NEWS SUMMARY

On Thursday, the White House hosted an event on patent reform and efforts by the Administration to address patent trolls.

Members of Congress are working with constituents in their home states this week.

Victor Dzau, M.D., chancellor for health affairs at Duke University, has been named to be the next president of the Institute of Medicine.

Tom Perriello, CEO of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, will become the State Department’s special representative for the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review -- a quadrennial strategic review similar to one completed by the Pentagon.

NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Table of Contents

AGRICULTURE
• FARM BILL PROVISION COULD PAVE WAY FOR POULTRY INSURANCE
• AGRICULTURE DEPT. FORECAST PRICE DROPS

ATHLETICS
• NORTHWESTERN U. QUARTERBACK MAKES CASE FOR PLAYERS’ UNION

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
• NIH DIRECTORS FEATURED ON C-SPAN’S WASHINGTON JOURNAL
• FISCAL POLICIES, AND MORE, FOR 2014
• PCORI AT 3 YEARS — PROGRESS, LESSONS, AND PLANS
• PCORI WEBINAR: HIGHLIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLINICIANS
• DOD PROGRAMS TO PREVENT PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS IN MILITARY MEMBERS, FAMILIES NEED TO BE BASED ON SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS, SAYS NEW IOM REPORT

FEDERAL BUDGET
• ASSOCIATIONS ASK APPROPRIATIONS LEADERS TO RESTORE HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING IN FY 2015
• WHITE HOUSE BUDGET TO BOOST SPENDING BY $56 BILLION, DROP BOEHNER ‘GRAND BARGAIN’
• FEDERAL INVESTMENT AND THE PEACE DIVIDEND

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY
• TAKING THE DIRECT PATH
• C IS FOR COLLEGE RATING SYSTEM
• TOUGH LOVE FOR ACCREDITATION
• A NEW ROUND OF NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING STARTS TODAY
• STUDENT ADVOCATES WANT U.S. STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE-AFFILIATED DEBIT CARDS
• PANEL REVISITS 'STATE AUTHORIZATION' RULE FOR DISTANCE-EDUCATION PROGRAMS
• ADMINISTRATION LISTENING ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE
• THE NEW TASK FORCE ON GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, CREATED BY SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER (R-TN) AND THREE OF HIS SENATE COLLEAGUES, HELD ITS FIRST MEETING LAST WEEK

IMMIGRATION
• ACTIVISTS INCLUDE IMMIGRATION IN ‘WAR ON WOMEN’

INNOVATION
• DRIVING THE DAY: W.H. MOVES ON PATENTS
• EXECUTIVE ACTIONS: ANSWERING THE PRESIDENT’S CALL TO STRENGTHEN OUR PATENT SYSTEM AND FOSTER INNOVATION

LIBRARIES
• EDUCATION DEPARTMENT’S BIENNIAL REPORT EXAMINES STATE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

MICHIGAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
• DAVE CAMP DEFIES SKEPTICS, PLANS TAX BILL NEXT WEEK
• SENATE BATTLE IN MICHIGAN: WHISKEY AND SLED RIDES

PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING
• OBAMA TO PROPOSE $1 BILLION CLIMATE RESILIENCE FUND
• RECOMPETITION OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ICECUBE NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY
• BIG MECHANISM SEEKS THE “WHYS” HIDDEN IN BIG DATA
• GEOGRAPHY AND SPATIAL SCIENCES PROGRAM (GSS)
• GSS PROGRAM - DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT AWARDS (GSS-DDRI)
• NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD TO MEET FEB. 25-26, 2014, IN ARLINGTON, VA.

SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE ARTS & THE HUMANITIES
• STIMULATING RESEARCH RELATED TO THE SCIENCE OF BROADENING PARTICIPATION
FARM BILL PROVISION COULD PAVE WAY FOR POULTRY INSURANCE
By Jenny Hopkinson, Politico’s Morning Agriculture, February 20, 2014

A provision of the farm bill could enable the creation of an insurance program for poultry producers, reports The (Salisbury, Md.) Daily Times. The measure calls for a report to be delivered to congress on whether such a program is necessary to protect producers from "business disruptions caused by integrator bankruptcy" and other "catastrophic" events. The Daily Times reports that, at a news conference in Georgetown, Del., Tuesday, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) supported the idea saying: "Many other segments of agriculture benefit from crop insurance. Poultry's something where there is no such product available. There's no federal role in providing for that...We're trying to encourage young folks to get into this segment. We want to help them manage risk in a responsible way.”

