Subject: DC Update, News from Washington
From: Sarah Walter and Mary Malaspina, Michigan State University’s (MSU’s) Washington Office
Date: December 19, 2014

* Notes:
  • Past copies of the DC Update can be found on the Federal Relations section of the webpage for MSU’s Office of the Vice President for Governmental Affairs.
  • The DC Update will pause for the holidays. The next update will go out on January 9, 2015.

* NEWS SUMMARY
* SUMMARY OF THE FY15 CROMNIBUS
* NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

NEWS SUMMARY

On Saturday, the Senate passed the $1.1 billion FY15 Appropriations Cromibus. On Tuesday, President Obama signed it into law. This legislation funds every agency in the federal government, except the Department of Homeland Security (which is funded under a three-month Continuing Resolution in response to President Obama’s recent executive order on immigration), until September 30, 2015. It includes $90 million for the Department of Energy (DOE)/MSU Facility for Rare Isotope Beams.

In its last week of business for the year, the Senate also has:
  • Confirmed several White House nominations, including
    o James Cole, Jr. as the Department of Education’s General Counsel;
    o Vivek Murthy as Surgeon General; and
    o Jonathan Stivers as Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
  • Approved a tax extenders package.

Senator-elect Peters has been named to the:
  • Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee;
  • Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs;
  • Senate Small Business Committee; and
  • Joint Economic Committee.

Congressman-elect John Moolenaar (R-Midland) has been named to the House Science, Space & Technology Committee. He also will sit on the House Agriculture Committee.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah has announced that he will step down by mid-February.
## NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGRICULTURE</th>
<th>WEBINAR ON NRC REVIEW OF AFRI PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATHLETICS</td>
<td>AS N.C.A.A. ISSUES PILE UP, A CALL FOR A COMMISSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANKING</td>
<td>COLLEGE CREDIT CARD AGREEMENTS CONTINUE TO DECLINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES</td>
<td>NIH ALLOWS RESTART OF MERS RESEARCH THAT HAD BEEN QUESTIONED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NIH COMPLEMENTARY AND INTEGRATIVE HEALTH AGENCY GETS NEW NAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NIH REGIONAL SEMINAR ON PROGRAM FUNDING &amp; GRANTS ADMINISTRATION IN BALTIMORE, MD - SAVE THE DATE - MAY 6-8, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF LUPUS RESEARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE BRAIN INITIATIVE: CLINICAL STUDIES TO ADVANCE NEXT-GENERATION INVASIVE DEVICES FOR RECORDING AND MODULATION IN THE HUMAN CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT TRIAL INNOVATION CENTERS - TICS FOR THE CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE AWARD NETWORK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT INNOVATION CENTERS (RICS) FOR THE CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE AWARD NETWORK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS</td>
<td>SPENDING BILL HOLDS SCANT, IF ANY, INCREASES FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCIENCE AGENCIES MAKE GAINS DESPITE TIGHT U.S. BUDGET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OMNIBUS REPORT LANGUAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OMB DIRECTOR SHAUN DONOVAN ON THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 83, CONSOLIDATED AND FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APLU SIGNED ONTO NDD UNITED LETTER REGARDING SEQUESTRATION; CAMPUSES INVITED TO SIGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPROPRIATORS FACE LONG ODDS FOR FISCAL 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY</td>
<td>A NEW SYSTEM OF COLLEGE RATINGS— INVITATION TO COMMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RATINGS PLAN ARRIVES, DETAILS SCANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEHIND THE RATINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GOP GIVES FEDS’ COLLEGE RATING PLAN AN F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. ANNOUNCES RULEMAKING ON INCOME-BASED REPAYMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GAO REPORT EXAMINES STATE FUNDING CUTS AND REDUCED COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INNOVATION</td>
<td>GOODLATTE AND ISSA: THE NEW ODD COUPLE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES
• OBAMA FORGES NEW OPENING WITH CUBA
• GOP DIVIDED ON OBAMA’S OPENING TO CUBA
• EASIER PATH TO CUBA
• RESEARCHERS APPLAUD U.S.-CUBA ACCORD
• RAJIV SHAH TO LEAVE USAID IN FEBRUARY
• CLOUDY CRYSTAL BALL ON FEED THE FUTURE
• NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR GLOBAL INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENT AWARDS FOR LOW-TO MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY
• REPORT ON THE SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

