
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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BUDGET NEWS, BUDGET BLUES

On April 17, the House of Representatives provided a definition of 'budget freeze' for the FY 1986 authorization of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Faced with an amendment proposed by Rep. Robert Walker (R-PA) to simply freeze the FY 1986 authorization at the FY 1985 levels, House Science and Technology Committee Chairman Don Fuqua (D-FL) offered an amendment that froze the total for NSF in FY 1986 at the \$1.5 billion level of FY 1985, but allowed the Congress to rearrange the dollar amounts for specific directorates within NSF. The House accepted Fuqua's substitute amendment by a vote of 407-4 and then passed the amended bill (H.R. 1210) by voice vote.

The result of this 'freeze' is to reduce the \$20 million increase in the President's proposed FY 1986 NSF budget for the Biological, Behavioral and Social Science Directorate (BBS) to \$7 million. This plan provides a 3% increase over FY 1985 for BBS, compared to a 7% increase for Engineering, and a 2% increase for both Mathematics and Physical Sciences (MPS) and Astronomical, Atmospheric, Earth and Ocean Sciences (AAEO). The actual distribution of the increase among the programs in BBS will be up to the Foundation. The Science and Engineering Education Directorate was authorized \$50.5 million in new funds plus a carry-over from FY 1985 of \$31.5 million. The Ethics and Values in Science and Technology (EVIST) program was eliminated

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Risa I. Palm, *President*

David Jenness, *Executive Director*

as a separate program, but the Committee set a floor of \$1 million to be spent on such studies in the other research directorates of the foundation.

An FY 1986 NSF authorization bill was also reported out of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, chaired by Sen. John Danforth (R-MO), on April 15. This bill maintains the 4.4% increase for NSF in the President's original budget presentation. The Commerce Committee is still disputing jurisdiction over NSF with the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, which is expected to report its own bill after its NSF hearings on April 30.

In other budget news, the compromise budget package agreed to by the President and the Senate Republican leadership assumes a level for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of 5,500 grants during FY 1986. The agreement calls this a reduction from the appropriated FY 1985 level of 6,500 grants. Thus, we can assume that the administration is backing off from its intention to fund only 5,000 grants in FY 1985. Senator Lowell Weicker (R-CT), chairman of the Subcommittee that oversees NIH appropriations, has already announced his opposition to the compromise on NIH funding for FY 1986.

The next step in the budget battle will occur the week of April 22, when the Senate takes up the compromise package in a debate expected to last two weeks. The House Budget Committee has yet to be heard from and is awaiting the outcome of the Senate debate before acting.

AFTER UNESCO WITHDRAWAL: U.S. ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE UNDEFINED

Since the withdrawal of the United States from UNESCO at the end of 1984, the status of official U.S. involvement in international science has yet to be determined. Despite promises to the scientific community that international science programs would continue to be supported, the federal government has not made a firm financial commitment to these programs, and has in fact significantly reduced its earlier budget proposals.

COSSA, along with other groups in the scientific community, has been closely watching developments in this area. With the American Psychological Association (APA), COSSA submitted questions to be asked of Assistant Secretary of State Gregory Newell in hearings on the Department of State authorization bill. Newell testified on March 12 before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Operations, chaired by Rep. Daniel Mica (D-FL). The questions covered issues such as maintenance of the State Department's commitment to supporting international scientific cooperation, the role of the U.S. National Commission on UNESCO, and the mechanisms by which funds for "UNESCO-like" activities will be secured and disbursed. In addition to these questions, COSSA and APA submitted a statement advocating that the prorated portion of the U.S. contribution to UNESCO previously devoted to biological, behavioral and social science

continue to be made available through the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Research Council to support international cooperative research and training.

The FY 1986 State Department authorization bill was marked up on March 26 and unanimously reported out of the Mica Subcommittee without any "alternative interim funds" for international science activities previously funded by the U.S. through UNESCO. The Subcommittee did, however, approve \$250,000 for the operation of a National Commission on Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Cooperation. It is not clear whether this is a new name for the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO or an entirely different body. At the markup, both Chairman Mica and Ranking Member Olympia Snowe (R-ME) promised to include strong report language expressing their frustration with the State Department. The report states:

It is clear from the discrepancy between the Department's commitment and its actual [budget] submission that the executive branch reneged on its commitment. The Committee feels that it has not been dealt with in good faith on this issue. This situation undermines the Committee's confidence in the Department's representatives who testified before the Committee. The Committee hopes that the Department will live up to its commitment with respect to funding these programs.

