

SBE ANNOUNCES INFRASTRUCTURE COMPETITION

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After two years of discussion and input from the community, the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Science Directorate has announced a new competition to expand opportunities for infrastructure projects that are "large, innovative, and long-running." The text of the full announcement is available on the NSF Webpage at

www.nsf.gov/pubs/1999/nsf9932/nsf9932.htm.

(For earlier stories about the discussion see *UPDATE* June 2 and August 11, 1997).

Under the auspices of the Division of Social, Behavioral and Economic Research (SBER), from four to eight awards will be made at the level of \$500,000 to \$1 million per year, continuing for up to ten years. Approximately \$3 million will be available in FY 1999. Plans call for another competition in FY 2000, subject to the availability of funds. **The deadline for proposals in the FY 1999 competition is March 1, 1999.**

The program aims to "create or extend innovative large-scale infrastructure projects that promise widely spread support to social and behavioral scientists." Proposed projects should focus on one of the following four areas or a combination of them:

- Collection of data from surveys, experiments, or administrative records; case or historical records; or objects of investigation (e.g., archaeological items): that will support broad based investigation into the most important scientific questions facing social and behavioral science in the next decade.
- Creation of Web-based data archiving systems that enable world wide access to linked databases and incorporate innovative capabilities for metadata, file searching, and data confidentiality protection.

(Continued on page 7)

COSSA HOLDS 1998 ANNUAL MEETING

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COSSA held its 1998 Annual Meeting on Monday, November 9. The event, attended by nearly 75 members of COSSA's members, affiliates, and contributors, featured speakers from Harvard University, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), National Science Foundation (NSF), and the White House's Council of Economic Advisers.

1998 Midterm Election

Martha Kumar, Fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, spoke about the results of the midterm election. She noted that the election was about three "Rs": 1) Renewal, 2) Rebellion, and 3) Revival.

In terms of renewal, Kumar stated that this election was, once again, a story of incumbency success in both the House and the Senate. She noted that of the 435 House incumbents, only 6 incumbents running on election day lost their seats. In the Senate, only 3 incumbents lost. Overall, she said that the Republicans should be pleased with the election results, especially since they have won three House elections in a row, something they have not done since Republicans won six House elections in a row between 1917 and 1933. Yet their majority shrunk by 5 seats to 223-211 with one independent.

What does this election mean for Republicans in

Inside UPDATE...

- House Leadership Changes: New Head of VA, HUD
- Crime Researcher Alfred Blumstein Elected President of COSSA
- Healthy People 2010
- NIJ Budget Language

terms of governing? Kumar said that in 1953, when their majority was 221-213 with one independent, Republicans were able to count on Southern Democrats for votes. Today, she said, the level of partisanship is much higher and, thus, the GOP cannot count on these votes. Democrats, explained Kumar, might actually try to pick up Republican votes to push agenda items that Clinton has been able to bring back to the table, namely crime and education.

The impeachment ads, approved by House Speaker Newt Gingrich in the last week of the election, clearly did not help the Republicans, noted Kumar. They merely reminded voters that Republicans "had no other issues." The reliance on the impeachment issue and the poor election results, noted Kumar, led to the second "R", rebellion, and the resignation of Speaker Gingrich and the shakeup of the House GOP leadership (see following story).

Kumar noted that the election clearly revived the spirits of President Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Vice President Al Gore. She noted that all three worked extremely hard during the course of the election. Kumar said that Gore campaigned for 244 Democratic candidates, while Mrs. Clinton spent countless hours on the campaign trail. Overall, Kumar noted that the elections results "look good for Gore" for the 2000 presidential election.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences. *UPDATE* is published 22 times per year. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788. <http://members.aol.com/socscience/COSSAindex.htm>

While the election revived Clinton, Kumar said that one must look at the overall losses for the Democratic party since he ascended to the presidency in 1992. Overall, since Clinton became president, Democrats have lost seats in the House, the Senate, and state governorships. Since 1992, Democrats have lost 47 House seats (from 258 to 211); 12 Senate seats (from 57 to 45); and 13 Governor seats (from 30 to 17).

