681 billion, \$67.3 million above the FY 2009 funding level and \$33.4 million more than the budget request. Of the funding provided, \$368.9 million is from evaluation set-aside funds under the Public Health Service Act which is \$37.6 million above the FY 2009 funding level and \$38 million more than the budget request. For the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the bill provides \$138.7 million, almost \$14 million more than the FY 2009 funding level and the same as the budget request. In the report accompanying the bill, the Committee encouraged the NCHS to fully support its ongoing seminal health surveys, in particular the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). The Committee expects NCHS to protect these core surveys without compromising data quality or accessibility, particularly with regard to minority populations. It stresses that further cuts to the sample sizes of these surveys could compromise our ability to monitor health disparities at a time when our society becomes increasingly diverse.

The Committee also expressed concern regarding the lack of health care data about the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered community and urged the CDC to enhance the NHIS to collect data regarding the sexual orientation and gender identity of survey respondents using tested methods for doing so with the greatest possible accuracy. With regard to climate change, the Committee urges CDC to fund research on the health impacts and implications of climate change, the health impacts of potential mitigation strategies and the development of tools for modeling and forecasting climate change at the regional, State, and local levels. CDC should work with partners at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a coordinated research agenda on climate change and health.

#### **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality**

The bill provides a program level total of \$372.1 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which is the same as the fiscal year 2009 funding level and the budget request. Within the total for Research on Health Costs, Quality, and Outcomes, the Committee provides \$12.5 million for Patient-Centered Health Research. This is \$37.5 million less than the FY 2009 funding level and the budget request. Funding is provided to cover the continuation costs of current research grants. The Committee noted that the Recovery Act provided an additional \$1.1 billion for Patient-Centered Health Research in FY 2009 and FY 2010 to be administered by AHRQ, NIH, and the HHS Office of the Secretary. The program provides current, unbiased evidence about the effectiveness of different health care interventions. Its objective is to help consumers, health care providers, and others make informed choices among treatment alternatives.

#### **Education Programs**

The House provided \$128.9 million for the Department's International Education and Foreign Language Studies program, \$10 million above FY 2009 funding and the budget request. Domestic programs received a \$9.3 million boost with report language encouraging continued restoration of funding for the current number of centers over expanding their number, when they are recompeted in 2010. The Fulbright-Hays overseas program received \$15.2 million from the House for FY 2010. The Committee report declares that: "Overseas immersion is critical to achieving high levels of foreign language proficiency." The House allocated a little over \$2 million for the Institute for International Policy, a \$200,000 increase over FY 2009. This program provides training to prepare individuals from underrepresented populations for international service.

Once again the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) became a prime target for congressionally-directed funding for specific projects, commonly known as earmarks. The total FY 2010 FIPSE budget recommended by the House is \$133.9 million, a slight increase above FY 2009 funding, and \$86.5 million above the request, mostly due to the earmarks. The Comprehensive Program, which has a competition, has an allocation of \$34.8 million for FY 2010. The Committee also includes \$10 million for a college textbook rental initiative.

The House agreed with the Administration and level-funded the Javits Graduate Fellowship program at \$9.7 million, the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program at \$31 million, and the Thurgood Marshall Legal Education Opportunity Scholarship program at \$3 million.

With regard to the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the House could not bring itself to provide the large increase, particularly for research, development, and dissemination (RDD), requested by the Administration. The appropriation for RDD from the House is \$199.2 million, \$25 million below the request, but still \$32 million above the FY 2009 funding. The Committee report indicates that \$2 million of the increase should go to a new research and development center for adult learning and literacy. The report also makes clear that it wants IES to be the lead agency in conducting rigorous evaluations of Department of Education programs. The House also wants the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate IES' What Works Clearinghouse to see if it works.

The House provided the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) \$108.5 million for FY 2010, \$10 million above FY 2009, and the same as the request. Statewide Data Systems development, which received \$250 million in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), got \$65 million for FY 2010, same as the non-ARRA funding in FY 2009. The House allocated \$138.8 million for Assessment, same as FY 2009 funding and the budget request. Of that amount \$130.1 million goes to administer the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests. The rest is for the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which formulates policy guidelines for the program. In FY 2010 NAEP will conduct tests in U.S. history, civics and geography at grades 4, 8, and 12.

