NEWS SUMMARY

Debate in Washington covered topics such as a broad blueprint for a FY15 federal budget, equal pay policy and funding for veterans programs and military construction.

A group of MSU Extension professionals attended the 2014 Public Issues Leadership Workshop in Alexandria, VA this week. As part of the workshop, they briefed staff from Michigan Congressional offices on the benefits of Extension programs.

On Tuesday, five MSU undergraduate student leaders joined their fellow Big Ten colleagues at the Association of Big Ten Students annual advocacy meetings in Washington, DC. The students met with both Administration officials and with elected representatives and Congressional staff to discuss issues ranging from student financial aid, student loan debt and immigration.

The annual appropriations process continues to move forward with Congressional hearings on the President’s FY15 budget request. These hearings will take place over the coming weeks. Following the hearings, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will negotiate their respective funding bills for federal programs and agencies. The process will take its course over the rest of the year.

Congressional hearings included the following:

- April 8 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations hearing with Rajiv Shah, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID),
- April 8 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services and Education hearing with Education Secretary Arne Duncan;
• April 8 Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities hearing on the role of the Department of Defense science and technology enterprise for innovation and affordability;
• April 8 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science hearing on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;
• April 9 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy &Water hearing on the FY15 budget request for the Department of Energy (DOE);
• April 10 House Science, Space and Technology Committee hearing on DOE science and technology priorities; and
• April 10 Senate Foreign Relations Committee Committee hearing on the FY15 Budget for international development priorities.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reports that the federal deficit fell 31 percent in the first six months of the 2014 fiscal year, to $187 billion.

On Thursday, President Obama announced his intent to nominate Dr. William “Bro” Adams, President of Colby College, as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has announced that she is resigning. Reportedly, the President will nominate Sylvia Mathews Burwell, head of the White House Office of Management and Budget, to replace her.

President Obama also has nominated the following individuals to his Administration:
• Rabbi Lee Bycel, Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in Napa, California, to be a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council;
• Dr. Mostafa El-Sayed, Regents Professor and Julius Brown Chair at the Georgia Institute of Technology, to be a member of the President’s Committee on the National Medal of Science;
• Jonathan Stivers, Senior Advisor to House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, to be Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Asia at the United States Agency for International Development (Jonathan Stivers received a B.S. from Michigan State University); and
• Alice Wells, Senior Advisor in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State, to be Ambassador to Jordan.

NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

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AGRICULTURE

LUCAS NOW UNCERTAIN ABOUT FARM BILL SAVINGS FROM SNAP CUT
By Jenny Hopkinson, Politico’s Morning Agriculture, April 9, 2014

Rep. Frank Lucas said yesterday he is no longer certain of the accuracy of a prediction by the CBO that changes in the 2014 farm bill would reduce food stamp spending by $8 billion over the next 10 years. He's reacting to an effort by at least seven states that have taken steps to overcome the cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). "I took them at their word," Lucas said of the CBO estimate. "I don't know that we will really have a clear understanding of what the effect is until we go through another year or two." "Over the next year or two, if the savings are dramatically less than the $8 billion, that will only add fuel to the fire to do something about the underlying problem," Lucas warned.

* This is the complete news article.

SECRETARY VILSACK APPOINTS NEW MEMBERS TO USDA NAREEE ADVISORY BOARD
USDA Press Release, April 8, 2014

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the appointment of eight individuals to serve on the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board. The NAREEE Advisory Board advises the Secretary of Agriculture and land-grant colleges and universities on top national priorities and policies for food and agricultural research, education, extension, and economics.
ATHLETICS

NORTHWESTERN ASKS NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD TO OVERTURN REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S RULING ON FOOTBALL PLAYERS' UNIONIZATION
Northwestern University News Release, April 9, 2014

Northwestern University today (April 9, 2014) asked the full National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to review and overturn the recent ruling by the NLRB Chicago Regional Director that Northwestern scholarship football players are employees and may be represented by a union. Calling the decision by the regional director “unprecedented,” Northwestern’s brief states that the director overlooked or ignored key evidence that Northwestern presented showing that its student-athletes are primarily students, not employees.