OBSSR and NIH

Norman Anderson, Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), spoke of the activities of his office and the NIH. Specifically he addressed several goals or priorities that his office is working to advance. He noted that Harold Varmus, Director of the NIH, recognizes that understanding health inequities between racial and ethnic groups is a top priority within the NIH. Varmus, according to Anderson, has also pointed to integrating a bio-behavioral interdisciplinary perspective across the NIH as a main priority.

Anderson said that he was asked earlier this year by Varmus to initiate a "first of its kind process to set priorities in the behavioral and social sciences." This process, according to Anderson, is mainly a response to Congressional concerns of how the NIH would spend the largest percent and aggregate increase in its history received for Fiscal Year 1999. (See *UPDATE*, October 26).

The OBSSR, according to Anderson, has asked the National Academy of Science (NAS), specifically the National Research Council's Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences, to develop a working group that would derive a set of recommendations for these priorities. The priorities, said Anderson, will serve as a guide for the office as "we fulfill the mandate of developing trans-NIH funding initiatives and other activities." Overall, the research priorities should: 1) focus on the most pressing national and international health problems; 2) offer the greatest scientific opportunity, such that a significant research investment would pay dividends in a short time; and 3) concentrate on the health concerns of the public for which behavioral and social sciences research may provide solutions.

The NAS working group will be assisted in its work by an NIH Liaison Group that will be chaired by Anderson. The group's final recommendations will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that the research priorities are still the most applicable and relevant.

Regarding the second priority — integrating biobehavioral interdisciplinary perspective across NIH — Anderson commented that OBSSR has undertaken a number of activities to meet this goal. OBSSR has developed a contract with the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) on an activity to document successes in interdisciplinary research. Anderson observed that there are some approaches to interdisciplinary research that are successful, while there are also some problems with doing this type of research. The SSRC will develop an activity to document successes, as well as develop models for overcoming barriers to interdisciplinary research.

Education Research

Kent McGuire, Assistant Secretary of the OERI, proclaimed that he has been "having a ball" since he took his post in June. He said, however, that his is not an easy job partly because of the juggling he has to do with the many competing forces, specifically the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Capitol Hill. Both sides pose a challenge for OERI. McGuire stated that increased spending on education research is a hard sell to the OMB, while the House and the Senate "do not trust" OERI. The two are skeptical of the products produced by the OERI-funded research.

The OERI, said McGuire, needs to become "a better consumer and manager of research." OERI needs to articulate to lawmakers and policymakers why certain research is important and why the results are worth waiting for. He also mentioned that the OERI should do a better job identifying thoughtful research, while also performing more interpretive and analytic work on the research being produced in the field. "This is currently not part of the culture at OERI," stated McGuire.

McGuire expressed his dislike for the set-asides for OERI, specifically the amount for Field-Initiated

Studies (FIS) that COSSA and other groups fought for in the 1994 reauthorization.

McGuire also noted that the OERI needs to establish a better working relationship with the research community. The research community, decalred McGuire, must help the OERI clearly demonstrate the benefits of education research. He said that he currently does not have the "stories" to tell legislators and the OMB to convince them that education research is worthy of increased expenditure.

Reinventing Social and Behavioral Science

Bennett Bertenthal, Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation, was the meeting's luncheon speaker. He coined his discussion "Reinventing the Social and Behavioral Sciences for the 21st Century," and addressed many of the challenges facing the social and behavioral science community.

He began by noting that one priority and challenge is the continued development of data bases for the social and behavioral sciences. Bertenthal remarked that there are currently some data bases — geographic information surveys, social and economic surveys, and innovation surveys — but more are needed. "We are only skimming the surface on what we can actually do with data bases," he said. Most of the current data bases, according to Bertenthal, are fragmented and not stored properly. Thus, he maintained that the social and behavioral sciences need to better consolidate, store, and make data available.

Bertenthal also addressed the need for promoting multi-disciplinary research. He referred to E.O. Wilson's book *Consilience* and noted that unlike the medical research community, the social and behavioral science community does not work cooperatively. The social and behavioral sciences lack coherence and, in fact, are theoretically divisive. In the words of E.O. Wilson, Bertenthal said, "the medical research community has it and the social science community doesn't."

