COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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In This Issue



## WELCOME BACK! COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE RESUMES ITS BIWEEKLY PUBLICATION!

## Politics of Taxing and Spending to Dominate Pre-Election Congressional Session

Congress returns from its summer recess on September 14 for a three week sprint toward its next recess for the congressional elections in which partisan control of the House and Senate are up for grabs. In these three weeks, which coincides with the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 and the onset of FY 2011, Congress and the Administration will continue to struggle over the politics of taxing and spending, what we used to call in graduate school TPOTS (not to be confused with Tea Party).

Another appropriations season will end with few, if any, of the FY 2011 spending bills approved by the Congress. If one thing is certain, in this uncertain period of American politics, there will be a Continuing Resolution (CR) that will fund government programs and agencies come October 1, when FY 2011 begins. How many programs and agencies the CR will cover and how long the initial one will last is unclear, but the likelihood that it will cover all agencies and programs is high, since none of the spending bills have gone to the Senate floor and only two have passed the House. Some are predicting that the first CR will go through mid-November, which will allow the presumed post-election, lame-duck congressional session to take a shot at approving these bills, most likely using the Omnibus solution, putting them all in one large legislative package.

Also part of this discussion will be the fate of the tax cuts promulgated by the Bush Administration in 2001 and 2003. In a delicious bit of legislative maneuvering to make them more palatable for the lawmakers and public of that era, the tax cuts have a sunset provision that has them expiring at the end of 2010. President Obama has indicated a willingness to extend most of them cuts, with the exception of the reduction for the wealthy. The Republicans and some Democrats have argued that increasing taxes, even those on the wealthy, is not good policy in general and certainly not in the middle of the Greatest Economic Crisis Since the Depression. This argument will go on.

On the non-taxing and spending front, the Congress is in the midst of reauthorizing the America COMPETES Act, which includes the authorities for programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and is the key piece of legislation affecting the nation's science and technology programs, excluding the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, NASA and the Department of Agriculture. The House, after much difficulty passed its version in late May (see Update, June 9, 2010). The Senate version cleared the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on July 22, but has not gone to the Senate floor yet. Since a bipartisan consensus appears to exist for this legislation, it will get done at some point, but again the short time frame may push its completion to after the election.

## Key Science Nominations Continue to Await Confirmation

Another key situation for the coming months is the continuing delay in getting those nominated by the President for positions in his administration confirmed by the Senate. President Obama nominated Subra Suresh to lead the NSF on June 3 (see Update, June 14, 2010). Presumably this is not a controversial nomination, yet Suresh has not been confirmed, although he is scheduled for a vote in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on September 15. Cora Marrett's nomination as NSF's Deputy Director, made on August 6, will probably have to wait a while.

The President nominated Carl Wieman as the Associate Director for Science at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on March 24. Wieman's nomination cleared the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on June 9. The Senate has yet to confirm him.

On April 26, the President nominated Catherine Woteki to become the next Under Secretary of Agriculture, for Research, Education and Economics. Her nomination has not been acted on by the Senate. Jack Buckely was nominated as Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics on July 9. He also waits.

In the meantime, Jack Lew, nominated to replace Peter Orszag as head of the Office of Management and Budget, will have his confirmation hearing before both the Senate Budget Committee and the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee on September 16. Christina Romer has resigned as head of the President's Council of Economic Advisers to return to the University of California, Berkeley. Austan Goolsbee, economist from the University of Chicago, already serving on the Council, negating the need to get him confirmed again, will replace Romer.

## NIH Announces New Appointments

Unlike NSF, most leadership positions at the National Institutes of Health do not require Senate confirmation. Thus, the following take effect immediately.

**Tabak Named NIH Principal Deputy Director**

Tabak

On August 19, Lawrence A. Tabak was named by National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins as principal deputy director of the NIH. Tabak assumes the position held by Raynard Kington who served as NIH deputy director since 2003, as well as acting NIH Director from October 2008 to August 2009. Kington left the NIH to become the president of Grinnell College in Iowa. Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research since 2000, Tabek served as acting NIH deputy director in 2009 and most recently as the acting director of the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiative.

Tabak came to NIH from the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Rochester, where he was the senior associate dean for research, director of the Center for Oral Biology, professor of dentistry, and professor of biochemistry and biophysics. He maintains an active research lab within the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, where his major research focus has been on the biosynthesis and function of mucin-glycoproteins, molecules that are heavily decorated with sugars and help form the coating that protects the delicate inner soft (mucosal) tissues of the body.

He received his undergraduate degree from City College of the City University of New York, his D.D.S. from Columbia University, and both a Ph.D. and certificate of proficiency in endodontics from the University of Buffalo. A former NIH MERIT recipient, Tabak is also a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 2007 Tabak spoke at the COSSA Annual Meeting.

**Sally Rockey Appointed Director of the Office of Extramural Research**

On August 15, **Sally J. Rockey**, was appointed by Collins as the agency's Deputy Director for Extramural Research (DDER). Rockey had been serving in an Acting capacity since the fall of 2008. She joined the NIH as Deputy Director of the Office of Extramural Research (OER) in 2005. Rockey has spent the majority of her career in the area of research administration, grants management, and Information Technology.