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

FORMER U.S. RESEARCH FRAUD CHIEF SPEAKS OUT ON RESIGNATION, 'FRUSTRATIONS'
By Jocelyn Kaiser, ScienceInsider, April 4, 2014

Last month, David Wright, the director of the federal Office of Research Integrity, which keeps watch on fraud in federally funded biomedical research, quit in frustration after 2 years. His resignation letter was a scathing critique of what he called the "dysfunctional" bureaucracy at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health. After it was obtained and published by ScienceInsider, it drew national attention to an office that often labors in obscurity. Wright, 68, has since returned to Michigan, where he is a professor emeritus at Michigan State University in East Lansing. He spoke with ScienceInsider earlier this week about his reasons for leaving.

U.S. OVERSIGHT OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT IS SEEN AS HAMPERED BY BUREAUCRACY

The federal office responsible for guarding against misconduct in biomedical research is so hampered by bureaucratic turf wars that it has been unnecessarily losing cases against suspect scientists, the unit’s departing director said on Monday.

NIH PUTS SQUEEZE ON CHIMPANZEE LIVING SPACE
By Jocelyn Kaiser, ScienceInsider, April 4, 2014
The few chimpanzees still used for biomedical research in the United States can live in much tighter quarters than some experts prefer. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has decided that about 23 square meters (250 square feet) per individual is adequate. That is just one-fourth the area that an advisory committee had recommended.

**FEDERAL BUDGET STATUS**

**COALITION OF 114 EDUCATION GROUPS: RYAN 2015 BUDGET WOULD ‘DEVASTATE’ SCHOOLS**


The 2015 budget proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan’s House Budget Committee would “devastate funding for education and make college less affordable,” a coalition of 114 national education associations and institutions charged in an open letter sent to the panel. The Ryan budget would, according to this story by my Post colleague, Ed O’Keefe, cut more than $5 trillion in federal spending over the next decade, primarily by slashing social programs and essentially repealing President Obama’s health care program.

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

**HAPPY MARK UP TO YOU**

By Stephanie Simon, *Politico’s Morning Education*, April 8, 2014

The House Education and the Workforce Committee is planning on having a bipartisan moment this morning, when the committee will mark up two bills that have support from both sides of the aisle: A bill to rewrite federal charter law, and another tackling federal education research programs, called the Education Sciences Reform Act. Both bills have strong backing from the committee's Republican majority and are expected to pass easily out of committee. And both are expected to get a vote in the House after the mid-April recess. Aides say they expect ESRA will be voice voted. It's unlikely the charter bill will go far in the chamber this year, aides say. But ESRA could - if the House takes up legislation that the Senate is interested in, namely the Child Care and Development Block Grant. CCDBG, which reauthorizes federal child care law, passed the Senate with bipartisan backing in March. Now, with each chamber wanting the other to take up its bill, the fates of ESRA and CCDBG may be intertwined, a Senate aide told Morning Education.

* This is the complete news article.