* This is the complete news article.

AGRICULTURE DEPT. FORECAST PRICE DROPS
By David Rogers, Politico, February 20, 2014

Updated projections by the Agriculture Department on Thursday forecast significant price declines for corn, wheat and even soybeans — all large enough to trigger potential payments under the new farm bill. Corn stands out the most, with average prices dropping to $3.90 per bushel in the coming crop year, even after the department assumes reduced plantings. Wheat would fall to $5.30 a bushel, also with reduced plantings.

ATHLETICS

NORTHWESTERN U. QUARTERBACK MAKES CASE FOR PLAYERS' UNION

Northwestern University's quarterback testified on Tuesday before the National Labor Relations Board as part of his team's high-profile push to form the first labor union in college sports. Seated at the witness stand in a federal building in Chicago, Kain Colter, who just completed his senior season, detailed the demands of big-time sports, including football obligations that he said can eat up more than 50 hours a week. "It's a job, there is no way around it -- it's a job," he said, according to the Associated Press. A lawyer representing the university, Alex Barbour, disputed that players are employees, saying that academics are a core part of a Northwestern player's experience.

**BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

**NIH DIRECTORS FEATURED ON C-SPAN’S WASHINGTON JOURNAL**
*Ad Hoc Group Weekly Round Up, February 21, 2014*

Several [National Institutes for Health] (NIH) Directors February 21 appeared on C-SPAN’s Washington Journal, including National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Director Story Landis, Ph.D.; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Director Alan Guttmacher, M.D.; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Director Gary Gibbons, M.D.; and National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Disease Director Stephen Katz, M.D., Ph.D. The directors discussed the areas each institute seeks to address as well as some of the scientific opportunities they are pursuing.

* This is the complete news article.

**FISCAL POLICIES, AND MORE, FOR 2014**
*By Sally Rockey, Rock Talk, February 14, 2014*

You probably saw earlier this week that we announced policies for the NIH’s fiscal operations and legislative mandates for fiscal year (FY) 2014, implementing the 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act signed by President Obama on January 17. NIH has a budget of $30.15 billion, an increase of $1 billion over fiscal year 2013. I am particularly grateful that NIH was able to recover a significant portion of the funds lost due to sequestration, which should bring our budget situation back on track not only for this year, but hopefully into the future. Here are some key points from the new NIH Guide notices that were published Monday.

**PCORI AT 3 YEARS — PROGRESS, LESSONS, AND PLANS**
*By Joseph Selby and Steven Lipstein, New England Journal of Medicine, February 13, 2014*
The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), which recently marked its third anniversary, has established distinctive pathways for funding and conducting practical research and a solid foundation of funded studies. The PCORI board of governors has adopted three strategic goals to meet its mandate under the Affordable Care Act. These goals are to increase the quantity, quality, and timeliness of usable, trustworthy comparative research information; to accelerate the implementation and use of research evidence; and to exert influence on research funded by others to make it more patient-centered and useful. To address the first goal, PCORI funds comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER) related to five national priorities: evaluating prevention, diagnosis, and treatment options; improving health systems; enhancing communication and dissemination of evidence; addressing disparities in health and health care; and improving CER methods and data infrastructure.

**PCORI WEBINAR: HIGHLIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLINICIANS**

PCORI Press Release, February 20, 2014

This [February 28] webinar will provide medical specialty society members with an overview of some of the opportunities that PCORI’s recent funding initiatives provide for practicing clinicians to play a critical role in CER. The webinar will highlight two key PCORI initiatives: PCORnet, the National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network, and PCORI’s Pragmatic Clinical Studies Initiative. Both offer a range of opportunities for participation by and partnerships among clinical research scientists and practicing clinicians and clinician organizations in advancing CER.