OER serves as the focal point for policies and guidelines for extramural research administration within NIH. Rockey also served as Acting Director of the Office of Research Information Systems in OER where she oversaw the eRA (electronic research administration) and OER reporting activities. In addition, she served as the NIH Agency Extramural Research Integrity Officer managing research misconduct issues for NIH extramural programs and directed the OER Office of Planning and Communications. She began her career in the US Department of Agriculture's extramural research arm, the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), as a program officer for entomological grant programs. She later became Deputy Administrator for the Competitive Research Grants and Award Management Unit where oversaw extramural competitive research, education and extension portfolio within CSREES as well as oversaw the financial and administrative management of all CSREES grants and agreements. As CSREES's Chief Information Officer, Rockey worked to align state-of-the-art information technologies with the goals and objectives of CSREES.

Rockey is an insect physiologist by training. She received her Ph.D. in Entomology (1985) from The Ohio State University and held a post doctoral appointment at the University of Wisconsin.

**James M. Anderson Named Director of DPCPSI**

Earlier on August 9, Collins announced the appointment of James M. Anderson as the Director of the NIH Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI). Anderson is expected to begin this month. Since 2002 Anderson has been the Professor and Chair of the Department of Cell and Molecular Physiology in the School of Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). Prior to going to UNC-CH, he was Professor of Medicine and Cell Biology and Chief of the Section of Digestive Diseases at the Yale School of Medicine.

DPCPSI's mission includes identifying emerging scientific opportunities, rising public health challenges, and scientific knowledge gaps that merit further research. The Division plans and implements trans-NIH initiatives "supported by the Common Fund and coordinates research related to AIDS, behavioral and social sciences, women's health, and disease prevention."

## Rachel Croson Joins NSF as SES Division Director

Rachel Croson, Professor of Economics, and Organizations, Strategy and International Management at the University of Texas at Dallas, has joined the National Science Foundation (NSF) as the Director of the Social and Economic Sciences Division of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate. Croson replaces Harold Clarke, a political scientist, who left NSF in December 2009, to return to the University of Texas at Dallas. Frank Scioli served as Acting Division Director since Clarke's departure. This position does not need Senate confirmation.

At UT Dallas Croson also directs The Negotiations Center. She has taught at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Pittsburgh. She had a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Arizona's Economic Science Laboratory.

She was the recipient of a NSF Graduate Fellowship and subsequent grants from NSF as well as receiving funding for her research from the Aspen Institute, the Ford Motor Company and General Motors. Croson is currently on the editorial board of the *American Economic Review* and is an Associate Editor of *Experimental Economics*, *Judgment and Decision Making*, *Management Science* and the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, where she co-edited a special issue on Trust and Institutions. Croson has authored numerous articles on game theory, experimental economics, negotiations, and public goods.

She has a B.A. in Economics and the Philosophy of Science from the University of Pennsylvania and an A.M. and Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard.

## SBE Asks Community for Help in Defining Future Research

In a Dear Colleague letter, Myron Gutmann, Assistant Director for the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), requests individuals and groups to contribute white papers outlining grand research challenges in these sciences. The papers are due on September 30, 2010.

AS Gutmann notes: "At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the social, behavioral, and economic sciences face extraordinary opportunities to address next-generation research challenges. The landscape is vast and complex, stretching across temporal and spatial dimensions and multiple levels of analysis -- from studying the human brain to implications of decision making in a dynamic and fragmented yet interconnected world. As we look forward 10 or even 20 years, the Directorate for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences of the

National Science Foundation (NSF/SBE) seeks to frame innovative research for the year 2020 and beyond that enhances fundamental knowledge and benefits society in many ways."

The request is part of a process that will help SBE make plans to support future research. Other activities will include a report by the Directorate's Advisory Committee about the grand challenges facing the SBE sciences over the next decade and recommendations from the Directorate's staff. At its meeting on September 7 and 8, the Advisory Committee led by Michael Goodchild of the University of California, Santa Barbara moved toward a preliminary outline of their report.

According to Gutmann, the insights resulting from this process are: "They will inform the substance of future research, the capacities to pursue that research, and the infrastructure to enable investigations that will be increasingly interdisciplinary and international and will involve multiple perspectives and intellectual frameworks, differing scales and contexts, and diverse approaches and methodologies."

The contributed white papers will also help to advance SBE's mission to study human characteristics and human behaviors in its Social and Economic Sciences and Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences divisions, as well as to be the nation's resource for understanding the structure and development of science through its Science Resources Statistics division.

These white papers must:

*****Explain the challenge question, capability to be created, or scientific strategy; provide context in terms of recent research results and standing questions in the field; suggest the range of disciplines that may contribute, and indicate the implications for future research within and across disciplines.

*****Limit the white paper to 2,000 words with a 200-word maximum abstract and up to three references to relevant readings.

*****Include a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike license found at http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses so that the material may be made widely available through the web.

*****Arrive by September 30, 2010 in a Microsoft Word-compatible format submitted to: http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/sbe_2020.

NSF/SBE plans to use these contributions over the next year to assist in formulating plans that will guide its strategic scientific thinking. Consequently, all abstracts and papers will be accessible through the SBE 2020 website. Authors who do not wish to have their papers made available through the website may restrict access to NSF staff. However, the author(s), title, and abstract will be included in the publicly accessible body of work.

## Data Problems in Doctoral Survey Reported by NSF

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS) and its contractor, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, have uncovered a problem in data on individuals who reported more than one race to the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) in 2003 and 2006. The SRS and NORC erroneously classified multiple-race individuals in SDR data files as having only one of the races they had reported. The effect was to overestimate the number of blacks, Asians, and American Indians, and to underestimate the number of multi-race individuals. SRS and NORC deeply regret this error.

This also affects data in a number of previously released SRS publications to varying degrees. Because the SDR is a component of the Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System (SESTAT), 2003 and 2006 SESTAT records for doctoral scientists and engineers derived from the SDR are also affected.