For the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the House appropriated \$611.6 million, \$14.4 million above the FY 2009 funding, and the same as the request. The \$9.8 million increase for the Employment and Unemployment Statistics component will, according to the Committee report, "begin to correct a history of severe underfunding for this vital program that produces the Current Population Survey, National Longitudinal Surveys, and many other important publications...[This component] will also initiate a new data series in FY 2010 on the green energy sector that will provide much-needed economic information on the emergence and long-term development of industries related to renewable energy and energy efficiency."

#### HUD Policy and Research Office Gets Big Increase

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, the House of Representatives passed the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) FY 2010 spending bill by a vote of 256-168. The House provided \$50 million to HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), same as the President's request. Although the funding is \$8 million below the FY 2009 level, with the transfer of the University programs to the Community Development Block Grant, OPDR is actually receiving an \$18 million boost. The report from the Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. John Olver (D-MA), noted that: "For too long HUD has missed an opportunity to be a leader in housing research and the Committee is pleased that this Administration promotes sound data collection and evaluation of its programs." The bill makes no reference to HUD's request to set-aside one percent of its program budget for research and evaluation.

The Senate will begin its consideration of the Transportation-HUD spending bill with Appropriations' Subcommittee and full Committee markups the week of July 27.

## SCIENCE PANEL APPROVES ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH PROGRAM AT ENERGY DEPARTMENT

The Energy and Environment Subcommittee of the House Science and Technology (S&T) Committee has reported out legislation to "establish a social and behavioral sciences research program at the Department of Energy."

Sponsored by Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA), the bill requires the Secretary of Energy to establish such a program "to identify and understand social and behavioral factors that influence energy consumption and acceptance and adoption rates of new energy technologies, and to promote the utilization of the results of social and behavioral research to improve, the design, development, demonstration, and application of energy technologies."



According to data reported to the National Science Foundation's Science Resources Statistics division, the Department of Energy spent zero funds on social and behavioral research in FY 2007 (the latest year for these data).

During his tenure as Chairman of the S&T panel's Research and Science Education Subcommittee Baird held a hearing on the importance of the social and behavioral sciences to any attempt to reduce energy consumption and our reliance of foreign sources of that energy (see Update [October 8, 2007](#)).

The legislation also calls for the creation of an Advisory Committee that will assist the director of the program in developing a research plan that will award grants through a competitive, peer-reviewed process. The bill authorizes \$10 million for the program in each of the next six years.

The full S&T panel will consider the legislation on July 29.

## CONGRESS TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT WOMEN IN STEM FIELDS

In an effort to broaden the participation of girls and women in all fields of STEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Engineering) education, the National Science Foundation (NSF) created the Program for Women and Girls, which led to the Research and Gender in Science and Engineering Program (GSE). The GSE program produced a series of publications established to help educators, employers, and parents promote gender diversity in STEM. But, according to a recent assessment by the National Association of Educational Progress, a small but persistent gap remains in performance within STEM education between boys and girls in primary and secondary schools - less than one percent for math and less than three percent for science.

The problem many researchers say is that issues such as self-confidence and perceived expectations negatively affect the achievement of girls on standardized tests. To further explore this issue the House Committee on Science and Technology's Research and Science Education Subcommittee held a hearing July 21 to examine current research findings, best practices, and the role of federal agencies in increasing the interest of girls in STEM subjects in primary and secondary school.

The witness panel included: Alan Leshner, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Marcia Brumit Kropt, CEO of Girl's Incorporated, Sandra Hanson, Professor of Sociology for Catholic University; Barbara Bogue, Associate Professor Engineering Science and Mechanics and Women in Engineering Penn State College of Engineering; and Cheryl Thomas of President of Ardmore Associates LLC.



Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) reemphasized that over the past few decades, girls and women have made substantial gains in breaking down barriers in both education and the workforce. However, women's participation rates in certain STEM disciplines remain disproportionately low. Lipinski noted that: "According to the NSF, although women earned more than half of all science and engineering bachelor's degrees in 2006, they earned only about 20 percent of degrees in engineering, computer science, and physics. Although this is an improvement from the time I was earning my mechanical engineering degree from Northwestern University 20 years ago, more can be done to encourage women in these fields." He commented further that: "We must have women engineers, computer scientists, and physicists. By broadening the STEM pipeline

to include more women and other under-represented groups, we can strengthen our workforce."

Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI), Subcommittee Ranking Member, stressed that strengthening math and science education is essential to America's economic competitiveness. The lack of female participation in these sciences is a "great hindrance that must be remedied" out of fairness and the fact that the nation can benefit from more participation of individuals in math science.