**DOD PROGRAMS TO PREVENT PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS IN MILITARY MEMBERS, FAMILIES NEED TO BE BASED ON SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS, SAYS NEW IOM REPORT**

National Academies News Release, February 20, 2014

As the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) advances its efforts to evaluate and improve psychological health services for military members and their families, it should develop, track, and evaluate programs based on scientific evidence to ensure their effectiveness, says new report from the Institute of Medicine.

**FEDERAL BUDGET**

**ASSOCIATIONS ASK APPROPRIATIONS LEADERS TO RESTORE HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING IN FY 2015**

The American Council on Education (ACE), February 19, 2014
[The ACE] and 16 other higher education groups sent a letter yesterday to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders requesting higher education funding be increased in the FY 2015 spending bills the committees soon will begin drafting. The letter expresses appreciation for the efforts on the FY 2014 omnibus spending measure approved last month, which restored many of the sequestration cuts that impacted higher education. But as the bill did not fully restore the erosion of higher education and research funding over the last few years -- including $23 billion in cuts to student financial aid -- the groups are asking Congress to reinstate or enhance previously eliminated investments in student aid, institutional support and scientific research.

**WHITE HOUSE BUDGET TO BOOST SPENDING BY $56 BILLION, DROP BOEHNER ‘GRAND BARGAIN’**

The White House budget to be released early next month will propose $56 billion in new spending on domestic and defense priorities and drop a proposal that was included in last year’s budget as a way to attract Republican support -- a plan that would have included less generous payouts of Social Security benefits...Obama will bundle the new $56 billion in spending into an "Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative," eliminating the remaining non-defense sequestration cuts in place for 2015. The initiative will include: creating 45 new manufacturing institutes, a "Race to the Top" program for states that promote energy efficiency; job training programs aimed at expanding apprenticeships and pairing colleges and private employers; and universal pre-K and expanded Head Start.

**FEDERAL INVESTMENT AND THE PEACE DIVIDEND**
By Matt Hourihan, The American Association for the Advancement of Science R&D Budget Analysis, February 21, 2014

The latter half of the 20th century has seen a major “peace dividend” through declining defense spending. But the fiscal advantages of that dividend have largely sidestepped investments in science, infrastructure, and education.

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

**TAKING THE DIRECT PATH**
By Paul Fain, Inside Higher Ed, February 21, 2014

Scores of colleges are gearing up to offer new competency-based degrees. But some college leaders are confused about whether the U.S. Department of Education remains supportive of a new form of competency-based education that does not rely on the credit hour standard. This
approach is called direct assessment -- as in directly measuring student knowledge and learning, rather than linking it to seat time and grades. Institutions that seek to try direct assessment first must get a green light from the department and their accreditor in order to qualify for federal financial aid.

C IS FOR COLLEGE RATING SYSTEM
By Libby Nelson, Politico Pro, February 21, 2014

Determining what makes a good chocolate chip cookie and what makes a good college education might have more in common than you think. Analogies (and advice) abound for the Obama administration’s forthcoming college rating system. It will be a Consumer Reports for colleges. Or a Good Housekeeping seal of approval. Or a higher education version of the exhaustive Cook’s Illustrated reviews of skillets and blenders for every budget. The Education Department says it doesn’t know what the ratings will look like, although they’re expected to be unveiled this spring. Those are just a few of the comparisons that have been offered, perhaps to distinguish the ratings from better-known college rankings, as the department undertakes its rating endeavor.