**HOUSE DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AT ODDS ON EDUCATION SPENDING**

By Carolyn Phenicie, *CQ.com*, April 7, 2014
The budget House Democrats released Monday would call for increased funding for preschool and higher education, drawing a sharp contrast from the proposal their Republican counterparts unveiled last week. The Democrats’ proposal, which will be proposed to the House Rules Committee for consideration on the floor as an alternative to the budget authored by Rep. Paul D. Ryan, R-Wis., would allot $101.1 billion in budget outlays for all education, training, employment and social services programs in fiscal 2015. It calls for “regular increases” in funding for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, funding for college affordability initiatives and a $76 billion investment over 10 years in high-quality early childhood education programs for all four-year-olds. The Republicans’ proposal, unveiled last week, would call for discretionary spending cuts to all non-defense programs of about $791 billion beginning in fiscal 2016 for the 10-year span of the budget. Applying the non-defense discretionary cuts to education would result in a $19.6 billion cut to early childhood education, $896 billion cut to elementary and secondary education programs and a $260 billion cut to higher education, Democrats said. The Republican budget would allot $91.8 billion in budget outlays for all education, training, employment and social services in fiscal 2015. During a news conference Friday, Democratic leaders blasted the education provisions in the Republicans’ proposal, saying it showed Republicans’ real priorities. “Clearly what is not valued in this budget, what is not a priority for the Republicans in their budget, is children,” Education and the Workforce Committee ranking Democrat George Miller said. The budget would cut 170,000 early childhood education slots in the first year and more after that, Miller said. “You cannot build a strong nation, a strong society and a strong democracy if these children lose their chance at a high quality education,” he added. Higher Education Proposals: The Democrats’ proposal calls for increased spending on college affordability and competition initiatives, full funding for Pell Grants and expanded refinance and repayment options for student loans. The Republican proposal, meanwhile, would eliminate mandatory funding for the Pell Grant program, maintain the maximum grant award of $5,730 for the duration of the 10-year proposal, call for the consideration of an income cap for Pell eligibility and eliminate eligibility for students attending school less than half-time. It also would eliminate the existing subsidy for undergraduates’ student loan interest while they are in school. Republicans note that the CBO has predicted the Pell Grant program will face shortfalls beginning in fiscal 2016. The GOP plan “brings Pell spending under control and makes sure aid helps the truly needy, not university administrators,” they said in a statement. But Democrat Hakeem Jeffries of New York said student loan debt is limiting young Americans’ ability to buy homes, start families and open businesses. “This student loan debt crisis is made worse by dramatically slashing Pell grants and limiting the ability of younger Americans to pursue a college education in an affordable way. It’s unhealthy for our economy,” he said at the Friday news conference. Little Actual Change: Despite all the rhetoric surrounding the release of the two budgets, little in the way of actual legislation is likely to result. The budget is “such a mushy document,” said Joel Packer, executive director of the Committee for Education Funding. Most budgets – if they are passed into law and signed by the president – do nothing but set the total discretionary spending caps for a fiscal year. If both chambers pass budgets with so-called reconciliation instructions, they can force committees to bring forth legislation that would make changes to mandatory programs sought in the budget. Those bills are then considered under expedited
rules, including forbidding a filibuster in the Senate. Democrats in 2010 used reconciliation instructions (PL 110-152) to make changes to the student loan program, ending the issuance of government-backed loans through private lenders in favor of just a direct lending program, Packer said. The budget proposed by Ryan does not include reconciliation instructions that could result in legislation that would make changes he proposes, Packer noted. “It actually doesn’t even really try to implement its own policies,” he said. The Senate will not be considering its own budget; Senate Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray, D-Wash., has said the December budget deal (PL 113-67) already sets spending for fiscal 2015. If the Senate Republicans win control of that chamber next year, they could conceivably pass a budget with some GOP favored provisions included as reconciliation instructions. President Barack Obama, however, would likely veto it.

* This is the complete news article.

**DUNCAN DEFENDS RATINGS SYSTEM TO CONGRESS**
*Inside Higher Ed, April 9, 2014*

Education Secretary Arne Duncan on Tuesday defended the Obama administration's proposed college ratings system to several Republican lawmakers, who criticized the plan. Testifying before the House appropriations subcommittee that oversees the department's budget, Duncan said that the college ratings system was needed to provide students with better information and to provide more accountability for taxpayer money.

**'UNDERMATCHING' PROS AND CONS**
*By Scott Jaschik, Inside Higher Ed, April 7, 2014*

The idea of "undermatching" -- the view of education researchers that many talented high school students never apply to competitive colleges that might well admit them -- has captured widespread attention among researchers and policy makers in the last two years. The Obama administration, many elite colleges and educational organizations have all announced initiatives to combat undermatching. And, as is the case with many hot scholarly ideas, other researchers have questioned some of the assumptions behind those who have promoted the undermatching idea.

