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“WORLD IS FLAT” AUTHOR ADDRESSES SBE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Since he is a heavy user of data compiled by the Science, Resources, and Statistics division of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman agreed to participate in its advisory committee’s meeting on April 20th. Before a standing room audience of SBE panel members and others from NSF and the science community, Friedman expounded on his book The World is Flat, now in its 2.0 edition.

Friedman’s basic premise is that the world has seen three major eras of what we now call globalization. In the first phase, lasting from 1492 to the early 1800s, countries were the key actors. In the second phase, from the 1800s to around 2000, companies played the predominant role in internationalizing trade and commerce. Since 2000, with modern computer-driven communications fostering interactions, the key actors are now individuals. It is people who are “connecting and collaborating” that are leading the way toward the future, according to Friedman. Software entrepreneurs in China and India, scientists using internet collaboratories to perform their research and exchange information, and bloggers challenging the conventional production of news, are all part of this new era.

While we focused on 9/11, Enron, and the dot-com bust, our attention was deflected, Friedman claims, from the “horizontalization” of exchanges that are taking place throughout the world. We are in a “Gutenberg moment,” Friedman declared, akin to

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

ATTACKS ON PEER REVIEW DISCUSSED AT AAAS S&T POLICY FORUM

“Peer review of science is the bedrock for determinations about the quality and merits of research . . . The contributions and potential of science for advancing the public good could and would quickly erode absent peer review processes,” stressed Felice Levine, Executive Director of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), speaking at the 31st American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) forum on Science and Technology Policy recently held in Washington. Levine emphasized the continued importance of the scientific community’ “being vigilant and using its voice and presence to push back on *resistance to, direct assaults on, or manipulations* of expert peer review.” [Levine’s Emphasis]

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WORLD IS FLAT (Cont. from Page 1)

the changes brought about by the invention of the printing press, and if Americans don't pay attention we will no longer maintain our historic role of "inventing the future."

To meet this challenge, Friedman argued for an enhanced scientific and communications infrastructure, an improved educational system and updated governance structures that will see us through. The educational system needs to focus on teaching "how to learn" where "curiosity and passion" trump intelligence. Increasingly, Friedman suggested, left brain "logical, analytical" activities are now done by computers, and it is time as Dan Pink author of a Whole New Mind has pointed out, to stress right brain "creative, intuitive" learning activities. In addition, new governance regimes in intellectual property, rules of investment, and legal structures are now necessary for moving forward.

Friedman indicated that maintaining a middle-class is important for the survival of democracies. In envisioning his new world, he worries about what middle-class jobs will exist to avoid total bifurcation in income and wealth. He noted that these jobs will include: "great collaborators," "passionate personalizers," "great synthesizers," "great explainers," "great adapters," and "green technologists."

If Friedman's basic premise is true, it implies, as COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver suggested to him, that the greatest scientific challenge of our time is to understand the human behavior that is driving Friedman's "flat" world. We hope science policymakers are listening.

Cyberinfrastructure, the Science of Science Policy, and the IPY

The SBE Advisory Committee also heard from Dan Atkins, new head of NSF's Office of Cyberinfrastructure (OCI). He described the importance of the SBE sciences to this multimillion-dollar initiative in all its aspects, including data visualization and analysis, virtual collaborations, education and workforce issues, and the use of high performance computers and computing. David Lightfoot, Assistant Director for SBE, also mentioned a memorandum of understanding with the United Kingdom's Economic and Social Research Council for International Cooperation in cyberinfrastructure development as well as in the human and social

dynamics research that is still a priority area for the NSF.

The Advisory Committee heard about SBE's continuing response to Presidential Science Adviser John Marburger's call for a new science of science policy. These include plans for workshops and a clear desire to move beyond the narrow issue of developing science metrics. There are funds in the FY 2006 budget for exploring these issues and a significant part of the proposed FY 2007 increase for SBE is dedicated to work in this area (see UPDATE, March 7, 2006).

In addition, opportunities for SBE research funding exist in the upcoming International Polar Year (IPY). Anna Kerttula, a social scientist in NSF's Office of Polar Programs, explained that the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) has included as the IPY's Theme #6: "To investigate the cultural, historical and social processes that shape the sustainability of circumpolar human societies, and to identify their unique contributions to global cultural diversity and citizenship."