Representing the world's largest scientific organization, Leshner testified that in K-12 education, standards are unfortunately too low for all students and expectations lag, especially for students from groups without a clear history of participation in STEM fields. He also noted that in high schools, gaps persist for young women in pursuing study in courses such as physics, calculus and computer science and continues to the undergraduate levels.

Leshner pointed out that "even in fields such as psychology, where women have received more than 50 percent of PhDs since the mid 1980s (and where they have received over two-thirds of doctorates since 1996) in 2007-2008 they

were less likely to be in the rank of full professor (26.4 percent of women versus 46.3 percent of men) and more likely to be in non-tenure track or lecturer positions.” He also noted that even where women may have reached the level of full professor at major research universities, climate studies of the academic environment at many of these institutions reveal that women continue to face ongoing micro-inequities and lack diversity in the faculty hiring pools. “And the hiring challenges are especially severe for women from underrepresented racial/ethnic minority groups,” Leshner insisted.

An important role that a professional society plays, according to the AAAS CEO, is in helping to define acceptable practices within the culture of the discipline. Leshner stressed that “critical to efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of women in STEM fields is identifying measures of success and ‘keeping score’” which means maintaining the statistical base that will allow us to gauge “climate” and chart progress. “We need to be able to look at enrollment data by specific field of study and by each degree level; disaggregated for men and women, most certainly, but also for women from different racial/ethnic groups and citizenship status,” he testified. The federal government, Leshner argued, needs to support the research that helps to provide better understanding of the practices that are especially effective as well as provide greater support for dissemination of these. He acknowledged that federal laws and infrastructure are already in place to support much of this work.

### A Research Perspective

Hanson provided the Subcommittee with an overview of her several decades of research on girls, the current status of research on girls in STEM and her ideas about disseminating research findings. According to Hanson, findings from her research “show that young girls do not start out with low achievement in STEM.” Her research “confirms that young women’s increasing presence and success in STEM education is happening at a faster rate than in science occupations.” She related that her research “suggests that we view STEM as an increasingly powerful elite.” In spite of the progress that women and minorities have made in STEM education and occupations, Hansen asserted that “the culture of science continues to be a white male culture that is often hostile to women and minorities.”

Hanson cautioned that an important lesson from her work on women in STEM is that one cannot just talk about “women” or “men” in STEM. “Men and women across race and social class statuses have very different experiences in STEM. Gender cultures vary tremendously across race groups,” testified Hanson and her recent research on African American women in science suggest a considerable interest and engagement in science. Her research extends to Asian Americans and Latinos. She cited the “dearth of research on the experiences of Latino youth” in STEM education. For Asian American girls, her research shows that Asian American girls do not have the same level of science achievement as Asian American boys. She also related that the Asian American youth in her “survey reported considerable stress and anxiety associated with overwhelming familial pressure towards success in science.”

When it comes to structural barriers and selection processes, Hanson reported that her research also shows that “the problem of talented young women leaving science (and of a shortage of women in science in general) says less about the characteristics of young women and more about structural barriers and selection processes.” She explained that these “processes directly affect STEM achievement through gender discrimination . . . [and] indirectly through the transmission of ‘gendered’ socialization and unequal allocation of science resources in families, schools, and the media.” These processes “often work in a subtle way that students and teachers may not be aware of,” said Hanson.

Kropt had three messages for the Subcommittee: 1) As a country, we still need to address the gender gap in STEM, 2) Informal science education is a critical strategy to address the gender gap, and 3) The federal government must continue to play a role, alongside the private, nonprofit and educational sectors in fostering girls’ success in STEM fields. She also emphasized that “women role models are essential for girls to be aware of career options and to envision themselves in those careers someday.” Role models are particularly important for girls of color, Kropt related, but sadly minority women in science are scarce.

Bogue focused her comments on the need for improved assessment and evaluation practices of programs serving women in STEM, and on specific challenges in the efforts to increase the number of girls and women entering and succeeding in STEM-related studies. She emphasized that while “different efforts might be required for particular STEM fields, certain activities, such as effective assessment of those efforts, are relevant across all disciplines within STEM.” What we need to know, said Bogue, “is how effective are the broad offering of STEM educational practice and programming work in K-12 schools, colleges, and community and professional organizations across the country.”