**IMMIGRATION**

**H1-B VISA CAP FOR FY15 REACHED IN ONE WEEK**
*Association of American Universities Council of Federal Relations Update, April 9, 2014*
The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced this week that applications for H-1B visas have reached the allotment for FY15. The filing period opened on April 1, and every slot was taken by April 7. The cap is set at 65,000, with another 20,000 slots for foreign residents with a master's degree or higher from a U.S. university.

*This is the complete news article.

INNOVATION

STRENGTHENING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT HOME AND ABROAD
White House Fact Sheet, April 7, 2014

Entrepreneurs play a critical role in expanding the economy and creating jobs. President Obama is committed to increasing the prevalence and success of entrepreneurs across the country, including through the White House Startup America initiative, an “all-hands-on-deck” effort to expand access to capital, accelerate innovation, and promote private sector efforts to strengthen the Nation’s startup communities. The United States also runs and funds hundreds of programs to support entrepreneurs globally and maintains a broad coalition of governments, business people, civil society, investors, and academics to educate and support entrepreneurs around the world.

Building on these efforts, today the Administration is announcing a series of new steps to accelerate the success of entrepreneurs in the United States and across the globe:...

• *Accelerating Biomedical Entrepreneurs from Lab to Market*: The NIH and the National Science Foundation (NSF) are launching a new collaboration to empower entrepreneurial scientists and address the critical gap between fundamental research and the development of a commercial entity. Academic researchers and entrepreneurs who receive Small Business Innovation Research funding from NIH will be eligible to pilot a new version of the NSF Innovation Corps program that is specially tailored for biomedical technologies.

• *Energizing Entrepreneurs to Help End Extreme Poverty*: Fostering entrepreneurs and strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems are vital elements of USAID’s newly launched U.S. Global Development Lab (The Lab).

• *Bolstering Exchanges and Training for Entrepreneurs in the Western Hemisphere*: This fall, the State Department will host TechCamps for women in El Salvador, Colombia, and Argentina. These camps will bring together hundreds of women across the region over the course of the year and provide them training to address key challenges in business formation, from financing to marketing. Additionally, the State Department will be launching two new exchange programs for entrepreneurs in the Western hemisphere.

PATENT LEGISLATION TO RESUME CONSIDERATION AFTER RECESS
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Council on Governmental Affairs News, April 10, 2014
On April 9, Chairman Leahy announced that after weeks of negotiations, “we have made enormous progress, and we now have a broad bipartisan agreement in principle.” However, due to the complexity of this issue, Leahy added further time was needed to draft key provisions that have been part of the discussion. He plans to circulate a manager’s package the day the Senate goes back into session and aims to resume consideration in the Senate Judiciary Committee the first week back.

* This is the complete news article.

**INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES**

**MCC’S ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS SHARED VALUES**
Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Press Release, April 7, 2014

The MCC released its 2013 Annual Report entitled “Shared Values, Shared Prosperity,” which highlights the U.S. Government agency’s unique role in introducing America’s core values into global development assistance. The report provides an overview of MCC’s work from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013, and showcases how MCC’s values—built around accountability, evidence-based decision making, transparency, and sustainability—contribute to improving the lives of the world’s poor while advancing U.S. interests for security, stability and economic growth.

**THE PRESIDENT’S FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTING IN TUNISIA**
White House Fact Sheet, April 4, 2014

The United States strongly supports the Tunisian people and their progress toward a future of economic prosperity that strengthens civil society, empowers women and youth, and solidifies the foundation of democracy. Since the January 2011 revolution, the United States has committed more than $400 million to support Tunisia's transition, focusing heavily on technical and financial assistance to Tunisia's economy and private sector, support for security in the country and along its borders, and support for its civil society and democratic practices.