It is important to note that this error does not affect variables other than race and ethnicity in the SDR and SESTAT, and the effect of the race error in SESTAT is limited to those holding a U.S. doctorate in a science or engineering field.

NORC is correcting the raceand ethnicity data for the 2003 and 2006 SDR. SRS will release the corrected SDR and SESTAT data files as quickly as possible and will also correct its affected publications. Revised publications, with corrections noted, will be available at www.nsf.gov/statistics/. SRS will inform the community of progress in remedying the problem.

SRS and NORC are instituting additional procedures to ensure that such a problem does not occur in the future. For questions please contact srsweb@nsf.gov.

Update thanks Lynda Carlson and Mary Frase of NSF's SRS Division for the information contained in this article.

## Bob Hauser Appointed Interim Director of DBASSE

Robert Hauser, Vilas Research Professor of Sociology andDirector of the Center for Demography of Health and Aging at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been appointed Interim Executive Director of the National Academies' Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE). Hauser replaces Michael Feuer, who left DBASSE at the end of August to become the Dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the George Washington University. Connie Citro, Executive Director of the Committee on National Statistics, will assist Hauser.

He has led the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) since 1980, beginning his work on the study in 1969 with William Sewell. The WLS began as a study of the transition from high school to college or the work force. It has become a multi-disciplinary study of the life course and aging. In recent years, Hauser has combined work on the WLS with studies of trends and differentials in educational attainment, the role of achievement testing in American society, and the measurement of adult literacy.

Hauser is a member of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). He has participated on numerous NAS Committees, including two that reviewed the 2000 Census, and others that produced the reports, *Scientific Research in Education*, *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*, and *Measuring Literacy: High Stakes Testing for Adults*.

He is a Fellow of the AAAS, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Education, the American Educational Research Association, the American Statistical Association, and the Gerontological Society of America. He has also been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.

Hauser has a B.A., Economics from the University of Chicago and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Sociology from the University of Michigan.

Over the coming year the Academies expect to conduct a national search to find a non-acting DBASSE director.

# APSA Meeting: Nobel Winner Ostrom Gives Plenary Address, Brady Speaks of the Art of Political Science

On September 2, Elinor Ostrom, 2009 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics and Professor of Political Science at Indiana University and Arizona State, had a busy day. The former President of the American Political Science Association (APSA) gave a talk at the National Science Foundation at mid-day and then provided the opening plenary address at the APSA annual meeting held in Washington, DC.

Ostrom's APSA talk focused on the "Theory of Collective Action from a Multiple Methods Perspective." Once again she examined how people act for a common purpose in social-ecological systems. Based on her extensive field work and laboratory experiments, Ostrom discussed norms, social context, trust and reciprocity, sanctions, the heterogeneity of participants, information availability, social capital, and complexity as important variables affecting whether attaining agreement on the production and protection of public goods is possible.

In one example, she suggested keeping local users out of forests is not a panacea, because these are the people who have the most information and largest interest in how that particular ecosystem operates. In another, Ostrom noted that simplification of metropolitan governments has not worked, because of the complexity of jurisdictions with their own particular interests.

In his presidential address, Henry Brady of the University of California, Berkeley, spoke of the "Art of Political Science," using spatial representations to illustrate the political cleavages that have pervaded and continue to pervade political systems. He described how spatial models and scaling methods have improved the capacity of political scientists to describe factions, so important to Madison in Federalist #10, realignments that have intrigued political historians and electoral behavior researchers, and the divisions that have dominated political life throughout history, but more specifically in contemporary American politics. One such division Brady portrayed as a key factor of recent American politics involved moral vs. economic conservatism. He also demonstrated that from 1972-82 economic cleavages dominated American politics, while since 1992 the social-moral dimension has become just as important.

### America's Religious Diversity and Tolerance

That moral dimension was the subject of a panel that discussed a new book by Robert Putnam of Harvard University and a former APSA President, and David Campbell of Notre Dame, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us.* Panel participants included E.J.Dionne, syndicated columnist from the Brookings Institution, William Galston of the University of Maryland, Ray Suarez from the PBS Newshour, and Nancy Ammerman, a sociologist from Boston University.

The bookis based on two of the most comprehensive surveys ever conducted on religion and public life in America and includes a dozen in-depth profiles of diverse congregations across many religions. According to Putnam and Campbell the recent American past has produced three religious and cultural shocks, the 1960s secularist counter-culture, which then brought on the reaction that led to the rise of the religious right and the linking of politics and religion, followed by a counter-reaction, particularly among the young, that has led to a large abandonment of organized religion.

On the one hand this had led to polarization among religious conservatives and secular liberals, but another phenomenon of increasing interfaith marriages and friendships has led to greater tolerance and fluidity in religious affiliation. The panelists all praised the book, but some wondered about the recent rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric that challenges the tolerance hypothesis, while others worried about the decrease in understanding of the theological fundamentals of religious practice.

In addition to these sessions, there were hundreds of other panels and presentations across the four days of the meeting, including a workshop of political science department chairs. COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver participated in that one along with American University President Neil Kerwin and Harvard's Graduate School Dean Theda Skocpol. Silver discussed last year's attack on political science by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) and noted that the current political climate could possibly see a repetition in the year to come.

## APA Releases Report on Psychology in STEM

The American Psychological Association (APA) has released a report, *Psychology as a Core Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Discipline*. Produced by a Task Force led by John Dovidio of Yale University, the report is a response to the rather inconsistent view of whether the social and behavioral sciences are part of the enormous concern with improving STEM education among America's students. At NSF they are supposed to be included as noted in the House of Representatives' version of the America COMPETES bill, but in other instances their inclusion is unclear, as exemplified by the National Academies' *A Framework for Science Educatio*n (see Update, July 26, 2010).