Thomas shared that throughout her academic career, she was always interested in the sciences and was encouraged to think about or pursue the biological sciences. In high school, she demonstrated an aptitude for Chemistry. She credits the “discipline of being involved in the sciences as preparation for a demanding role in a subsequent position of Chicago’s Commission of the Department of Buildings. She was the first woman to hold the position. The biggest challenges to attracting and retaining young women and girls in STEM fields, according to Thomas are: exposure at an

early age, encouragement, and nurturing of ideas, and the pervasive tendency to promote the sciences as career fields for boys and men.

Over the course of the last two years, the Committee has held several hearings with STEM educators and agency representatives to explore what role the federal government can play in improving STEM education.

For more information on enhancing diversity in the sciences go to: <http://www.cossa.org/diversity/diversity.html>.

## **A BIG WEEK FOR CENSUS: GROVES SWORN IN; FORMER DIRECTORS RETURN; MALONEY PUSHES INDEPENDENCE; ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS.**

On July 22, Robert Groves officially became the 23<sup>rd</sup> director of the U.S. Census Bureau after he was sworn in by Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke and following remarks by Undersecretary for Economic Affairs Rebecca Blank.

Looking on were seven former Census Directors: Vincent Barraba (1973-76,1979-81), John Keane (1984-87), Barbara Everitt Bryant (1989-93), Martha Farnsworth Riche (1994-98), Kenneth Prewitt (1998-2001), Charles Louis Kincannon (2001-2008), and Steve Murdock (2008-09) as well as representatives from the Census Stakeholder community, including COSSA, and Bureau staff.

Following the swearing in, Groves moderated a panel with the former directors that provided all sorts of advice to the new kid on the block. These included how to manage communications with Congress, how to maintain political independence from the White House and the Department of Commerce, how to respond to the tensions between the need for 'quick' data that may come at the expense of the 'good,' and how to reduce the costs of the decennial count.

One way to save money Prewitt argued was to eliminate block level data from the Census, since these data are "scrambled" and thus not very precise, in Kincannon's view. Its use for redistricting is mistaken and Prewitt suggested that the Census Director has the authority to simply abolish it. Groves was non-committal on this.

### **Maloney Pushes Independence for Census Bureau**

On the day before, five of the former directors - Barraba, Bryant, Riche, Prewitt, and Kincannon - appeared before the Joint Economic Committee to discuss their views on the role of the Census Bureau in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In her opening remarks Chairwoman Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) stressed the importance of how policy makers at all levels of the government rely heavily on the data produced by the Census Bureau to weigh policy options. Known best for its role in conducting the decennial census every 10 years, the Bureau also conducts the annual American Community Survey and many other surveys that provide key information on economic and demographic subject areas.

"There is no doubt of the Bureau's significance and the importance of the work it does...[the decennial census] is the largest peacetime mobilization of government workers, takes place every ten years, but the leadership changes every four years with a new Administration. But statistical agencies like the Census Bureau should be absent political pressures so that the data remains unbiased and objective."

Maloney went on to say that in order to be relevant to policy decisions, the major ongoing surveys conducted by the Census Bureau need regular review, updating, and sometimes complete redesign depending on economic, social, and technological changes. Earlier this year Maloney introduced legislation [H.R. 1254](#) which aims to give the Census Bureau independent status, similar the National Science Foundation (NSF) and NASA.

With a culmination of almost twenty years experience spanning five Administrations, all of the former census directors agreed that the Bureau would benefit from leaving the Department of Commerce and achieving independent status reporting directly to the President. Prewitt affirmed that this institutional reform could help to establish the scientific integrity and independence of census taking, adding that this would help further insulate the director from the political battles of the moment. Prewitt favors the five-year fixed-term for the director as recommended in the Maloney bill.

Bryant argued that with many large organizations under it including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Institute of Science and Technology, the Department of Commerce has a large load or responsibilities to deal with. "Flatten the bureaucracy by removing the Census Bureau from the Department," said

Bryant. "It's a large organization that reports to another large one...Commerce is not geared to a 10 year cycle but to a four-year one."

Riche testified that the issue at hand is "How to maintain the Census Bureau and other statistical agencies' independence in pursuit of data ...We need a set of regular processes built on transparency, collaboration with other measurement agencies and professionals, regular reporting, and that are not subject to political appointees, no matter how well intentioned."

William Eddy, professor of statistics at Carnegie Mellon University and chairman of the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT), expressed his view that a statistical agency must have certain characteristics to maintain a strong position of independence. "An agency must have broad authority for professional decisions over the scope, content, and frequency of data compiled, analyzed or published within the framework set by its authorizing legislation." It should, he contended, "adhere to fixed schedules in public release of important statistical indicators to prevent even the appearance of manipulation of release dates for political purposes." He cited the CNSTAT publication *Principles and Practices of a Statistical Agency*, now in its fourth edition, as the guidebook for how to accomplish these tasks.