**PLAN TO ALLOW LIBYAN NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS TO STUDY IN U.S. DRAWS FIRE IN CONGRESS**
By Thomas Sumner, ScienceInsider, April 7, 2014

Republican lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives are raising objections to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security plan to lift a 1983 ban on Libyan nationals receiving pilot training or studying nuclear science in the United States. At a hearing last week, supporters of lifting the ban said the move is needed to help Libya rebuild global ties after decades of
international sanctions during the dictatorship of Muammar Gaddafi. Critics, however, worried it could help train potential terrorists.

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RELEASES 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN**

*Energy.gov, April 7, 2014*

The Department of Energy today released its 2014 Strategic Plan, a comprehensive blueprint to guide the agency's core mission of ensuring America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions...The DOE Strategic Plan is organized into 12 strategic objectives aimed at three distinct goals – Science and Energy, Nuclear Security and Management and Performance. These objectives represent the broad cross-cutting and collaborative efforts taking place across the Department's headquarters, site offices, and national laboratories...The Strategic Plan is available [here](#).

**COST SKYROCKETS FOR UNITED STATES' SHARE OF ITER FUSION PROJECT**

*By Adian Cho, ScienceInsider, April 10, 2014*

ITER, the international fusion experiment under construction in Cadarache, France, aims to prove that nuclear fusion is a viable power source by creating a "burning plasma" that produces more energy than the machine itself consumes. Although that goal is at least 20 years away, ITER is already burning through money at a prodigious pace. The United States is only a minor partner in the project, which began construction in 2008. But the U.S. contribution to ITER will total $3.9 billion—roughly 4 times as much as originally estimated—according to a new cost estimate released yesterday. That is about $1.4 billion higher than a 2011 cost estimate, and the numbers are likely to intensify doubts among some members of Congress about continuing the U.S. involvement in the project.

**MIKULSKI: PRESIDENT'S NASA BUDGET REQUEST JUST "ADVISORY," WILL WORK TO GET MORE**

*By Marcia Smith, Space Policy Online, April 7, 2014*

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., vowed today that she will "work her earrings off" for NASA. As for President Obama's "spartan" FY2015 NASA budget request, she said "It was well intentioned, but I consider it advisory" and will try to get the agency at least as much as it got for FY2014.
BOLDEN TALKS BACK TO HOUSE SPENDING PANEL
By Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, ScienceInsider, April 8, 2014

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden has been at the receiving end of tough questions from Congress numerous times over the past 5 years. But his pugnacious exchange with lawmakers at a hearing of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee today is likely to go down as one of his more memorable visits to Capitol Hill.

NASA TO RESEARCHERS: SELL YOUR MISSION OR BE TERMINATED
By Richard Kerr, Science, April 2014

The robots that explore the solar system on humanity's behalf face multiple hazards. Rockets fail, instruments break, human error kills a spacecraft. But now, NASA's spacecraft face another mission-ending threat: the federal budget. NASA has put two long-lived but still productive planetary science missions on the budgetary chopping block, daring Congress to swing the ax. The agency is also asking researchers on other long-lived missions to explain why theirs should live on if others must die.

MANUFACTURING MEASURE APPROVED BY SENATE PANEL
By David Michaels, CQ.com, April 9, 2014

A Senate panel on Wednesday backed legislation that would create a network of research centers that seek to improve the competitiveness of the U.S. manufacturing industry. The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved the bill (S 1468) by voice vote. “With this bill, we can bridge the gap from basic research to manufacturing that has doomed so many promising inventions before they’re able to reach the market,” panel Chairman Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., said. Before approving the measure, the panel adopted by voice vote a substitute amendment by Roy Blunt, R-Mo., that would cut the program’s authorization level in half, to $300 million from the bill’s original $600 million. The measure, sponsored by Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, is a centerpiece of the Senate Democrats’ manufacturing agenda. However the bill has some bipartisan backing in the House as well. A House companion bill (HR 2996) is sponsored by Rep. Tom Reed, R-N.Y. The bill would establish a program within the National Institute of Standards and Technology that works with universities and community colleges to develop innovation hubs aimed at fostering new manufacturing strategies and techniques. The centers would create workforce education and training programs. While panel Republicans expressed their approval of the bill’s goal, they indicated their ultimate support would hinge on finding a way to pay for it. “It is critical that this legislation have an offset that would cover the full cost of the bill before floor consideration,” ranking Republican John Thune said. According to the last week’s Department of Labor report, the manufacturing industry has added 72,000 jobs in the past year to a factory workforce of 12.1 million. The committee also gave voice vote approval to a measure (S 2022) that would establish a national forensic science research program and require NIST to develop standards
that increase the reliability of forensic science activities. Additionally the panel approved by voice vote a House-passed bill (HR 2052) that would require the Commerce Department to study the United States’ competitiveness in attracting direct foreign investment and develop recommendations on how to boost such investments.