TOUGH LOVE FOR ACCREDITATION
By Paul Fain, Inside Higher Ed, February 19, 2014

Everyone from politicians to provosts seems to have an opinion on how to “fix” accreditation these days. That’s because the wonky accreditor plays a big role in shaping emerging models of higher education and how they are funded. Paul L. Gaston knows the accreditation process inside and out. A Trustees Professor at Kent State University, Gaston has served as a peer reviewer for regional accrediting agencies and has long been involved in the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

A NEW ROUND OF NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING STARTS TODAY
By Libby Nelson, Politico’s Morning Education, February 19, 2014

The Education Department panel will talk about PLUS loans, state authorization, the credit- to clock-hour conversion and cash management on debit cards - a wide-ranging agenda. Few panelists are likely to be experts on all subjects. A quick guide to the issues: "State authorization" is, like the gainful employment rule renegotiated late in 2013, part of the original package of program integrity regulations from the administration's first term. It would have required colleges to get permission to operate from every state where at least one student was enrolled. Here’s a primer from WCET. PLUS loans: The panel will also wrangle with one of the most racially charged topics in higher ed, a change to underwriting criteria for parent loans that many historically black colleges say left their students out in the cold and led to a drop in enrollment. More on the issue from the Chronicle of Higher Education. Debit cards and
financial aid: This has become a hot regulatory topic as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Government Accountability Office (at the urging of Congressional Democrats) have urged more regulations on transparency and fees surrounding the use of debit cards for federal financial aid refunds. The recent GAO report. Clock hour/credit hour: This is perhaps the most arcane topic on the agenda - how clock hours, required for programs that include licensing, convert into credit hours for financial aid purposes. A breakdown of the issue from Inside Higher Ed.

* This is the complete news article.

**STUDENT ADVOCATES WANT U.S. STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE-AFFILIATED DEBIT CARDS**

Student and consumer advocates on Thursday urged the Education Department to set strict standards for college-affiliated debit cards, saying students are being steered into products that aren’t always in their best interest. The advocates, who spoke during a negotiated-rule-making session here, asked the department to prohibit the co-branding of cards with colleges’ logos or mascots, arguing that such practices give the products the "imprimatur" of the institution. They said students should not be sent cards automatically, as some are now. And they asked the department to limit, or even eliminate, the cards’ fees.

**PANEL REVISITS 'STATE AUTHORIZATION' RULE FOR DISTANCE-EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Distance education dominated the discussion on Day 1 of the Education Department's new round of negotiated rule-making on Wednesday, with panelists discussing how the department could ensure that states do their part to protect students studying online and abroad. At issue was a 2010 rule that set federal standards for "state authorization" of institutions and clarified that colleges must seek approval from states where they enroll students online. Under the rule, colleges can receive federal aid only for students residing in states where they’re approved to operate.

**ADMINISTRATION LISTENING ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault held another virtual listening session Tuesday to discuss sexual violence on campus, this time with college and university leaders. One participant on the call voiced concerns about budget constraints, saying the administration should drum up financial support or free resources for schools looking to take preventive action but are limited financially. Another suggested that the results of regular national surveys of student victimization and crime on campus could help individual schools
benchmark and track their progress toward tackling sexual violence. Vice President Joe Biden also met with student advocates, survivors and educators Tuesday during an in-person listening session hosted by the task force. It was one of nine in-person listening sessions. 'We can do a great deal more than we're doing,' he said. Biden told the group he was 'here to listen' and wanted to hear what was working and what wasn't on their campuses, along with 'what we should be doing that we're aren't doing and what we're doing that's not making sense.'

* This is the complete news article.

THE NEW TASK FORCE ON GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, CREATED BY SENATOR LAMAR ALEXANDER (R-TN) AND THREE OF HIS SENATE COLLEAGUES, HELD ITS FIRST MEETING LAST WEEK
Association of American Universities, February 18, 2014

The panel, which is co-chaired by Vanderbilt University Chancellor Nick Zeppos and University of Maryland System Chancellor Brit Kirwan, plans to conduct a year-long, comprehensive review of federal regulations and reporting requirements affecting higher education institutions. The focus will be on those resulting from the Higher Education Act, and, more broadly, from the Department of Education. The Task Force will develop recommendations to streamline and reduce those regulations and reporting requirements and suggest reforms to ensure that future regulations are issued in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

* This is the complete news article.