NSF Director Arden Bement and Deputy Director Kathie Olsen also met with the Advisory Committee. Bement's remarks focused on the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) and SBE's role in it. He also stressed these sciences' role in other issues such as obesity, extreme events such as disasters, and improving education. Olsen responded to questions about NSF expanding its funding of basic social psychology research as the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) appears to have abandoned such support. She did not indicate that any NSF surge of funding for this research would occur, but that she is in the middle of efforts to try and work with NIH to find a home for basic behavioral research.

PEER REVIEW (Cont. from Page 1)

Levine underscored that "progress in science is highly dependent upon maintaining the integrity of the peer review process, periodic reviews of its openness and adequacy, and protection of that process from manipulation or encroachment for other purposes and ends." Peer review "is the mediating process in science that helps to ensure that knowledge is transparent and well warranted," Levine said.

She acknowledged this does not mean that "peer review processes like any other form of human action and decision making do not need to be studied, improved upon, or enhanced." Levine recognized the

substantial effort that has been devoted to the issue by well-known bodies such as the National Academies, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Levine outlined what she believes to be significant threats to peer review, speaking specifically to the actions of government, in the legislative and executive branches to “intrude on peer review or alter or devalue how it is used both in funding or in advice about science, and in the use of science in public decision and policy making.”

She maintained that “science and politics are inevitably intertwined as politics shapes the funding and policy environment for science, as science serves as an important component for the development of sound public policy.” She emphasized that political considerations do not or should not come into play in using the public’s resources for one purpose or another. “It is not uncommon to have political considerations overshadow scientific information in the development of public policy,” she explained. “It is though rather different in tone and intent to encroach on how science gets done or how knowledge is advanced, presented, or suppressed through transforming, altering, or reversing the processes of expert peer review or use of it,” she continued.

Levine cited three examples of attack from the last several years on peer review:

- a proposed rule change to peer review procedures used by the federal government (the Proposed Bulletin on Peer Review and Information Quality) initially promoted by the Office of Management and Budget in 2003;
- the continued actions and efforts, largely Congressional, to de-fund peer -reviewed research grants based on politically-driven rationales;” and
- the rather explicit steps to affect access to expert information through executive branch appointments to key scientific advisory positions and committees.

These examples and the accompanying responses from the scientific community, Levine concluded, illustrate how “attacks on peer review can have major and sustained consequences for the integrity and doing of science.” At the same time, they reveal “the important role of the organized scientific community over time in protecting science or ameliorating some of the consequences of such intrusions.

Challenges can be expected to continue,” she warned. Levine’s remarks can be found at: http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd/Forum_2006/levine.pdf

SOCIAL / ETHICAL CONCERNS FOCUS OF NANOTECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

New technologies transform our societies and the way we live in them. In the late 20th Century, information technology brought us supercomputers and the Internet. The biotech revolution brought new diagnostic techniques, new medicines, and new food products. As we move further into the 21st Century the promise of nanotechnology – working at the atomic, molecular, and supramolecular levels to create new materials, devices and systems with fundamentally new properties and functions because of their small structure – augurs even more transformations.

For enthusiasts like Mihail Roco, Senior Advisor for Nanotechnology at the National Science Foundation (NSF), this new knowledge will deliver higher efficiency processes and novel products, molecular medicine to cure disease and provide less intrusive treatments, and extend the limits of sustainable development.

For others, including some members of Congress, new technologies such as nano bring special ethical, legal, and societal implications (ELSI). That is why, with COSSA’s help, the basic legislation creating the U.S. nanotechnology initiative includes provisions for research on these ELSI dimensions. It is also why the Chicago-Kent College of Law and the Illinois Institute of Technology sponsored an all-day conference in Washington on April 26 to examine “Nanoworld: Toward a Policy for the Human Future.”

Nigel Cameron, Associate Dean and Research Professor of Bioethics at the Chicago-Kent College of Law, framed the conference by asserting that ethical issues are not just “adjuncts” to discussions of technology policies. Rather, he insisted, we must discuss the anthropological issues of the “human condition” that new technologies affect. He suggested that the need to focus on “values” place science and technology policy in the forefront of discussions of cultural politics. Both the public and the scientific community, he argued, are woefully unprepared to participate in these conversations and stressed the clear need for more

“transparency” by those wholeheartedly embracing the brave new nano world.