Maloney concluded that establishing the Census as an independent agency would be broadly beneficial to other statistical agencies and programs in emphasizing that the nation's statistical products are scientific and independent of partisan considerations. "This would serve as a valuable signal for the American public in a time of economic uncertainty and the corresponding high level of dependence on the numbers generated by the federal statistical system."

At the 2010 Census Advisory Committee meeting on July 21, members heard from some of the regional directors: Gabriel A. Sanchez from Dallas; James T. Christy from Los Angeles; Lester A. Farthing from New York; Fernando Armstrong from Philadelphia; and Ralph J. Lee from Seattle. These people are responsible for hiring the enumerators, planning the logistics, and carrying out the plan for taking the count. It was clear from all their presentations that the 2010 Census is an enormous undertaking with special problems in all the regions that will take tremendous efforts among the Bureau, its stakeholders, and the American citizenry to overcome. New Director Groves has a mighty task ahead of him!

## INSEL DISCUSSES NIMH'S USE OF ARRA FUNDING: 'UNTAPPED POTENTIAL' REVEALED

On July 10, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) director Tom Insel discussed the Institute's plans to distribute its portion of the \$10.4 billion in funding allocated to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA/Recovery) at a standing room only congressional briefing on Capitol Hill. It was the second in a series of presentations by NIH institute directors about how the agency is implementing the funds provided to advance biomedical and behavioral research. The briefings are being sponsored by the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research. COSSA, the American Psychological Association, the Population Association of America, along with ten other research and patient advocacy organizations co-sponsored the briefing.

Insel discussed the burden of mental disorders on daily life and its public health impact. He explained that the "direct and indirect" aspects of the economic burden of serious mental disorders, excluding incarceration, homelessness, comorbid conditions and early mortality, as of 2002 (the last year that the data is available), including health care costs, loss of earning, and disability was approximately \$317.6 billion, more than double the 1992 cost of \$156 billion.

The NIMH's recently completed Strategic Plan reflects the institute's "transformative vision," he informed the audience. The problem was that there were insufficient resources to implement those ideas. Fortuitously, NIMH's share of the Recovery dollars, \$366 million, came as the Institute was beginning to implement the Plan. According to Insel, in a given year NIMH has about \$1 billion that it puts out for research but only about \$180 million of that is for new and competing grant awards as a result of the NIH practice of funding four- and five-year grants. He shared that receiving the \$366 million in ARRA funding is "probably the most exciting period of his career at NIH."

In allocating the ARRA funding, the Institute approached its task by looking for those activities that it could fund right away. Accordingly, approximately 33 percent of the funding went towards activities that would stimulate and accelerate biomedical and behavioral research with existing mechanisms, which included funding those grants proposals that had already gone through the peer-review process and were consistent with NIMH's strategic plan, but had not received funding due to the lack of resources. This allowed the Institute to get the ARRA funds out quickly, as intended by the Administration. The Institute also is providing supplements to existing grantees. The director

explained that over the last three to four years the budgets of 90 percent of NIMH grantees had received less than the optimal amount of funding to accomplish what they needed to do.

NIMH is investing the other two-thirds of ARRA funding in new programs that address the Institute's priorities which include: jumpstarting the NIMH Strategic Plan, its Autism Research Strategic Plan, and implementing aspects of the NIH AIDS Research Strategic Plan. In an effort to respond to the White House's request that the Recovery funds create jobs, Insel noted that increasing training, faculty recruitment, and diversity is also important to the Institute. NIMH's priorities also include support for "beaker-ready projects" with two-year outcomes. While the Institute would like to do clinical trials, this was unrealistic, Insel said. It takes a year to launch a clinical trial, he explained.

To implement its priorities, NIMH is participating in the new ARRA NIH-wide programs. To jumpstart the strategic plans, the Institute is supporting Challenge Grants and Grand Opportunities ("GO" Grants), NIH-wide programs (see Update, [April 6, 2009](#)). This also includes participating in NIH-wide programs to recruit new faculty to conduct research and provide summer jobs for high school and college students and teachers in science labs, and the AREA Grants program (a national effort designed to support research in parts of the country that might not have much research). Insel emphasized that NIH's best estimate is that on average, every NIH grant supports six to seven jobs, both part-time and full-time

The Challenge Grants which are two-year, \$500,000 per year awards for 15 priority areas were due April 27, 2009 (see Update, [March 9, 2009](#)). The NIH received more than 21,000 proposals, of which 894 went to NIMH. These grants are currently under review and awards are expected by September 30, 2009. The NIH Office of the Director has committed \$200 million and NIMH is committing \$90 million to funding these grants. The NIMH Challenge Areas include: biomarkers, genomic sequencing, schizophrenia interactome, AIDS - behavior change, comparative effectiveness research, and developing iPS cells.