IMMIGRATION

ACTIVISTS INCLUDE IMMIGRATION IN ‘WAR ON WOMEN’
By Seung Min Kim, Politico, February 20, 2014

A coalition of advocacy groups wants to make the next front in the “war on women” all about immigration reform. The new strategy, unveiled Wednesday, is yet another tactic from pro-reform groups to pressure House Republicans to pass immigration reform this year — and punish them if they don’t. And the activists believe that focusing on the influence of female voters could crack the Capitol Hill stalemate on immigration reform.

INNOVATION

DRIVING THE DAY: W.H. MOVES ON PATENTS
By Alex Byers, Politico’s Morning Tech, February 20, 2014

Erin and your [Morning Tech]-er have the scoop on what to expect from 1600 Pennsylvania this afternoon: "The White House on Thursday will unveil a handful of new actions designed to improve the patent system as part of its effort to combat so-called patent trolls, according to several people familiar with the announcement...The administration will unveil an initiative with private-sector companies and, potentially, universities to make available more 'prior art' - essentially making it easier for Patent and Trademark Office officials to determine whether or not a patent idea is original, the sources said. The administration also is working with companies to provide additional technical training to patent examiners, they said."

"Officials are expected to provide updates on the [White House patent] work started last June. For example, the administration is moving forward with an online presence to provide resources for recipients of patent demand letters, sources said - that idea was first revealed during last summer's executive actions...President Barack Obama mentioned patent reform in last month's State of the Union - an address built around the idea that the White House was prepared to take unilateral action on important issues."

* This is the complete news article.

EXECUTIVE ACTIONS: ANSWERING THE PRESIDENT’S CALL TO STRENGTHEN OUR PATENT SYSTEM AND FOSTER INNOVATION
White House Fact Sheet, February 20, 2014

Year of Action: Making Progress Through Executive Action -- In his State of the Union address, President Obama set an ambitious agenda to make 2014 a year of action. As part of that commitment, and recognizing that innovation is the lifeblood of our economy, the Administration today is announcing major progress on a series of initiatives designed to combat patent trolls and further strengthen our patent system and foster innovation; issuing new executive actions to build on these efforts; and renewing its call on Congress to finish the job by passing common-sense patent reform legislation.

LIBRARIES

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S BIENNIAL REPORT EXAMINES STATE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Academic libraries lent about 10.5 million documents to other libraries in the 2012 fiscal year and borrowed some 9.8 million from their peers and commercial services during the same period, according to report released on Friday by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Education Department's statistical arm. Those totals are lower than what the NCES reported in its previous survey of academic libraries, which reported the lending of 11.2 million
documents and the borrowing of 10.2 million during the 2010 fiscal year. "Academic Libraries: 2012 First Look" is the latest in a biennial NCES survey that also includes data on staffing, spending, collections, and other services at academic libraries in two- and four-year degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States.

* This is the complete news article.

**MICHIGAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

**DAVE CAMP DEFIES SKEPTICS, PLANS TAX BILL NEXT WEEK**
By Kelsey Snell and Rachael Bade and Lauren French, Politico, February 20, 2014

Ways and Means chief Dave Camp is throwing caution to the wind. Defying skepticism from Republican leaders, Camp plans to release a major plan to rewrite the tax code next week, according to an email obtained by Politico. The Michigan Republican wrote his party's tax panel members to make it official: He is moving forward with a proposal, the product of several years' work.

**SENATE BATTLE IN MICHIGAN: WHISKEY AND SLED RIDES**
By Manu Raja, Politico, February 20, 2014

Braving sub-zero temperatures at the annual dog sled race here, Democratic Senate candidate Gary Peters happily indulged when a prospective voter offered him a swig from her flask of whiskey. And as some Upper Peninsula locals (known as “Yoopers”) were sledding down a giant snowbank the next day in nearby Houghton, the three-term congressman borrowed a sled and barreled down the hill himself, even though his attire was more suited for a boardroom than the playground. “I'll admit, I haven’t done that in a while,” said Peters, 55, a bespectacled former college professor and onetime state senator who worked in the financial sector for two decades. His dead-of-winter barnstorming in a region with a mere 3 percent of the state’s population shows how critical Michigan has become in the battle for control of the Senate — and the lengths to which Democrats will go to turn out voters without a presidential election to spur them to the polls. In their quest to capture the six seats needed to take control of the Senate, Republicans are looking beyond conservative strongholds like Arkansas, Louisiana and Alaska to states that Barack Obama carried in 2012. Michigan has catapulted to the top of that list. Thought to be the front-runner at the outset of the campaign, Peters has been running narrowly behind Republican Terri Lynn Land in recent weeks.