Spending Grows Enormously in Public and Private Sectors

President Bush’s proposed FY 2007 budget includes \$1.2 billion for the multi-agency National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI), with about one-third going to NSF. World wide estimates of nanotech expenditures by governments were about \$4.5 billion in 2004 with the U.S., the European Union (EU), Japan, China, and Korea the key players. In addition, another \$4 billion has been invested by the private sector, with about 45 percent in the U.S. and about 35 percent in Asia. This represents a huge investment leap since 1997 when total spending on nanotech was less than \$1 billion.

Projected governmental funding for 2006 for the societal dimensions research includes approximately \$39 million for programs that are primarily directed at environmental, health, and safety (EHS) issues and \$43 million for education-related activities and research on the broad implications of nanotechnology for society, including economic, workforce, educational, ethical, and legal implications. In late 2005, NSF made four awards totaling \$14.3 million for this research including creating two new Centers for Nanotechnology in Society at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Arizona State University. In addition, NSF is providing \$20 million to a national Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE), led by the Museum of Science in Boston, to create public nanotechnology exhibits and educational programs for the public at science museums throughout the U.S.

What has the investment produced so far and what is the potential for the future? According to Roco, the first generation of products includes new cosmetics, including sunscreens, improved chemical efficiency, enhanced textiles such as non-stainable fabrics, increased data storage in computer chips, and wound dressings which release intensive antimicrobials. The second generation, which includes the present time, will bring catalysts to clear up waste streams, localized drug delivery to target specific cells, sensors to detect chemical or biological releases, biodevices such as medical implants including artificial heart valves, and nanodevices with active photonic, electronic, biological, and mechanical components.

Down the road, from 2010 to 2015, Roco forecasts revolutionary industrial products, completely new plant and food products, brain-machine interfaces, brain to brain interactions, regenerative medicine, and modified viruses and bacteria. Roco also predicted that within the following five years, nanotech will make possible novel designs of molecules for self-assembling products, cell aging therapies, genetic therapies, human-machine interfaces, and complex, and large nanosystems.

To focus on the ELSI questions raised by these advances, an International Risk Governance Council (IRGC) has been created to help cope with the issues raised by nanoscience and nanotech. An important workshop is scheduled for July 2006. Questions about risk governance affect decisions and actions of both governmental and private actors. Roco indicated that principles of “good governance” should include: transparency, responsibility, accountability, and participation. The last means involving both non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the public, in what Roco called “horizontal interaction.”

Key issues include: investment policies that provide “best and equitable” outcomes for society; occupational safety; consumer safety; environmental safety; the possible need for new legal frameworks; individual rights to information and knowledge; questions of human integrity and dignity; international relationships including equity issues between the haves and have-nots now extended to a new area; and questions affecting long-term human development.

For conference speakers Andrew Kimbrell of the International Center for Technology Assessment and Brent Blackwalder, President of the Friends of the Earth, there are already many possible “pernicious” problems that nanotech has presented. For both Kimbrell and Blackwalder, the “unintended consequences” of new technologies, such as environmental health and safety questions, should lead us to adopt the “precautionary principle” before moving forward in accepting the bounty that this new technology will bring us. Charles Rubin, a political scientist from Duquesne University, cautioned that “prediction and control” in the natural sciences is “not good.” Inventors of DARPANET, the forerunner of the Internet, did not predict that major societal usage would include pornography, gambling, and spamming, he said.

Members of Congress Express Concerns

Three members of Congress spoke at the conference expressing their concerns with nanotechnology. Rep. Dave Weldon (R-FL) indicated his support for proceeding with the research into nanoscience. However, he expressed his desire that ELSI issues receive “robust discussion.” As a member of the House Appropriations Committee he has insisted on a three-percent floor for ELSI expenditures in the NNI. As an M.D., he is most concerned with the medical applications and the need to maintain “human dignity,” as we move down the road with this technology. He cautioned about the future ability to “enhance” human physical capacity.

Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) is apprehensive about nanotech’s possible power to “engineer intelligence” through the creation of “ambitious machines.” His concern is that this will not come about in one big swoop, but will “creep” into existence and that we need to focus on the implications of this now, not “after the bomb is dropped.” Sherman suggested that the ELSI implications of atomic energy were not part of the use of the atomic bomb discussions in the 1940s.

Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), who is recognized as the prime mover of the legislation that brought about the NNI, hoped to “keep fear and anxiety from taking over policymaking” in this area. Having seen a bunch of Hollywood movies lately, Honda worried about the general public’s response to these new technologies. “They have to live with this [new] stuff,” he noted, but he called on the media, in particular, to generate more discussion and clarification.

Marty Spitzer, of the House Science Committee staff, represented panel chairman Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) and focused on the environmental applications. He suggested the public wants a “strong regulatory framework” that will examine the impact of nanotech from a “life cycle perspective.” He indicated that EPA is working to issue a white paper in this area. Spitzer also expressed concern that since nanoscience is primarily centered in small companies not used to regulatory hindrances; it may be difficult for governments to impose restraints in this manner.

The concern for ELSI issues in the NNI arises from the example of the Human Genome Research Initiative, which included a five-percent set-aside to study implications related to the genomic revolution. It also stems from the experience with Genetically

Modified Organisms (GMOs), where the public, especially in Europe, made life difficult for companies trying to introduce new food products based on improved science and technology. For those pumping the Nanotech revolution, both these situations serve as models on how to proceed. The hope is to improve on the Genome experience and avoid the GMO one. Further discussions, conferences, workshops, and governmental involvement will be necessary to accomplish that goal.

RESULTS IN VOTER MOBILIZATION RESEARCH PRESENTED

On Monday, April 24 the American Academy for Political and Social Science held a symposium entitled “Getting Out the Vote” to report advances in knowledge gained by a number of field experiments that have the potential to reshape past assumptions about campaign effectiveness and influence future strategies on mobilizing voters. The symposium divided into two sessions, “What Works in Getting Out the Vote” and “Why Does Voter Mobilization Matter?”

Panelists included Melissa Michelson, Professor of Political Science at California State University, East Bay; Janelle Wong, Professor of Political Science at the University of Southern California; and David Nickerson, Professor of Political Science at Notre Dame University.

Michelson discussed research results concerning the challenges in meeting Latino voter mobilization. Michelson found that there are several factors contributing to low voter turnout among Latinos. “Forty percent of all Latinos are ineligible to vote due to their citizenship status” noted Michelson. “A majority of Latinos are young, and have relatively low socio-economic status and education levels.” Michelson explained that Latinos are very receptive to voter mobilization campaigns but “a significant challenge in Latino voter mobilization is that generally get-out-the-vote efforts do not make attempts to mobilize Latinos.”

Janelle Wong found that a key factor in mobilizing Asian American voters involved using student volunteers with the same nationality. Wong added that students who also spoke their native language were more likely to establish a relationship with Asian American voters. Both Wong and Michelson reached similar conclusions such as the importance of using canvassers from the same ethnic group, or at least canvassers who shared the same language as key in getting out the vote efforts.

The second panel focused on why voter mobilization matters and the broader social interpretation that could be drawn from the kinds of understanding that the research presented. The panel included Tobi Walker, Program Officer Policy Initiatives Pew Charitable Trust, Mark Hugo Lopez, Assistant Professor of Public Policy at University of Maryland, David Carney of Norway Hill Associates, and Hal Malchow, President of the Michigan Society of Clinical Hypnosis Partners.

David Carney illustrated how campaigns have become too tactic driven and need to refocus on communicating the overall message of the campaign to voters. “Campaigns need a consistent clear message that will make an emotional connection to voters to help differentiate them,” declared Carney. “Campaigns need to make an emotional connection to voters that will get them out to vote.”

Hal Malchow believed that political communications stand at the precipice of monumental change. “The collapse of the 30 second TV ad, coupled with TV’s limited reach has changed the involuntary nature in which campaigns previously reached voters. Voters are gaining more control of the information they receive and the commercials they see” Malchow explained. “These changes require us to figure out new ways to communicate to voters. Voluntary means of receiving ads, such as direct mail or phone calls, will never replace the involuntarily passive dissemination of information that the 30 second TV ad provided,” said Malchow. He concluded that “as campaigns lose their ability to communicate to a broad audience through involuntary means, they will have to turn to more personal ways of reaching voters through the use of peer groups, neighborhood leaders, and word of mouth.”