The APA report reviews the current status of psychology as a STEM discipline, and finds that there is inconsistent recognition of it as a core STEM discipline. The Task Force argues for psychology's inclusion because of its "direct scientific and technological innovations, as well as it indirect contributions to education and learning in science and technology."

Including psychology within STEM, according to the report, would "include a critical component - the human being - within scientific and technological solutions to pressing questions of national interest." It would also acknowledge the past successes of psychological science on issues of public health, public safety, education and learning, and national security. Additionally, including psychology in STEM would "capitalize on a large and diverse source of human talent that can contribute directly to national technological and scientific achievements."

For the full report go to: http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/stem-discipline.aspx

## Retirement Planning and Social Security Examined at Forum

With the President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform hard at work to produce its report by December 1, 2010, which is expected to include recommendations concerning Social Security and Medicare, the Retirement Research Consortium held its 12th Annual Conference in Washington, DC on August 5 and 6.

The Consortium, consisting of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), the University of Michigan Retirement Research Center, and the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, titled its session "Retirement, Planning, and Social Security in Interesting Times."

David Rust, the Social Security Administration's Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy, welcomed the crowd by reminding everyone that this is the 75th Anniversary of the Social Security and Disability Insurance program. He, as did many of the other speakers, paid tribute to Tom Juster, University of Michigan economist, who died in July at 83. Among his many accomplishments, including his activity on behalf of COSSA in its early days, Juster was the founding director of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), which along with the Panel Study on Income Dynamics (PSID), and the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), served as the data source for many of the papers presented at the conference. The National Institute on Aging provides the funding for the HRS. The National Science Foundation has provided core support for the PSID for many years. The Census Bureau funds SIPP.

Donald Marron, Director of the Urban Institute's Tax Policy Center delivered a plenary talk reflecting on fiscal policy. He suggested that the current economic crisis will "take a long time to heal." There is a lot of uncertainty facing economic policymakers, he noted. We are unsure about the impact of the implementation of the two major legislative achievements of the Obama Administration - healthcare reform and financial services reform. In addition, Marron indicated that the failure of policymakers to address climate change and immigration add to the uncertainty.

Regarding fiscal policy, Marron remarked that the fate of the Bush tax cuts, due to expire at the end of 2010, the need for another patch for the Alternative Minimum Tax to ensure that middle class Americans do not get caught in its net, and what to do about the estate tax, now expired, but set to return to pre-Bush levels in 2011, are all part of the unresolved political and economic situation. Add to all this a national debt that is growing faster than the economy and the situation, according to Marron, becomes "scary."

He has some hope for the Fiscal Commission and he expects them to recommend raising the retirement age. Above all, Marron argued that the country and its policymakers must agree on a vision of where we want to go, impose budget constraints, and restore a political process that works. There needs to be a national discussion on how big a government, with regard to federal spending, the country wants, and it needs to figure out the revenue necessary to get there, he concluded.

**How Have Americans Fared in the Current Economic Crisis?**

On the panel discussing how older Americans have fared in the current financial crisis, many of the conclusions mirrored those provided by Michael Hurd of the RAND Corporation at a congressional seminar presented by the Population Association of America and COSSA in July (see Update, July 12, 2010). Gary Burtless, presented a paper he wrote with his Brookings Institution colleague Barry Bosworth, that indicated the effects of a lousy job market and lousy asset returns were having interesting impacts on retirement decisions. The statistically significant results showed no impact of unemployment on retirement for men 55-59; a 1.5 percent impact on men 60-64; and a three percent increase for men 65-69. The declining asset problem also had no impact on retirement decisions. For women, unemployment had no effect and asset declines had small effects, according to Burtless and Bosworth. In commenting on the paper, John Karl Scholz of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, noted that "retirement is a fluid, dynamic concept," affected by perceptions of health and longitudinal risk, and the joint retirement decisions of working couples. In addition, Scholz suggested that those with Direct Benefit pensions, albeit a shrinking number, are not influenced by economic conditions.

In a paper examining the effect of cognitive ability on the well-being of older Americans, Matthew Shapiro of the University of Michigan, noted the importance of "fluid intelligence" and its correlation with wealth. Fluid intelligence is the capacity to think logically and solve problems in novel situations, independent of acquired knowledge. It allows people to analyze novel problems, identify patterns and relationships that underpin these problems, and try to solve them using logic. One of the solutions in the current economic crisis was to reduce consumption. According to Shapiro, those in financial distress cut back by about four percent. He also found some evidence that people would be willing to work up to 1.5 years longer than they previously expected.

**The Housing Crisis and the Elderly**

Examining housing markets, Anthony Webb of Boston College, discussed the increases in people in arrears and foreclosures. He suggested that older folks were somewhat immune to these calamities, because many had already paid off their mortgages. At the same time, they were impacted by the fact that, according to Webb's data, 42 percent of them were making intergenerational transfers to help family members with housing costs. Frank Stafford, director of the PSID, commented that we should remember that there is a geospatial story to the housing crisis, even though for many across the country there has been a significant erosion of home equity gains.

Daniel Silverman of the University of Michigan reinforced Shapiro's conclusions about the importance of cognitive ability in the elderly by looking at the ability to make choices to buy Medigap Insurance to cover shortfalls in Medicare's protections, while Kathleen McGarry of UCLA, discussed the same conclusions with regard to deciding which plans to buy for Medicare Part D, the prescription drug coverage. She suggested the utilization of a "Health Care Manager" for older people akin to a Retirement Planning Manager.