He declared that the Internet has opened the door for new opportunities for multi-disciplinary research centers. In fact, the Internet can facilitate "virtual" multi-disciplinary centers. He pointed to the NSF-funded National Center on Violence Research (NCOVR) as an example. NCOVR, housed at Carnegie Mellon University and headed by Al Blumstein, is comprised of 45 researchers from over 20 different universities. Bertenthal said that we must "exploit these types of opportunities." Further, he said that funding agencies and other funding sources must be willing to provide adequate resources over a number of years to reap the rewards of these multi-disciplinary centers.

Finally, Bertenthal addressed the need to generate increased support for the social and behavioral sciences. One way, he suggested, is to don the mantle of what Neal Lane has called citizen-scientists and convince the general public to support science. Bertenthal noted that he recently convened a conference at NSF of the science directors for many of the G-7 countries. He was "intrigued" to learn that many of the countries' total support for the social and behavioral sciences ranges between 8 percent and 15 percent of their federal budgets — a "tremendous commitment." The United States, claimed Bertenthal, only spends 3.2 percent of the federal budget on basic social and behavioral science research and only 4.4 percent when applied research is added.

The "social and behavioral sciences," he said, "are indispensable for ensuring the quality of life for the next century." This century, he said, has been the time of large projects, like the space program and the Manhattan Project. The next century, he said, is the time for a social science Manhattan Project. He emphasized the importance of long-range planning and said that the social and behavioral science community must address the challenges that we face or "we will be left in the dust."

Social Indicators and the White House Initiative on Race

Rebecca Blank, a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, spoke about the President's Initiative on Race and the chart book derived from the initiative, *Changing America*:

Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin (See UPDATE, October 26).

Looking at the data for household structure, Blank commented on two overarching trends. First, she said that there has been a large increase across all ethnic groups of single female headed families. Second, she noted that there has been a large increase in the number of people living alone. These trends have many implications for "parenting, labor market participation, economic outcomes, and household needs," she observed.

The data for education, Blank stated, is of particular interest. She noted that "computer use by children across all groups has greatly increased." Nevertheless, she said that large disparities exist between whites and blacks and Hispanics with regard to home computer use. White children, she said, are more likely than blacks or Hispanics to use a computer at home. She said that since computer use by children may be an indicator of labor market participation, she hopes "computer use . . . will continue to rise."

The worst news from the data, according to Blank, is the wage disparity between groups and the median weekly household incomes of the groups. She said that the income gap between whites and other groups has maintained and, in most cases, has widened. Further, she said that widening disparities exist between the median weekly household incomes between whites and blacks and Hispanics. By contrast Asian-Americans, on average have higher median incomes than non-Hispanic whites. However, like much of this aggregated data, Blank suggested, there are hidden disparities within groups.

The news regarding infant mortality rates, said Blank, is generally good. The rates are falling for all groups. She noted, however, that the gaps between the groups are not decreasing, with a notable exception for American Indians.

Blank discussed crime and criminal justice data, particularly homicide rates among the different racial groups. She noted that the black homicide victimization rate is off the chart, compared to the other groups. She also noted that the incarceration

rates for blacks (9 percent of all black males between 18 and 24) and whites (2 percent of all white males between 18 and 24) is tremendously high for both groups relative to past levels. She said that the increase in incarceration rates — particularly the rate for African-Americans — over the past two decades is primarily the result of drug arrests and the differences in sentencing guidelines for powder and crack cocaine. Incarceration rates, she said, have a great impact on the presence of fathers in families, earning capacities of families, and the long-term earning potential of persons released from prison.

The data on which the charts are based, and a copy of *Changing America*, can be found online at: <http://whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/publications.html>

HOUSE LEADERSHIP CHANGES: NEW VA, HUD APPROPRIATIONS CHAIRMAN *HS*

Reacting to the disappointment of losing, rather than gaining seats, in the House of Representatives, the 223 Republicans saw their “revolutionary leader” Newt Gingrich resign as Speaker and announce he will be leaving the House in the near future. In addition, frustrated “rank and filers” pushed for more leadership changes.