COSSA and APA have also written to NSF Director Erich Bloch with regard to the proposed reduction of the Foundation's contribution to the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) from \$800,000 in FY 1985 to \$400,000 in FY 1986. Through the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the NSF contribution provides for operation of the various U.S. national committees of the ICSU member unions. This makes possible the direct and indirect involvement of thousands of U.S. scientists in international science activities. Despite the fact that ICSU has not been particularly receptive to social science organizations, it serves a valuable and irreplaceable function.

PRESIDENTIAL YOUNG INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM HALVED FOR 1986

The Presidential Young Investigator Program, begun by the administration two years ago to deter high-quality science and engineering faculty from moving to jobs in industry, has been cut in half for 1986. National Science Foundation (NSF) Director Erich Bloch offered "priorities" as the explanation for the reduction. The program is administered by the Foundation, and any U.S. institution granting doctorates in at least one of the fields supported by NSF is eligible to participate. In addition to cutting the program from 200 to 100 awards, the announcement for next year's competition includes the provision that "[a]t least half of these awards will be made in engineering fields." When asked about this provision, Michael M. Frodyma, Director of the Postdoctoral Fellowships Program at NSF, explained that faculty shortages are most severe in this area.

Although the social and behavioral sciences were excluded from the original program announcement for 1984, the 1985 announcement stated, "Those nominated may conduct research in any branch of science and engineering normally supported by NSF." However, it went on to say that emphasis will be given to the mathematical, physical, and biological sciences and engineering, "where there are substantial needs for faculty development." This emphasis is also included in the most recent announcement for 1986 awards. Of the 200 Presidential Young Investigator Awards made for 1985, only five were given to social and behavioral scientists -- three psychologists, one economist, and one anthropologist.

Nominations for the Presidential Young Investigator Awards may be made by any science or engineering department in an eligible institution. Two categories of nominations may be made: 1) faculty awards, for scientists and engineers who have received or are about to receive doctoral degrees and whose institutions have appointed or plan to appoint them to tenure track faculty positions, and 2) prefaculty awards, for graduate students nearing their doctoral degrees, postdoctoral students, or doctoral recipients without faculty affiliation. In both categories, nominees must have received their doctorates after January 1, 1982; those who received their Ph.D.'s in 1981 or 1980 and have had at least one or two years, respectively, of full-time industrial employment are also eligible. The minimum award is \$25,000 annually for five years, with up to \$37,500 to match contributions from industry, for a maximum of \$100,000 per year.

Inquiries about the Presidential Young Investigator Program should be directed to the Presidential Young Investigator Awards, National Science Foundation, 1800 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20550 (202/357-7536).

COSSA RESEARCH GUIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

The Advisory Committee for the COSSA Research Guide held its first meeting on April 4 in Washington. The group was appointed to advise the COSSA staff on the content of the planned volume which will be a comprehensive guide to federal research support for the social and behavioral sciences. (See Update, January 11, 1985.)

Members of the Advisory Committee are Stephen G. Brush, Institute for Physical Science and Technology, University of Maryland; Samuel Gammon, Executive Director, American Historical Association; Frances Degen Horowitz, Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Kansas; Thomas E. Mann, Executive Director, American Political Science Association; Roberta Balstad Miller, Director, Division of Social and Economic Science, National Science Foundation; David Sills, Executive Associate, Social Science Research Council; Lawrence Rhoades, Assistant Chief, Research Planning and Evaluation, National Institute of Mental Health; Howard Schuman, Director, Survey Research Center, Ann Arbor; and David Jenness, Executive Director, COSSA.

FEDERAL RESEARCH SUPPORT: INSIDE NICHD

With this issue of Update, we begin a series of occasional articles aimed at providing an interpretive, in-depth look at certain federal agencies or programs of particular significance for the social and behavioral sciences. That significance may have to do with the nature of their work, the level of support for research, or their location or organization. In this case, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, support for the social and behavioral sciences constitutes only a small portion of the total research portfolio of the agency, but the actual dollar figure is impressive.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is a significant source of research support for social and behavioral scientists. If NIH budget office estimates are accurate, NICHD will spend approximately \$35.5 million on social and behavioral science research in FY 1985. That figure does not include individual and institutional training awards or research and development contracts. Because of the amount of support available for research in a wide range of fields and disciplines, the Update will provide a three-part series focusing on NICHD -- its organization, management issues, and opportunities provided through its extramural research program.