Insel also shared specific projects being supported by NIMH ARRA funding. These "NIMH signature projects" include:

- **Reducing Suicide In The Army** - Suicides rates in the Army have doubled. The Army has requested assistance from NIMH in assessing risk and resilience in soldiers. The agency is committing \$10 million in ARRA funds towards a collaborative effort for historic epidemiological study to follow 15,000 soldiers. The study is designed to provide actionable information to the Army.
- **Recovery After An Initial Schizophrenic Episode (RAISE)** - Schizophrenia is associated with chronic disability. RAISE will test aggressive, comprehensive treatment (medication, psychosocial, rehabilitation) to optimize outcomes. RAISE was developed with the Social Security Administration, SAMHSA, and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for "hand off" from research to practice. NIMH plans to commit \$25 million in ARRA funds and launch the project in 2009.
- **Neurogenomics** - There are many leads but few genes for psychiatric illnesses. New techniques permit rapid, comprehensive sequencing, including detection of rare variants. Sequencing is feasible in two years. NIMH plans to commit \$20-\$30 million in ARRA funds to support development of first comprehensive sequencing efforts.
- **Creation Of A Developmental Human Brain Atlas** - There is an absence of a reference atlas for human brain development. New techniques permit mapping regional gene expression in the developing human brain. While mapping is labor intensive, it is feasible in two years. NIMH plans to provide \$20 million to support development of the digital public resource.

Insel also noted NIMH ARRA-supported comparative effectiveness research, important in the healthcare reform discussion. ARRA projects include: Leveraging existing healthcare networks for CER on mental disorders and autism, cost effectiveness of mental health interventions, collaboration with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality CER program, and building ASD registries (infrastructure) for use in CER. When asked if he thought CER was an effective use of NIH resources, Insel replied that indeed it was. The NIH has already undertaken CER, he explained, but does it differently than what might be done elsewhere. He cited a large scale CER trial on schizophrenia, depression and bi-polarity that informed the Institute that current treatments for these conditions are not very good. The Institute has a role in CER beyond that, he contended, "in being able to inform the public about what works and what does not work . . . [providing] highly credible, conflict free research that inform clinicians."

He maintained that ARRA provides an "unprecedented opportunity to advance biomedical research while participating in the nation's economic recovery." Insel noted that although the demand for ARRA support is high, success will be relatively low. The NIH didn't realize how much untapped potential was out there. The Institute is receiving "fantastic applications and [they] are making tough decisions to figure out the top five or six percent that [the Institute] can actually afford to pay." The Institute would love to pay up to 10-20 percent of these outstanding applications, Insel stressed. It is painful to have these great ideas and not be able to fund them. The good news is

that this is not the end of the game, but a way to build the infrastructure. The outcome will be a spectacular addition to what NIMH will be able to do going forward, concluded the director.

Responding to a question regarding his concerns about what will happen in FY 2011; Insel noted that the Institute has been thinking a lot about this question. He explained that approximately six to seven percent of the 1703 ARRA grants submitted to NIMH will receive funding. The ones that do not get funded, he posited, will resubmit them as regular NIMH proposals in FY 2010. Those applications will come to the Institute in FY 2011, he put forward. He explained that the NIH has operated at about a 20 percent success rate, that is the number of applications funded against the number applications submitted. Modeling the possible scenarios it could contend with in FY 2011 with the expectation that both unsuccessful and successful grants return in FY 2011, Insel explained that if half of the 1703 ARRA grants return for funding in FY 2011, the Institute will be looking at about a 13.7 percent success rate. If 75 percent return, the success rate would be 12.2 percent and if 90 percent return, NIMH would be looking at an 11.5 percent success rate. To meet the 20 percent NIH success rate, NIMH would need a 7-11 percent increase above the FY 2010 President's budget.