* This is the complete news article.

**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK CONNECTIONS**
NSF Program Solicitation, April 9, 2014

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): July 07, 2014. The International Research Network Connections (IRNC) program supports high performance network connectivity required by international science and engineering research and education collaborations involving the NSF research community. NSF expects to make a set of awards to: (1) link U.S. research networks with peer networks in other parts of the world and leverage existing international network connectivity; (2) support U.S. infrastructure and innovation of open network exchange points; (3) drive innovation and state-of-the-art capabilities for Research and Education (R&E) Network Operation Centers (NOC); (4) stimulate the development, application and use of advanced network measurement capabilities and services across international network paths; and (5) support community engagement in training and human and network capacity building, and coordination in advanced network engineering. High performance network connections funded by this program are intended to support science and engineering research and education applications, and preference will be given to solutions which provide the best economy of scale and demonstrate the ability to support the largest communities of interest with the broadest services.

**EARTHSCOPE**
NSF Program Solicitation, April 9, 2014

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): August 25, 2014 [and] August 23, Annually Thereafter. EarthScope is an Earth science program to explore the 4-dimensional structure of the North American continent. The EarthScope Program provides a framework for broad, integrated studies across the Earth sciences, including research on fault properties and the earthquake process, strain transfer, magmatic and hydrous fluids in the crust and mantle, plate boundary processes, large-scale continental deformation, continental structure and evolution, and composition and structure of the deep Earth...This Solicitation calls for single or collaborative proposals to conduct scientific research and/or education and outreach activities within North America that make use of capabilities and/or data provided through the EarthScope Facility to further the scientific and educational goals of EarthScope, as described in the 2010 EarthScope Science Plan and/or EarthScope Education and Outreach Implementation Plan.
**GEOPRISMS PROGRAM**
NSF Program Solicitation, April 10, 2014

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): August 01, 2014, July 01, 2015. July 1, Annually Thereafter. GeoPRISMS (Geodynamic Processes at Rifting and Subducting Margins) is the successor to the MARGINS Program. GeoPRISMS will investigate the coupled geodynamics, earth surface processes, and climate interactions that build and modify continental margins over a wide range of timescales. These interactions cross the shoreline and have applications to margin evolution and dynamics, construction of stratigraphic architecture, accumulation of economic resources, and associated geologic hazards and environmental management. The GeoPRISMS Program includes two broadly integrated science initiatives (Subduction Cycles and Deformation and Rift Initiation and Evolution), linked by five overarching scientific topics and themes, where transformative advances are likely to occur in the next decade, and where a focused scientific program could be most effective. These overarching science topics include 1) Origin and evolution of continental crust; 2) Fluids, magmas and their interactions; 3) Climate-surface-tectonics feedbacks; 3) Geochemical cycles; and 5) Plate boundary deformation and geodynamics. Each of the initiatives has identified primary sites for focused investigations, as well as thematic studies that will complement primary site studies.