On November 18, the GOP selected Representative Bob Livingston of Louisiana as its nominee to lead the House. In January when the 106th Congress convenes, Livingston will be officially elected Speaker. While not expected to be as big an advocate for science and research as Gingrich was, Livingston has been generally supportive of increased funding for this area of the federal budget.

Majority Leader Dick Arney of Texas survived a multi-candidate challenge, and Majority Whip Tom DeLay, also from Texas, was not challenged. Representative J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, the only African-American Republican in the House, secured the fourth position on the leadership rung, Conference Chairman by ousting Ohioan John Boehner.

Appropriations Changes

With Livingston moving to the Speaker's chair, his leadership of the appropriations committee shifts to Representative C.W. Bill Young of Florida. Young's ascension opened up the National Security Subcommittee post, which was grabbed by Representative Jerry Lewis of California who gave up the VA, HUD, IA Subcommittee chair.

Lewis was replaced as head of the Subcommittee that recommends funding for the National Science Foundation by Representative James Walsh of New York. Walsh, who arrived in Congress in 1989, is from Syracuse. He had been head of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

Some Subcommittee chairmen stayed put. Representative John Porter (R-IL) will continue to lead the Labor, HHS, and Education panel. Representative Joe Skeen (R-NM) remains as head of the Agriculture Subcommittee, while Representative Harold Rogers (R-KY) will continue to scrutinize the 2000 Census and Office of Justice Programs as chief of the Commerce, Justice, State Subcommittee (CJS).

Ranking Democrats on the appropriations subcommittees will not be determined until early December when House Democrats organize for the next session. The decision of Representative Alan Mollohan (D-WV), whether to stay at CJS or leave for VA, HUD will determine a number of positions.

CRIME RESEARCHER ALFRED BLUMSTEIN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF COSSA *HS*

Alfred Blumstein, University Professor and J. Erik Jonsson Professor of Operations Research at Carnegie Mellon University, has been elected President of COSSA for a two-year term commencing January 1, 1999. He replaces Eleanor Maccoby, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Stanford University.

A nationally recognized and much-quoted criminologist, Blumstein is the director of the National Consortium on Violence Research (NCOVR), a long term project funded by the National Science Foundation. He is the former Dean

of the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon. He has chaired National Research Council panels on deterrence and incapacitation, sentencing, and criminal careers. He received the American Society of Criminology's (ASC) Sutherland Award for "contributions to research" and was the president of ASC in 1991-92. He has also served as President of the Operations Research Society of America, the Institute for Management Sciences, and the new organization into which they have been merged, the Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences.

He has served as Chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (1979-90), the state criminal justice planning agency, and as a member of the state's Sentencing Commission (1986-96). His research related to crime and punishment has covered issues of criminal careers, deterrence and incapacitation, sentencing, incarceration practice and policy, racial disproportionality, youth violence and demographic trends. He has served as an at-large member of the COSSA Board of Directors, has spoken at COSSA Congressional Seminars and a COSSA Annual Meeting, and has been a COSSA witness before the House VA, HUD, IA Appropriations Subcommittee.

Professor Blumstein has a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering Physics and a Ph.D. in Operations Research from Cornell University. He was recently elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010 AS

Speaking at a November 13th gathering to solicit goals for the *Healthy People 2010*, U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher declared that 60 percent of the *Healthy People 2000* goals have been met.

"The Healthy People plan," said Satcher, "for the first decade of the new century addresses important national issues, such as access to quality care and public health infrastructure and major disease areas. It also addresses key areas of health that I believe are challenges that need to be addressed if we are to effectively improve health in this country." Satcher noted that "analyses of all types of health status indicators tell us that racial and ethnic minorities,

females, people with disabilities, people with low income, and older adults bear a disproportionate burden of disease and disability compared to the population as a whole." *Healthy People 2010* proposes one target for all groups, he said.

There are more than 500 specific objectives currently proposed in the draft for public comment. These objectives fall into 26 focus areas and are further broken down into four categories: 1) promote health behaviors; 2) promote healthy and safe communities; 3) improve systems for personal and public health ; and 4) prevent and reduce disease and disorders.