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute director Betsey Nabel will be the next speaker in the series. To view Insel's presentation, go to: <http://www.aamc.org/research/adhocgp/news.htm>

## ANOTHER PSYCHOLOGIST COMES TO THE HOUSE

The voters of California's 32<sup>nd</sup> district have sent Judy Chu to the House of Representatives to replace the new Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. Chu becomes the third Ph.D. psychologist in the House, joining Reps. Brian Baird (D-WA) and Tim Murphy (R-PA).



Prior to her election to Congress, Chu was serving as the Vice Chair of the California Board of Equalization. The Board of Equalization collects California state sales and use tax, as well as fuel, alcohol, and tobacco taxes and fees that provide revenue for state government and essential funding for counties, cities, and special districts. Before joining the Board, Chu served three terms in the California State Assembly, where she chaired the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

In addition, Chu served as Chair of the California Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, Assembly Select Committee on Hate Crimes, and Assembly Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. She was also a member of the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee, Labor and Employment Committee, and Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee.

Prior to the State Assembly, Chu served on the Monterey Park City Council for thirteen years from 1988 to 2001, and served as Mayor three times. She began her career in public service as a Member of the Board of the Garvey School District. Chu taught psychology at a community college for 20 years. She holds a B.A. from UCLA and Ph.D. in psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology. The new Congresswoman is the first Chinese American woman elected to the United States Congress.

## CHILD WELFARE FOCUS OF NEW BOOK AND PANEL

On Friday 24, the Urban Institute held an event, "Child Welfare: Uniting Leadership, Policy, and Research to Serve Vulnerable Children and Families," to coincide with the release of the new book by Olivia Golden, *Reforming Child Welfare*. Judy Woodruff, correspondent, The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, moderated the panel that included several people involved in the reform effort including Donna Shalala former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services during the Clinton Administration and currently President of the University of Miami.

Child welfare policy and the responsible agencies are often out-of-sight and out-of-mind until moments of tragedy attract the media's and public's attention. Many children come into contact with child welfare agencies, and far more live in highly vulnerable families. In 2007, alone state child welfare agencies in this country received 3.2 million referrals involving 5.8 million children. And of those referrals agencies found almost 800,000 of those children to have been abused or neglected.

Olivia Golden was formerly the Director of the District of Columbia's Child and Family Services Agency from 2001 to 2004 she is currently an institute fellow at the Urban Institute. In her book, Golden describes the many ways the child welfare system can improve the lives of children and their families. Golden's book chronicles the experiences of the D.C. child welfare agency as well as two other state agencies, Alabama and Utah.

*Reforming Child Welfare* includes seven reform recommendations, one of which is that we need to invest nationally in proven prevention methods and services. Golden points to services that would help birth parents keep their children. These services include helping mothers who suffer from depression, and providing help for parents with substance abuse problems. Panelist Barbara Pryor, senior legislative assistant with the Office of Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), said that often parents are overwhelmed when faced with a child with serious medical conditions. She declared more must be done to help birth families have greater access to healthcare, including prenatal care, and healthcare for their children.

Another panelist, Christine Calpin, consultant and former associate commissioner of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, said governments must figure out a way to bring private and public agencies together. No one agency deals solely with children's issues. Calpin said the federal government can play a role in helping to bring government agencies, such as the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Agriculture, together to work on child welfare. All the panelists stressed the need to have greater cross agency affiliations, such as working with state and local school departments. They pointed out that local schools are often on the frontline of child welfare, because they see children every day and can spot if there are any problems going on before any other part of the governmental system. It is often teachers who are the ones who report if a child looks abused or neglected.

While Golden asserts there is no single problem in child welfare, the failures when they happen are multi-faceted. Shalala said we could start addressing the problem by starting with the basics, such as a system of financial support for families and access to health care. Pryor agreed that while there is no one program that will fix all that is wrong with families, policymakers need to look at reform as an ongoing process, and concede there will never be a point when we can say "ok it's fixed, we're done."

## NCES RELEASES REPORT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GAP AT STATE LEVEL

On Tuesday, July 14, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released a report analyzing the achievement gaps between black and white students and how that gap has changed over the years. The NCES report used both state and national data collected from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), for both math and reading.

The new report emphasizes the comparison of state data, rather than just a national portrait of the black-white achievement gap. The report shows some states have narrowed the achievement gap, but still have both white and black students performing below the national average. The report also found that no state experienced a widening of their achievement gap in reading or math.