David Wise of Harvard and the head of the NBER Retirement Research Center warned everyone about the destructive asset wealth costs of major health events. Bosworth wondered given insurance protections why people seem to lose so much.

David Weir of the University of Michigan and director of the HRS and Angela Duckworth of the University of Pennsylvania presented the results of their exploration of the role of personality on lifetime earnings and retirement wealth. Richard Johnson of the Urban Institute was skeptical of this line of inquiry suggesting that personality traits can change with age and that occupation could trump personality.

For more information and access to the papers presented at the conference go to: [http://www.mrrc.isr.umich.edu/news/events/](http://www.mrrc.isr.umich.edu/news/events/).

## NSF Will Support Educational Research Projects on STEM Education for Minority Groups

As part of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program, the program will accept from alliance member institutions proposals for educational research projects focused on baccalaureate attainment in STEM by African-Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Native Pacific Islanders. In addition, LSAMP will also accept educational research proposals which address other emerging topics in STEM education and learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels. **Proposals are due on October 8, 2010.**

According to NSF, LSAMP educational research projects should be based on a research design that incorporates appropriate and proven methodologies and strategies to: (1) identify the research questions; (2) implement the collection and analysis of data; and (3) interpret the resulting measures and findings generated by the study. The results should lead to enhanced understanding of issues such as (but not limited to):

> *factors that facilitate (or inhibit) increased minority undergraduate access to STEM careers as well as increased access of traditionally underrepresented groups to STEM graduate study at department and/or institutional levels;
>
> *factors, including curriculum development, that impact success in STEM learning and achievement; and
>
> *studies of what motivates choice of, or retention in, STEM careers for underrepresented minority populations.

The proposal must address the usefulness of the anticipated outcomes to the body of knowledge in transforming student learning, transforming recruitment and retention strategies and practices in STEM education at critical educational junctures as well as the STEM workforce.

For example: LSAMP educational research studies should reflect explicit cognizance of the broad variety of institutions of higher education involved and should address the unique challenges and opportunities posed by that variety. Outcomes of the proposed research should be developed with the intent to provide a framework to inform the education community, including faculty and teachers, administrators, policymakers, parents and the public. It is anticipated that these cooperative efforts will also guide the future development of learning experiences as well as foster the retention and academic success of diverse students in STEM.

NSF will support education research projects for up to $200,000 for up to 24 months. Eligible institutions may submit no more than one proposal per competition. For more information, please go to: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10522/nsf10522.htm.

## NSF Seeks Nominations for Waterman Award for Young Researchers

The National Science Foundation (NSF) seeks nominations for the 2011 Alan T. Waterman Award. This award recognizes talent, creativity, and influence of a singular young researcher. Established in 1975 to commemorate the Foundation's first Director, the Waterman Award is NSF's highest honor for researchers under the age of 36.

The Foundation accepts nominees from any field of science or engineering that NSF supports. The award recipient will receive a medal and an invitation to the formal awards ceremony in Washington, DC. In addition, the recipient will receive a grant of $500,000 over a three-year period for scientific research or advanced study in any field of science or engineering supported by the National Science Foundation, at any institution of the recipient's choice.

Two social scientists have won the Waterman Award: economist Larry Summers, then at Harvard, now a member of President Obama's economic team and a former Secretary of the Treasury; and sociologist Dalton Conley, now Senior Vice Provost and Dean for the Social Sciences, as well as University Professor at New York University.

The eligibility and selection criteria are:

* Candidates must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. They must be 35 years of age or younger or not more than 7 years beyond receipt of the Ph.D. degree by December 31 of the year in which they are nominated.

* Candidates should have demonstrated exceptional individual achievements in scientific or engineering research of sufficient quality to place them at the forefront of their peers. Criteria include originality, innovation, and significant impact on the field.

For detailed nomination information, please visit: https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/honawards.

Complete nomination packages, consisting of nominations and four letters of reference, are due by **October 30, 2010.** The nominations and letters must be received through NSF' FastLane system. Please contact the Program Manager for the Alan T. Waterman Award at waterman@nsf.gov or 703-292-8040 if you have any questions. You may also visit http://www.nsf.gov/od/waterman/waterman.jsp for more information.

## NIH Establishes Health Economics Program; Seeks Applications

The National Institutes of Health has launched an initiative, the Common Fund Health Economics program, designed to address the evolving needs of the health care sector for economic research. The initiative addresses one of the challenges accompanying the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 slowing the growth of health care costs while promoting technological innovation and ensuring access to high-value care (see Update, April 5, 2010). The goals of the Health Economic program include "fostering the collection of data that will be most useful for policy-relevant analysis; examining the economic effects of changes in incentives for consumers, providers and insurers; exploring the ways in which structure and organization on the supply side of the medical market affect health care spending and clinical outcomes; investigating the potential preventive measures to improve health and mitigate cost growth."

The implementation group is led by National Institute on Aging (NIA) director Richard Hodes and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) director Thomas Insel. Richard Suzman (Behavioral and Social Research Program, NIA) and Philip Sun-En Wang (Deputy Director, NIMH) are the working group coordinators.

By creating the program NIH recognizes that the success of efforts "to reform the American health care system depends on both improving health outcomes and reducing health care costs. Prevention is a key element of both those objectives, but not all prevention measures are cost-reducing or even health-improving." Accordingly, the NIH has issued two funding opportunity announcements (FOA).