Tobi Walker commented on the challenges that academics and practitioners face in using randomized field experiments for their research. According to Walker “there is a culture clash between academics and practitioners that results in a lack of understanding on the importance of randomized field experiments on the part of practitioners.” Walker offered some solutions for the challenges researchers now face, keep things simple as possible; conduct analysis and report research in a timely fashion; keep all parties, academics, practitioners and funders, involved in the process; and lastly for academics, do not to underestimate the power they have.

For more information on the voter mobilization research studies, please see the September 2005 edition of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

METHODOLOGY AND MEASUREMENT IN THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The behavioral and social sciences offer significant fundamental insights into the comprehensive understanding of health, including disease etiology and treatment, and the promotion of health and well-being. To encourage the investigation of the impact of social and behavioral factors on health and disease, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) invites grant proposals on methodology and measurement in the social and behavioral sciences (PA-06-343 and PA -06-344).

Methodology and measurement encompass research design, data collection techniques, measurement, and data analysis techniques. The goal of the announcement is to encourage research that will improve the quality and scientific power of data collected in the social and behavioral sciences relevant to the mission of the NIH institutes and centers (ICs).

Research that addresses methodology and measurement issues in diverse populations, issues in studying sensitive behaviors, issues of ethics in research, issues related to confidential data and the protection of research subjects, and issues developing interdisciplinary, multimethod, and multilevel approaches to social and behavioral science research is particularly encouraged, as are approaches that integrate social and behavioral science research with biomedical, physical, or computational science research or engineering.

Applications addressing four general areas of methodology and measurement in the social and behavioral sciences are being encouraged: 1) research design, 2) data collection techniques, 3) measurement, and 4) data analysis.

Participating NIH institutes, centers, and offices include: the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR); Cancer (NCI); the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM); Heart, Lung, and Blood (NHLBI); Child Health and Human Development (NICHD); Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS); Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS); Nursing (NINR); Aging (NIA); Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA); Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD); Drug Abuse (NIDA); and the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS).

For more information on this announcement see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-06-343.html>

BUILDING TRANSLATION RESEARCH IN INTEGRATIVE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

For many decades, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) have been the primary sponsors of research in the basic behavioral sciences. This investment has resulted in the development of a large body of knowledge in such areas as emotion, motivation, self-concept, personality, cognition, memory, social cognition and influence, family processes, social networks, and sociocultural variations.

The theory, methods, knowledge, and insights from the basic behavioral sciences, however, have not been fully utilized in understanding pressing public health issues in mental health and alcohol and drug use disorders; the etiology and assessment of disorders; the development of innovative preventive and treatment interventions; and the effects of interventions and services for diverse types of people in disparate social, economic, cultural and environmental contexts.

Accordingly, the institutes are seeking to encourage the development of translational research partnerships between scientists who study basic behavioral processes and those who study the etiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental and behavioral disorders (including alcohol and drug use disorders) and the delivery of services to those suffering from the disorders.

The announcements (PAR-06-355, PAR-06-356, and PAR-06-357) are designed to address the needs of investigators in the formative stages of the collaborative research process who are just beginning to explore translational research questions.

Examples of broad research topics that might be the focus of translational research include:

- Studies of cognitive, attentional, emotional, and/or motivational processes in attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and how they relate to functional impairments and are affected by treatment;
- Research devoted to understanding the nature of specific functional deficits in mental, alcohol and drug use disorders (e.g., deficits in attention, memory, emotion-regulation, social interactions and relationships, and development of targeted interventions for rehabilitation and relapse prevention;

- Studies in cultural factors involved in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, and delivery of services in mental disorders, including drug abuse and addiction;
- Investigations of genetic or proteomic factors as part of an integrated, multi disciplinary approach to behavioral, cognitive, or emotional characteristics that are affected in mental illness, alcohol, or drug use disorders; and
- Research to identify and validate endophenotypic behaviors, cognitive components, or emotional expressions as unique to a particular mental, alcohol, or drug use disorders.

For more information see
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-06-355.html>.

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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.

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