Mission. NICHD conducts and supports research in the reproductive, developmental and behavioral processes that determine the health of children, adults, families, and populations. NICHD administers a multidisciplinary program of research, research training and public information. The Institute has four major components: the Center for Population Research and the Center for Research for Mothers and Children, both extramural programs supporting research through grants and contracts; the Intramural Research Program; and the Epidemiology and Biometry Research Program. Approximately 80% of NICHD's budget is allocated to extramural research and research training. The majority of awards are Research Project Grants.

Scientific Management. Grant proposals to NICHD are submitted through the NIH Division of Research Grants where they are assigned to an appropriate study section for review. Approved proposals then go to the National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council for review and recommendations. The Council meets three times a year to review applications and discuss matters of agency policy and direction. This Council is unique among NIH advisory councils in that its membership includes three behavioral scientists and one social scientist. Most NIH advisory bodies have little or no representation from these disciplines.

The directorship of NICHD is currently vacant. Deputy Director Duane Alexander is serving as Acting Director of the

Institute while an NIH search committee considers candidates for the top post. The selection of Dr. Alexander for the position is viewed as a strong possibility. His candidacy is highly regarded by NICHD staff and he is known for his strong support of the social and behavioral sciences.

Review Procedures. In FY 1984 NICHD began a two-year experiment in normalizing the raw priority scores assigned by the study sections reviewing research grant applications. A phenomenon that has long been noted by NICHD staff and the relevant scientific community is that study sections composed primarily of social/behavioral scientists tended to review applications severely, often declaring them 'unfundable' because of methodological weaknesses or failure by the applicants to provide a tight theoretical context. The study section reviewing most projects for the Demographic and Behavioral Science Branch in the Center for Population Research disapproved more than 50% of its proposals. Many observers have believed that largely biomedical study sections tended to give relatively more weight to the intrinsic interest of the chosen topic, as opposed to the research design. Occasionally, a tendency toward ratings by social/behavioral science study sections has been noted, where an assessment of supposed procedural flaws or weaknesses resulted in many applications rated 'fundable' but given low priority scores.

To investigate this possible inequity, NICHD devised a method of ranking priority scores by percentiling the array of scores and funding projects falling at a stated percentile rather than specific raw scores. Based on the first year's experience, it has been determined that the majority of research projects were fundable no matter which ranking system was used. (One effect of the ratings experiment was to alter the behavior of the study sections.) In the case of the Social Sciences and Population Study Section, however, 5 projects were funded in FY 1984 using percentiling that would not have been funded using raw scores.

Both ranking systems allow for High Program Relevance (HPR) designations, allowing program staff or the Advisory Council to fund some projects out of rank order if the project addresses an area of specific agency interest (i.e., in response to a request for applications) or shows particular promise. Approximately five percent of the program budget is available for funding projects in this category.

In the next issue of Update we will focus on the Center for Population Research and its Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch.

* * *

The "Sources of Research Support" which follows describes a current request for applications from the Human Learning and Behavior Branch of NICHD. That Branch will be covered in detail in the May 17th issue.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

Human Learning and Behavior Branch
(National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

The Human Learning and Behavior Branch (HLB), located in the Center for Research for Mothers and Children of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), supports research that seeks to maximize child development. A new research area of the Branch, behavioral pediatrics, focuses on applying principles of human learning to health and illness behaviors of children, as well as the behaviors of adults significant in affecting the child's health environment. A part of this research effort seeks to determine the role of behavioral factors in the etiology of childhood injuries and their prevention. The HLB Branch has issued a Request for Applications (RFA) which invites proposals for research on childhood injuries and injury prevention. Of particular interest are studies that identify and measure observable behaviors of parents and children that are precursors of injury or injury avoidance. Also relevant are observational studies of modifiable environmental conditions; the development of experimental models that explain the origins and continuation of both risk-taking and injury avoidance; and the development of generic intervention strategies.

Budget: Funding of proposals submitted in response to this RFA is contingent on the FY 1986 appropriation. It is anticipated that up to five grants will be awarded.

Funding Mechanisms: Both individual research project grants (RO1) and New Investigator Research Awards may be awarded.

Review Process: Peer review panel

Restrictions on Awards: Projects are supported from one to a maximum of five years.

Deadline: A letter of intent briefly describing the research to be submitted should be sent to the address below by May 15. Applications must be received by July 15. Applications received after the deadline may be considered as a regular research project grant application. NICHD plans to continue support of research in this area after the deadline date of this RFA.

Contact: Dr. Josephine D. Arasteh or Dr. Norman A. Krasnegor
Human Learning and Behavior Branch
NICHD, 7C18 Landow Building
7910 Woodmont Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20205
301/496-6591

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