**Economics of Prevention**

The first, **Economics of Prevention (RFA-RM-10-015),** solicits applications for research to conduct economic analyses of prevention and health. Common Fund initiatives invite investigators to develop bold, innovative, and often risky approaches to address problems that may seem intractable or to seize new opportunities that offer the potential for rapid progress. The FOA is an effort to ensure that prevention measures are targeted appropriately and implemented effectively. Consequently, the wise use of limited resources requires that the costs associated with generating those benefits are considered as well. Submitted applications should respond to four specified research areas:

1) Conduct economic evaluations of preventive interventions - including novel strategies from outside the health care system - to identify those that are most cost-effective and cost-beneficial at each stage of the life course in improving health;

2) Estimate the affects of the provisions of health care reform related to preventive services on health care costs, utilization and outcomes;

3) Model the effects of targeting prevention measures, for example, through expanded use of genetic testing , health informatics, and biomarkers for disease risks, on health costs and outcomes including how the individual and provider responses to these new tools influence such outcomes; and

4) Identify strategies that promote adoption/implementation of effective prevention measures in different settings and population groups.

The FOA states that applicants may propose statistical analysis, model building, simulation, testing of data linking, or construct measurement to address any of the areas above or to improve future demonstration programs, evaluations or trials involving prevention in health care.

**Letters of intent are due on September 28, 2010. Applications are due October 28, 2010.** To apply or for more information see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-10-015.html. For more information on the NIH Common Fund Health Economics program see: http://nihroadmap.nih.gov/healtheconomics/.

**Science of Structure**

Health care spending in the U.S. continues to rise at a pace that many analysts consider to be unsustainable. At the same time, according to the NIH relevantly little research has focused on how specific features of the structure or organization of health care delivery organizations and reimbursement systems influence how health care technologies are adopted and combined by health care providers and how they are applied or used for specific patients, and how those features could be modified to enhance efficiency. Accordingly, the agency has issued a second FOA, **Science of Structure, Organization and Practice Design in the Efficient Delivery of Effective Healthcare (RFA-RM-10-016).**

The FOA seeks research that informs: 1) the identification of specific, modifiable causes of high and increasing health care costs related to the structure, organization and production of health care; and 2) the development and refinement of interventions, practices, or policies that can address these causes while maintaining or enhancing outcomes.

Examples of research topics relevant to the FOA include:

- Compare low- and high-cost provider organizations or delivery systems to isolate the specific administrative and operational practices or structural characteristics of efficient entities that could be adopted by others to reduce costs while maintaining or improving quality.
- Explore how innovative delivery system approaches, such as the medical home or accountable care organizations, might optimally coordinate care for patients with multiple conditions (e.g. mental or addictive disorders in addition to other medical conditions) or other potentially high-cost populations and lead to lower costs while improving quality and outcomes.
- Examine the effects of specific government regulations and policies, perhaps through secondary analyses of data from regional or cross-national comparisons, on the structure and organization of heath care delivery, to isolate potential modifications in either the regulations or provider and delivery system responses to them that might enable enhanced efficiency while maintaining or enhancing quality.
- Develop and refine ideas that may lead to innovative organizational or delivery system practices or structures that may be useful in enabling organizations to optimally respond to components of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 designed to slow the growth in costs and spur improvements in health care delivery (e.g., the changing of Medicare payments including extending payment before and after discharge or the bundling of services by acute episode; chronic care models such as the patient-centered medical home; or communitywide cost management with models such as accountable care organizations).

**Letters of Intent are due on September 26, 2010. Applications are due on October 25, 2010.** For more informationor to apply see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-10-016.html.

## OppNet Releases Additional Funding Opportunity Announcement

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s Basic Behavioral and Social Sciences Opportunity Network (OppNet) is a trans-NIH initiative that provides funding for activities that build the collective body of knowledge about the nature of behavior and social systems, and that deepen the understanding of basic mechanisms of behavioral and social processes. All 24 NIH institutes and Centers that fund research and four Program Offices within the NIH Office of the Director co-fund and co-manage OppNet. Initiatives supported by OppNet invite investigators to propose innovative research that will advance a targeted domain of basic social and behavioral sciences and produce knowledge and/or tools of potential relevance to multiple domains of health- and lifecourse-related research.

**Scientific Meetings for Creating Interdisciplinary Research Teams in Basic Behavioral and Social Science Research**

OppNet has released a FOA soliciting Research Conference Grant applications for scientific meetings in an effort to build interdisciplinary research teams in basic behavioral and social science research (b-BSSR). The initiative is tailored to fill the gap in the tools available to scientists building interdisciplinary research teams that may advance targeted areas of b-BSSR and lead to the development of projects for the team in the future. It is also part of an overall vision for facilitating investigator-initiated interdisciplinary research by building capacity to advance targeted domains of basic social and behavioral science and produce knowledge and/or tools of potential relevance to multiple domains of health- and life course-related research.

The FOA is designed to promote and facilitate interdisciplinary research in basic behavioral and social science research areas that demand the integration of multiple discipline, by a team composed of investigators who, collectively, have not previously collaborated. It recognizes that a series of meetings and exchanges over time is often necessary. Accordingly, the announcement provides the opportunity for a higher level of support than a standard conference grant.

**Examples of domains within b-BSSR that are appropriate to this FOA and of interest to OppNet include, but are not limited to:**

- Integrated research to enhance understanding of how affective and cognitive processes interact;
- Development of comprehensive and conceptually focused measures of psychosocial stress;
- Integration of behavioral mechanisms with biological processes in the context of stress and behavior;
- Interdisciplinary approaches to understanding basic mechanisms involved in real-world decision making;
- Basic research on self-regulation;
- Basic behavioral endophenotypes associated with health and disease for Gene X Environment (GXE) research;
- Basic research on social environments and health;
- Reciprocal relationships between sleep and social environment;
- Biological basis of life-course behavioral and cultural impacts on health-related outcomes;
- Basic mechanisms of social stratification and health; and
- Basic mechanisms influencing behavioral maintenance.