**ALEXANDER URGES MONIZ TO DO 'MISSIONARY WORK' TO GOP ON ARPA-E**
By Alex Guillen, *Politico’s Morning Energy*, April 10, 2014

The top Senate Republican on the energy and water appropriations subcommittee urged Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz today to rally GOP support for DOE's popular ARPA-E program. "One piece of advice I've given to the secretary...is do some missionary work on my side of the aisle on ARPA-E," Sen. Lamar Alexander said yesterday at a hearing about DOE's fiscal 2015 budget. "Republicans look at some of the Obama administration energy adventures and don't like what they see over the last several years, and some have lumped ARPA-E in with that. I think it's a very different idea," he told Moniz. "I think Republicans would like ARPA-E."

* This is the complete news article.

**LIKE LAST YEAR, NEW HOUSE NASA BILL PROHIBITS DEVELOPMENT OF ASTEROID REDIRECT MISSION**
By Marcia Smith, *Space Policy Online*, April 7, 2014

A copy of the 2014 NASA authorization bill, H.R. 4412, that will be marked up by the Space Subcommittee of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee tomorrow is posted on the committee's website. From a policy perspective, there seem to be only minor changes from the version approved by the committee last year, but a major sticking point -- funding levels --
seems to be resolved. Funding recommendations are not likely to be an issue in the new bill. It recommends funding for only one year, FY2014, which is already in progress and the funding levels are identical to appropriated amounts. [The subcommittee approved the measure on April 9.]

**OPPONENTS ASSAIL WHITE HOUSE PLAN TO CLOSE NOAA LAB IN NORTH CAROLINA**

By Puneet Kollipara, *ScienceInsider*, April 7, 2014

A proposal by the Obama administration to close a historic marine research laboratory near Beaufort, North Carolina, is drawing pushback from the scientific community and local members of Congress. Although the administration frames it as a tough choice in a time of fiscal restraint, critics argue that the proposed closure of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) lab would endanger crucial marine research. The Obama administration quietly proposed closing the lab in the president's fiscal year 2015 budget request released last month, citing the tough fiscal environment.

**RESEARCH TRENDS**

**DEFENSE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Aerospace Industries Association Report, April 9, 2014

Federal investments in science and technology research and development are threatened by the current budget environment. The Aerospace Industries Association is embarking on an education effort to inform policymakers, elected leaders and the American public on the impact of federal R&D dollars on the innovations that redefine our everyday lives. *This report* – the first in a series that examines the impact of federal investment programs – highlights four case studies of private sector technologies and products that have been largely defined or influenced by defense R&D spending.

**SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE ARTS & THE HUMANITIES**

**COSSA’S ANALYSIS OF THE PRESIDENT’S FY 2015 BUDGET REQUEST FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE**

*COSSA Washington Update*, April 7, 2014

On March 4, the Obama Administration rolled out details of its fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request to Congress. The proposal totals $3.901 trillion, including $1.014 trillion in discretionary spending, keeping within the budget caps negotiated by Congress in late
2013. Total federal R&D funding would reach $135.4 billion in FY 2015, $1.7 billion or 1.2 percent more than FY 2014, and would include $65.9 billion for non-defense R&D, an increase of $477 million or 0.7 percent. In general, the President's budget request seeks increases for most federal science programs and agencies of relevance, although the level of increase varies.

**OBAMA SCIENCE ADVISOR, SCIENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS DEFEND SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AT HOUSE HEARING**

*COSA Washington Update, April 7, 2014*

On March 26, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee held an oversight hearing to review the President's fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request for federal science agencies. The sole witness was Dr. John Holdren, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and President Obama's Science Advisor. While the purpose of the hearing was to engage in a dialogue with the Administration's top science official about the President's proposals for federal R&D programs in FY 2015, committee members used the hearing to show just how far apart the majority and minority are in terms of research areas they believe are worth federal support...In response to a question, Holdren discussed the "abundant documentation" that justifies federal investment in social and behavioral science and its value to the American public. In addition, given the modest proportion of NSF funding dedicated annually to social and behavioral science, Holdren stated that the U.S. is "getting a lot of bang for the buck."