"We need to do a better job promoting personal responsibility for healthy lifestyles and behaviors," Satcher said. "A large proportion of premature mortality is related to preventable factors, such as poor diet and lack of physical activity, tobacco use, alcohol, drug abuse, and unsafe sexual behavior," he continued. Satcher said his six goals are:

1. Making sure every child gets a healthy start;
2. Promoting personal responsibility for health lifestyles and behaviors;
3. Eliminating racial disparities in health status and health care access and quality;
4. Enhancing mental health prevention, treatment and outcomes;
5. Increasing awareness of and attention to global health; and
6. Coordinating the national response to emerging infectious diseases, including leading the national response to the health consequences of bioterrorism and promoting the safety and availability of the blood supply.

For the last three decades, the Department of Health and Human Services has coordinated the *Healthy People* initiative. *Healthy People 2010 Objectives: Draft for Public Comment* was released on September 15, 1998. The public is invited to participate and several public hearings are being held across the country to receive public testimony and comment.

The final version of *Healthy People 2010* is scheduled to be released in January 2000. It is expected to "reflect a broadened prevention science base; improved surveillance and data systems; a

heightened awareness and demand for preventive health services and quality health care; and changes in demographics, science, technology, and disease spread that will affect the public's health in the 21st century."

For additional information about *Healthy People 2010* write to the HHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Room 728G, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC, 20201; call 1/800/367-4725; or visit the *Healthy People 2010* Webpage at <http://www.health.gov/healthypeople>.

NIJ BUDGET LANGUAGE DJ

UPDATE reported in the October 26th (Number 19) edition that the Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) would have "final authority over all grants, cooperative agreements and contracts for OJP and its component organizations, including the National Institute of Justice (NIJ)." To clarify any misunderstanding, NIJ Director Jeremy Travis still has the authority to make grants and distribute money. Additionally, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and certain research activities of the the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) are not subject to the provision and will retain research grant making authority.

Additionally, the omnibus appropriations bill includes the House proposal that instructs the Assistant Attorney General to report on changes in the organizational structure of OJP to ensure coordination among the separate bodies and activities within OJP. The Assistant Attorney General and the Department will develop "proposed elements of a new OJP structure with streamlined, consolidated authorities which will ensure centralized management." The proposals will be submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees no later than March 1, 1999.

SBE INFRASTRUCTURE (continued)

- Creation of Web-based collaboratories to enable real-time controlled experimentation, to share the use of expensive experimental equipment, and/or share widely the process and results of research in

progress.

- Establishment of Center programs to facilitate intensive cross-fertilization of research ideas and projects among selected researchers of diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and interests. Such centers will use innovative measures to encourage collaborative research activity that would not otherwise occur. The centers may be geographically and/or virtually organized.

The proposals will be reviewed by mail by experts in the area of the proposal. The regular external program panel(s) most relevant to the subject matter of the proposal will then examine the proposals and recommend support or decline. A special external Infrastructure Panel will then consider all submitted proposals and make recommendations for funding. Grants will be announced in late summer 1999. Continuation decisions will occur during the third and sixth year for longer-running projects. Regular NSF merit review criteria will be utilized as well as specific criteria related to the infrastructure focus.

Much of the discussion during the two years has focused on the fate of the three long running NSF-supported data bases: the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, the General Social Survey, and the National Election Studies. In addition, the future of continued federal support for the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences has been debated. Under the current arrangement, the three databases are funded within the programs, often competing against individual investigator projects for a share of the budget. Under the new competition, the databases will contend against other new infrastructure projects both within and outside the programs. The databases could be funded by the relevant disciplinary programs, as in the past, by funds from the new competition, or by a combination. The Center will face the same options. The three databases are funded through 2001 and therefore would not have to be recompeted until FY 2000. The NSF funding for the Center runs out in 1999 and thus, it would have to enter the FY 1999 competition.

SBE Assistant Director Bennett Bertenthal has admonished the social and behavioral science community to "think big." The new infrastructure competition provides the opportunity for riding large, innovative waves into the future.

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