**Letters of Intent are due on November 14, 2010. Applications are due on December 14, 2010**. For more information or to apply, see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-CA-10-017.html.

## NIGMS Seeks Research Proposals Addressing the Scientific Workforce

Part of the National Institutes General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) mission is preparing for the future by supporting the research training of the next generation of biomedical and behavioral researchers who will form the necessary teams of scientists to pursue interdisciplinary solutions. The Institute is attuned to the challenges in this area, in particular to an imbalance in representation of women and minorities in science careers.

In his FY 2011 congressional budget justification, NIGMS director Jeremy Berg stressed that "as biomedicine continues to evolve, [it] is essential to periodically go back to basics to define-clearly and functionally-the fundamental goals of research training." He pointed to the Institute's participation in an "NIH-wide effort to support social science research addressing factors that help foster women's careers in science." He also highlighted the Institute's efforts to develop a strategic plan for "research training that will garner evidence and input from the scientific community and prioritize the steps necessary to create and sustain a healthy and productive research training environment that mirrors the composition of the United States. We envision that the results of this process will be far-reaching and will help inform NIH-wide policy in this area."

NIGMS recognizes that to date, few interventions designed to improve participation for individuals from groups with low representation in the biomedical and behavioral sciences are based on theoretically grounded research. In addition, the ideas underlying these interventions have generally not been synthesized or analyzed systematically. Nor have the interventions, with a few exceptions, been subjected to rigorous research study. To address this deficit of information, the Institute has issued/reissued two Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs).

**Research to Understand and Inform Interventions that Promote the Research Careers of Students in Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences**

The first FOA, ***Research to Understand and Inform Interventions that Promote the Research Careers of Students in Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences (RFA-GM-11-004)***, seeks research proposals that test assumptions and hypotheses regarding social and behavioral factors that might inform and guide potential interventions intended to increase interest, motivation and preparedness for careers in biomedical and behavioral research, with a particular interest in those interventions specifically designed to increase the number of students from underrepresented groups entering careers in these disciplines. An expansive definition of "careers" is intended to include basic and/or clinical research in academic, governmental, and/or corporate environments. Similarly, "intervention" includes both broad programs and the cumulative effects of multiple activities as well as more narrowly specified interventions, or specific activities within a larger program.

A primary goal of the FOA is to identify principles that would inform practice. Consequently, it emphasizes that given the focus is on students from groups underrepresented in biomedical and behavioral research careers, proposed research involving non-underrepresented students should be comparative, rather than addressing non-underrepresented students exclusively. Applicants must explicitly identify the assumptions underlying the research question(s) to be studied, social science theories to be studied, and/or hypothesis to be tested. Examples of some basic types of questions that might inform this purpose include but are not limited to:

- **Individual Student Characteristics -** Which characteristics of a student (e.g., skills, preparation, attitude, motivation, self-efficacy, values, and knowledge) are more determinative in career choice? Are some characteristics more subject to intervention than others?
- **Teacher/Mentor Relationship -** What is the nature of influence of teachers/mentors or other role models?
- **Family and Environment -** With respect to the decision to enter (or remain) in a research career, what is the influence of peers, family, community, economics and job market? How can these be distinguished, measured, linked to outcomes and productively modified?
- **Institutional Factors -** What is the influence of culture of scholarship among the faculty in motivating high career aspirations in students?
- **Program-related** - What are the specific or purposeful designs of research experiences that are more effective in promoting persistence toward research careers than others, especially among underrepresented students? What are the ways, if any, that diversity programs inadvertently feed into stereotyping, stereotype threat or other psychological negative reinforcers? In what ways does a purposefully constructed program that is inclusive of all groups of students have different effects in this regard?

**Letters of Intent are due on September 15, 2010. Applications are due on October 15, 2010.** For more information and/or to apply see [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-GM-11-004.html](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-GM-11-004.html).

## Modeling the Scientific Workforce

In 2007 and 2008, NIGMS sponsored two conferences designed to explore the feasibility of computer modeling to guide policy makers in their efforts to increase the diversity of the U.S.' scientific workforce. The recommendations from those meeting led to the Institute issuing the FOA, ***Modeling the Scientific Workforce (RFA-GM-11-007)***, seeking proposals designed to develop computational models of the dynamics of the scientific workforce in the U.S. The models may be used to inform program development and management, identify questions that need additional research, and guide the collection and analysis of the data to answer these questions.

According to the Institute, advances in computational methods and system sciences, along with recent progress in workforce modeling, suggest that it is possible to build models of the scientific workforce that can inform the understanding of workforce dynamics, support development and management of interventions and training programs, and guide the collection and analysis of data necessary for program design and management. The Institute acknowledges "that computational models are one tool among many used to guide policy and process."

Data collected over the past 20 years document several trends that may have serious long-term consequences to the diversity and size of the workforce. These trends include:

- An increase in the average age of a Principal investigator (PI) of an investigator-initiated (R01) grant. Currently the average new investigator is 42 years old compared to 37 in 1980.
- A persistent disparity in education and career attainment among racial and ethnic groups. Despite a considerable body of data on outcomes, policy makers still lack a solid body of research to guide decisions on intervention strategies.
- The disparity in the percentage (approximately 50 percent) of women who make up the graduate students and postdoctoral fellows trained by NIH and the percentage of awards (approximately 25 percent) and awarded dollars (approximately 21 percent) that go to female PIs.
- Baccalaureate degree recipients from groups underrepresented in biomedical and behavioral sciences enroll in and attain graduate degrees in STEM disciplines at a proportionately lower rate (5 percent versus 10 percent) than students from non-underrepresented groups.