**ADVANCING INFORMAL STEM LEARNING**

*NSF Program Solicitation, April 10, 2014*

The Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) program seeks to advance new approaches to and evidence-based understanding of the design and development of STEM learning in informal environments; provide multiple pathways for broadening access to and engagement in STEM learning experiences; advance innovative research on and assessment of STEM learning in informal environments; and develop understandings of deeper learning by participants. The AISL program supports six types of projects: (1) Pathways, (2) Research in Service to Practice, (3) Innovations in Development, (4) Broad Implementation, (5) Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops, and (6) Science Learning+ Proposals.

**SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL DOMAINS IN ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS**

*The National Academies News Release, April 8, 2014*

Electronic health records (EHR) hold the potential to serve as essential tools for improving quality, increasing efficiency, and expanding access of the U.S. health system. They also provide crucial information to providers treating individual patients, as well as to researchers about the determinants of health and the effectiveness of treatment. Evidence of the how social and
behavioral factors contribute to health, in particular, has grown over the last few decades. A new report from the Institute of Medicine identifies 17 "candidate domains" and measures of social determinants of health -- including education, dietary patterns, nicotine use, and exposure to violence -- that should be considered for inclusion in all EHRs. The committee that wrote the report expects to further evaluate the "candidate domains" and winnow the list to a smaller number of core domains in Phase 2 of its study.

* This is the complete news article.

**NEH ANNOUNCES THE VIRTUAL JEFFERSON LECTURE**
NEH Announcement, April 9, 2014

The NEH invites you to join us online for a gala national event featuring Walter Isaacson, the biographer of Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein, speaking on *The Intersection of the Humanities and the Sciences*. Isaacson will be delivering the 2014 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, the most prestigious honor the federal government bestows for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities. The date is 7:30 p.m. May 12th at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. NEH will make a free, high definition, live stream of the lecture available for national viewing. Isaacson is one of the preeminent biographers, journalists, and intellectual leaders of our time. He conducted more than 40 interviews with Steve Jobs to write his definitive biography, getting Jobs to describe his own legacy in both the humanities and in technology. His biography of Albert Einstein defined unconventional thinking; his work on Benjamin Franklin and others describes *The Intersection of the Humanities and the Sciences* in human terms. As president and CEO of the Aspen Institute, he gathers the intellectual elite in a policy powerhouse. NEH will make the Jefferson Lecture instantly available to every community in the United States with a high speed internet connection. We hope that hundreds of groups will sponsor Jefferson Lecture nights and film discussion groups to consider *The Intersection of the Humanities and the Sciences* within their schools, communities, and states. Read more Catch Up Later. Busy on May 12th? The lecture will be available on www.neh.gov for a year to spur reading and discussion of the Humanities and STEM—science, technology, engineering and math.

* This is the complete announcement.

**STUDENT AID**

**HOUSE DEMOCRATS PROPOSE STUDENT LOAN REFINANCING**
*Inside Higher Ed*, April 8, 2014

Democrats in the U.S. House of Representative on Wednesday unveiled their response to the Republican 2015 fiscal year budget released last week by Representative Paul Ryan of
Wisconsin. The plan by Representative Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee, would, among other things, authorize a student loan debt refinancing program and expanded loan repayment options. The budget does not include any details about how those programs would be structured, but it would require them to not increase the deficit over the next 5 or 10 years. Both House budget proposals are largely symbolic political documents aimed at rallying voters in an election year, especially since Congress in December already agreed to top-line spending levels for the fiscal year that begins this October 1. Education Secretary Arne Duncan is set to testify before the House appropriations panel to discuss the administration’s budget proposal on Tuesday.

* This is the complete news article.

**TAX POLICY**

**ASSOCIATIONS COMMENT ON STUDENT-RELATED PROVISIONS IN DRAFT TAX BILL**

The Association of American Universities, April 4, 2014

A group of 11 higher education associations, including the AAU, sent a letter to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp, R-Mich., today providing comments on the student-related provisions in his draft comprehensive tax reform package.

* This is the complete news article.