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING**
OBAMA TO PROPOSE $1 BILLION CLIMATE RESILIENCE FUND

President Barack Obama yesterday used a visit to drought-parched California to announce that his 2015 budget request to Congress, to be released in early March, will include a proposal to create a $1 billion “Climate Resilience Fund.” To help farmers and U.S. communities prepare, Obama said he will request “new funding for new technologies to help communities prepare for a changing climate, set up incentives to build smarter, more resilient infrastructure. And finally, my administration will work with tech innovators and launch new challenges under our Climate Data Initiative, focused initially on rising sea levels and their impact on the coasts, but ultimately focused on how all these changes in weather patterns are going to have an impact up and down the United States…"

RECOMPETITION OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ICECUBE NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY
National Science Foundation (NSF) Dear Colleague, February 19, 2014

Consistent with the National Science Board Resolution on Competition and Recompetition of NSF Awards (NSB-08-12), NSF will carry out a competition for the next cooperative agreement to manage and operate the IceCube Neutrino Observatory (ICNO; http://icecube.wisc.edu/) through an open, merit-based external peer-review process. The Division of Polar Programs of the Directorate for Geosciences and the Division of Physics of the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences are currently preparing the program solicitation. This solicitation is expected to lead to the award of a five- to ten-year cooperative agreement for the management and operation of ICNO following the end of the current cooperative agreement on September 30, 2015

BIG MECHANISM SEEKS THE “WHYS” HIDDEN IN BIG DATA

During the 1854 cholera epidemic in London, Dr. John Snow plotted cholera deaths on a map, and in the corner of a particularly hard-hit quadrangle of buildings was a water pump. Snow’s maps, a 19th-century version of big data, suggested an association between cholera and the pump, but the germ theory of disease had not yet been invented and it took human ingenuity to realize that the pump was a causal mechanism of disease transmission. Nearly two centuries on, big data is vastly bigger, but human ingenuity is still required to leap from associations to causal mechanisms. DARPA’s new Big Mechanism program aims to change that…Mechanism program intends to address is cancer pathways, the molecular interactions that cause cells to become and remain cancerous. The program has three primary technical areas: Computers should read abstracts and papers in cancer biology to extract fragments of cancer pathways. Next, they should assemble these fragments into complete pathways of unprecedented scale and accuracy, and should figure out how pathways interact. Finally, computers should determine the causes and effects that might be manipulated, perhaps even to prevent or
control cancer...The Broad Agency Announcement for Big Mechanism is available at http://go.usa.gov/BRNw. DARPA is accepting proposals for the program until March 18, 2014 at 12 p.m. ET. For more information, please email bigmechanism@darpa.mil.

**GEOGRAPHY AND SPATIAL SCIENCES PROGRAM (GSS)**

NSF Program Solicitation, February 20, 2014

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): September 04, 2014. As specified in the Geography and Spatial Sciences Program strategic plan, the goals of the NSF GSS Program are:

- To promote scientific research in geography and the spatial sciences that advances theory and basic understanding and that addresses the challenges facing society.
- To promote the integration of geographers and spatial scientists in interdisciplinary research.
- To promote education and training of geographers and spatial scientists in order to enhance the capabilities of current and future generations of researchers.
- To promote the development and use of scientific methods and tools for geographic research.

The GSS Program sponsors research on the geographic distributions and interactions of human, physical, and biotic systems on Earth. Investigators are encouraged to propose plans for research about the nature, causes, and consequences of human activity and natural environmental processes across a range of scales. Projects on a variety of topics qualify for support if they offer promise of contributing to scholarship by enhancing geographical knowledge, concepts, theories, methods, and their application to societal problems and concerns.