The dynamics underlying these patterns are not well understood and it is not clear what interventions may be successful in promoting the diversity, health, stability of the workforce. NIGMS expects that computational modeling may provide the Institute with additional tools for understanding the dynamics of the scientific workforce an for program management and development.

Examples of possible research topics include, but are not limited to, activities to:

- Develop a layered set of models that address the short-and long-term of the U.S. scientific workforce;
- Reproduce historical dynamics and trends as represented by current data;
- Reproduce the current (baseline) structure of workforce demographics, variation, and dynamics;
- Identify and test key assumptions that contribute to policy and program development;
- Identify external factors that have major effects on scientific workforce dynamics, with economic incentives and disincentives being of particular interest.
- Provide a framework for additional research on workforce development.

**Letters of Intent are due October 4, 2010. Applications are due November 4, 2010.** For more information on the FOA see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-GM-11-007.html.

The Institute recognizes that the questions and the underlying assumptions put forward in both FOAs are complex in nature and expects that their study will require multidisciplinary approaches. Therefore, collaboration among natural, behavioral and social scientists, and other appropriate experts, is considered appropriate and is strongly encouraged.

## Communicating Research Intent and Value in Applications: NIH Emphasizes Plain Language Communication

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently instituted a communication campaign to increase the awareness regarding the significance of using plain language in NIH grant applications. "It is vital that the NIH make information about the scientific projects [it] funds available to the public and Congress in a way that clearly relays the value and potential impact of the research on public health," emphasizes Sally Rockey, director of the NIH Office of Extramural Research, in a recent newsletter.

The campaign recognizes that in addition to the scientists on review panels, sections of successful application are made public through the NIH's RePorter database, a compilation of NIH funded grants. These sections include the title of the application, the abstract, the public health relevance, and information about the principal investigator.

NIH defines plain language as that which "is grammatically correct language that includes complete sentence structure and accurate word usage. Plain language is *not* unprofessional writing or a method of 'dumbing down' or 'talking down' to the reader. Writing that is clear and to the point helps improve communication and takes less time to read and understand. Clear writing tells the reader exactly what the reader needs to know without using unnecessary words or expressions. Communicating clearly is its own reward and saves time and money. It also improves reader response to messages. Using plain language avoids creating barriers that set us apart from the people with whom we are communicating."

Additionally, the agency recently posted an ***All About Grants*** podcast regarding using plain language for applications on its website. The podcasts consistof conversations with NIH staff members and is designed for investigators, fellows, students, research administrators, and others. It is an attempt by the agency to "provide insights on grant topics from those who live and breathe the information." In the podcast, Rockey explains that the agency is trying to "get that balance between scientific terms and colloquialisms or areas that might have sensitive terms in them." She pointed out that the title is the first thing that people see when they go to the RePorter website. So the title is probably the most critical to have in layman's terms or in terms that would be generally understood, she related. Rockey explained that the titles may cause the research project to be misunderstood by the public. That said, she emphasized that "most scientists do a very good job of this, but [the agency] want[s] them to pay attention to this, with the recognition that their abstract, and title, and public health relevance are going to be on the NIH's website." According to Rockey, the website is used more and more everyday as people become familiar with NIH and is a great resource.

More information about NIH's Plain Language efforts can be found at http://www.nih.gov/clearcommunication/plainlanguage.htm.

Recent podcasts topics have included: Who Receives Your Grant Application and What Do They Do With It?; Enhance Your Research Capabilities through an Independent Career Award; Training and Career Opportunities in NIH's Intramural Research Programs; Graduate Students Considering a Postdoc; Using Career Development Awards to Achieve Independence; Postdocs Thinking About Independence; Jump Starting Your Research Program for New Faculty Members; Grant Writing for New Investigators; and Considerations for Early Stage Investigators.

The agency also invites suggestions for podcast topics. To listen or read a transcript of the podcasts above see http://grants.nih.gov/podcasts/All_About_Grants/index.htm.

## National Academies' Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship Program Seeks Applicants

The Christian Mirzayan Graduate Fellowship Program of the National Academies-consisting of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National Research Council-seeks applicants for its 2011 sessions. The program is designed to engage its Fellows in the analytical process that informs U.S. science and technology policy and to help them develop basic skills essential to working or participating in science policy at the federal, state, or local levels.

The program is open to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars and those who have completed graduate studies or postdoctoral research in any social/behavioral science, medical/health discipline, physical or biological science, any field of engineering, law/business/public administration or any relevant interdisciplinary field within the last five years.

The program takes place in Washington, D.C. and is open to all U.S. and non-U.S. citizens who meet the criteria. However, non-U.S. citizens must be currently enrolled in a U.S. University and have proof of holding valid J-1 or F-1 status. There are two session dates: Winter/Spring: January 24-April 15, 2011, and Fall: August 29 through November 18, 2011. The Fellowship provides a stipend of $8,240 to offset expenses for the 12-week session.

To apply please visit www.national-academies.org/policyfellows for details on criteria, application instructions, and access to the online application and reference forms. Please note the requirement for submission of an online reference from a mentor/adviser.

The application deadline for the Winter/spring program is **October 15, 2010** and for the Fall program **May 1, 2011.** Candidates may apply to both sessions concurrently.

For more information or questions please contact: policyfellows@nas.edu.

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