At the same time, test scores for both black and white students have been increasing. Yet overall progress has not been made in closing the achievement gap. Stuart Kerachsky, Acting Commissioner of NCES, stressed that the national scores do not provide a complete picture of student performance. He said our goal should not just to close the achievement gap, but to raise test scores for all students. For both reading and math the fourth grade assessments showed the gap narrowed. Scores increased for both reading and math for white and black students, but black students had a larger increase. However, for eighth grade students there was no significant positive change in states' achievement gaps for reading or math. The eighth grade scores did increase for both groups of students. However, black students failed to make enough gains to narrow the gap.

For the full report go to the National Center for Education Statistics' website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

## NSF SEEKS PROPOSALS ON STEM RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The National Science Foundation (NSF) seeks proposals for research on topics in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education as part of its Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (REESE) program.

According to NSF, the goals of the REESE program are: (1) to catalyze discovery and innovation at the frontiers of STEM learning, education, and evaluation; (2) to stimulate the field to produce high quality and robust research results through the progress of theory, method, and human resources; and (3) to help coordinate and transform advances in education, learning research, and evaluation.

This solicitation calls for three types of proposals. *Knowledge Diffusion projects* are small grants for the synthesis of existing knowledge on a topic of critical importance to STEM learning, education, and/or evaluation, or for the diffusion of research-based knowledge. Maximum award size for Knowledge Diffusion proposals is \$250,000 for duration of up to two years. *Empirical Research proposals* identify areas that have the potential for advancing discovery and innovation in STEM learning. They are designed to support the collection of new empirical data or to conduct secondary analyses from existing state, national or international databases. Maximum award size for these proposals is \$1 million for up to three years. *Large Empirical Projects* will award \$2 million for up to five years. These proposals will generally involve teams of multi-disciplinary experts working on conceptually related projects. REESE may also support a few well-focused *conferences or workshops* related to the goals of the program with budgets not to exceed \$100,000.

NSF estimates the number of awards will be 30 to 45 per year for each competition in FY 2009 and FY 2010, pending availability of funds. The agency anticipates that it will make about 10-15 Knowledge Diffusion awards, 15-20 Empirical awards, and 5-10 Large Empirical awards.

Letters of Intent, which are optional, are due by October 09, 2009. The full Proposal deadline is November 12, 2009.

NSF expects all REESE proposals, regardless of their type, to be responsive to one of two broad topical strands, *Emerging Research* or *Contextual Research*, described below.

*Emerging Research*, as described by the program, are those proposals that have the potential to transform existing fields of STEM learning and education through pioneering research that defies disciplinary boundaries in pursuit of emerging knowledge. Emerging Research proposals will contribute to far-reaching and longer-term developments in knowledge and theory. These proposals are limited to one or more of the following areas of inquiry:

### 1. *Neural basis of STEM learning*

REESE supports innovative combinations of theory, methods, and levels of analysis from a wide range of disciplines that would build capacity in neuroscience related to complex human learning and education, and to identify trajectories by which multidisciplinary research anchored in the biological basis of human learning can inform STEM educational practice.

### 2. *Cognitive processes underlying STEM learning and teaching*

The REESE program encourages proposals that push the boundaries of existing knowledge about the cognitive processes underlying the learning and teaching of complex STEM content at all age levels and in all learning contexts. Researchers should attempt to make substantial progress on fundamental intellectual and scientific questions about the nature of learning, teaching, and knowing, at all education levels that bear upon developing expertise in STEM fields.

### 3. *Measurement, modeling, and methods for research and evaluation*

The REESE program will support proposals to improve or develop new qualitative and quantitative methods, measures, tools and analytic techniques. REESE also encourages the submission of proposals to validate or construct major theoretical or analytical approaches in evaluation.

### 4. *Cyberlearning and teaching*

NSF defines Cyberlearning as learning that is mediated by networked computing and communications technologies. REESE invites proposals for research to test claims that cyberlearning promotes significantly different ways of learning STEM content, or allows for the learning of different STEM content.

In contrast to Emerging Research strand, which is limited to the specified topics above, the *Contextual Research* strand of REESE offers three broad areas for transformative solutions to persistent problems: research on teaching and learning in formal and informal settings, research on policy and systems, and evaluation studies.

The full solicitation can be found at:

[http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?pims\\_id=13667&org=EHR&sel\\_org=EHR&from=fund](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=13667&org=EHR&sel_org=EHR&from=fund)

## EDITOR'S NOTE

In the July 13<sup>th</sup> Update story on the National Academies' report on the Bureau of Justice Statistics we neglected to state that the Committee on National Statistics was the lead arm of the Academies' in preparing the study.

## CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS COSSA

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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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