**GSS PROGRAM - DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT AWARDS (GSS-DDRI)**

NSF Program Solicitation, February 20, 2014

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): August 14, 2014, second Thursday in August, Annually Thereafter DDRI Proposal-Submission Deadline. February 12, 2015, second Thursday in February, Annually Thereafter DDRI Proposal-Submission Deadline...

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant or Continuing Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 30 to 40. During a fiscal year, GSS expects to recommend (either on its own or jointly with one or more other NSF programs) a total of 30 to 40 DDRI awards. (Another GSS solicitation includes instructions for preparation of other kinds of proposals to the GSS program.)

Anticipated Funding Amount: $400,000 to $600,000 pending availability of funds. Project budgets should be developed at scales appropriate for the work to be conducted. DDRI awards may not exceed $16,000. This amount includes both direct and indirect costs for the entire duration of the award.
NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD TO MEET FEB. 25-26, 2014, IN ARLINGTON, VA.
NSF Media Advisory, February 21, 2014

The National Science Board (NSB) will meet Feb. 25-26, 2014, to address science and engineering policy of interest to the NSF. Members of the media and the public are invited to public portions of the meeting. The meeting will be webcast (please note the webcast page will become available on Monday). [Topics to be covered include: a FY14 update, a review of facilities, the iPlant collaborative, the astronomy portfolio, the Antarctic program and the 2014 Science & Engineering Indicators report.]

SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE ARTS & THE HUMANITIES

STIMULATING RESEARCH RELATED TO THE SCIENCE OF BROADENING PARTICIPATION
NSF Dear Colleague, February 19, 2014

Building on previous investments, the Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences and the Directorate for Education & Human Resources announce their interest in stimulating research related to the Science of Broadening Participation (SBP). The Science of Broadening Participation will employ the theories, methods, and analytic techniques of the social, behavioral, economic, and learning sciences to better understand the barriers that hinder and factors that enhance our ability to broaden participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The results of these efforts will inform approaches to increase the access and involvement of underrepresented groups in STEM and to strengthen our national STEM capabilities and competitive advantage. Ultimately, the SBP research will provide scientific evidence that STEM educators, STEM employers, and policy makers need to make informed decisions and to design effective programs and interventions.

APOLGODY FROM OBAMA
By Scott Jaschik, Inside Higher Ed, February 19, 2014

President Obama disappointed many art history professors in January when he seemed to question the value of their discipline. In fact President Obama did receive a bunch of emails from frustrated art historians. And now he has apologized to one of them -- in a handwritten note that [Ann C. Johns, Regents' Outstanding Teaching Professor and senior lecturer in art and art history at the University of Texas at Austin] has released.

STUDENT AID

THE DIFFERENCE FOUR YEARS MAKES (IN [STUDENT LOAN] DEBT)
By Libby Nelson, Politico’s Morning Education, February 18, 2014

The average bachelor's degree recipient is paying about $79 more per month, or $949 more per year, on student loans compared to his or her counterpart from four years earlier, according to a new student debt analysis from the New America Foundation. The report looks in detail at the debt figures for each sector, breaking out the average monthly payments for graduates with debt from a four-year public college ($272), a four-year private nonprofit ($343) or a four-year private for-profit college ($425).

* This is the complete news article.

STUDY: LINK BETWEEN LOANS AND TUITION IS MURKY

Inside Higher Ed, February 19, 2014

Congressional investigators said in a report Tuesday that they could not determine whether students' increased access to federal loans in recent years has caused college prices to rise. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was tasked with analyzing what, if any, impact higher federal loan limits that took effect in 2008 and 2009 have had on the rising price of college. In its report, the GAO concludes that "it is difficult to determine if a direct relationship exists between increases in college prices and the [federal] loan limit increases because of the confluence of many other factors that occurred around the time the loan limit increases took effect," such as the economic recession and increases in other types of federal, state and institutional aid available to students. The report also notes that the increased federal loan limits were correlated with a drastic drop, by more than 50 percent, in private student lending. A variety of factors explain that drop, the report says, including more stringent lending criteria, new consumer protections on private loans, and colleges' efforts to steer students away from private loans.

* This is the complete news article.