INTERNET POLICY
• NEW ON COMMERCE: PETERS, WHO’S ALREADY WEIGHED IN ON NET NEUTRALITY
• WHEELER REBUFFS ANTITRUST-BASED APPROACH TO NET NEUTRALITY
• FOR THE NET NEUTRALITY RECORD

MICHIGAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
• NEW FACES, POPULATION DROP HURT MICHIGAN’S INFLUENCE

PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING
• ANTARCTIC RESEARCH
• NUTRIENT SENSOR CHALLENGE
• BIPARTISAN CYBERSECURITY R&D BILL HEADED TO PRESIDENT'S DESK
• ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PROVES TO BE POLITICAL SWEET SPOT
• U.S. FUSION EFFORT MELTS DOWN
• CONGRESS KEEPS NASA EDUCATION PROGRAMS ALOFT
• CRITICAL RESILIENT INTERDEPENDENT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES
• US-SOUTH KOREA COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

RESEARCH POLICY
• FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET’S UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS
• HONORING WOMEN IN STEM
• NSF UPDATE ON RELOCATION TO ALEXANDRIA, VA.
• HIGHER ED COMMUNITY ASKS FAA TO RELAX DRONE REGULATIONS

SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY
• PROTECTING WHOM?

SOCIAL SCIENCES & THE HUMANITIES
• RESEARCHERS CRITICIZE PLAN TO REMOVE KEY QUESTION IN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY
• INVESTING IN BREAKTHROUGH LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
• NIJ: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON FORENSIC SCIENCE
• APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS FOR 2015 NATIONAL DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP RESIDENCY PROGRAM
• NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS 2015 FUNDING GUIDELINES POSTED
AGRICULTURE

WEBINAR ON NRC REVIEW OF AFRI PROGRAM
Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources, National Academy of Sciences Email, December 18, 2014

Please join us for another look at the NRC report “Spurring Innovation in Food and Agriculture: A Review of the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Program.” The committee will be hosting a webinar on Friday, January 9, 2015 from 9:30-11:30am EST. There will be a presentation from the committee and reaction from USDA-NIFA Director, Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, followed by your questions. If you are interested in joining the webinar, please register here by January 4: http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1939885/Registration-AFRI-January-9-Webinar. A separate email will be sent on January 8 with instructions for joining the webinar via WebEx. If you have any questions about the webinar, please contact Jenna Briscoe (jbriscoe@nas.edu).

* This is the complete news article.

ATHLETICS

AS N.C.A.A. ISSUES PILE UP, A CALL FOR A COMMISSION

After hearings on Capitol Hill this year to examine the N.C.A.A. and college sports, some lawmakers believe they have found the next step for the federal government’s role: a presidential commission. A group of legislators and proponents of reform pushed the idea Tuesday in a closed-door meeting with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in Washington. Led by Representative Jim Moran, Democrat of Virginia, who recently introduced a bipartisan bill calling for a commission, the group of about 20 discussed the issues facing college sports. They include a unionization push at Northwestern, several antitrust lawsuits aimed at the
N.C.A.A., an academic scandal at North Carolina and a new governing system that will give prominent athletic programs the freedom to make some of their own rules.

**BANKING**

**COLLEGE CREDIT CARD AGREEMENTS CONTINUE TO DECLINE**
*Inside Higher Ed, December 16, 2014*

The number of colleges that partner with financial institutions to offer credit cards has dropped by nearly 70 percent since 2009, according to new data from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

**BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

**NIH ALLOWS RESTART OF MERS RESEARCH THAT HAD BEEN QUESTIONED**
*By Nell Greenfield Boyce, NPR, December 18, 2014*

Some researchers who study the virus that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome got an early Christmas present: permission to resume experiments that the federal government abruptly halted in October.

**NIH COMPLEMENTARY AND INTEGRATIVE HEALTH AGENCY GETS NEW NAME**
*National Institutes of Health (NIH) News Release, December 17, 2014*

The NIH agency with primary responsibility for research on promising health approaches that already are in use by the American public has a new name — the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. The revision from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine was mandated as part of the omnibus budget measure signed by President Obama.

**NIH REGIONAL SEMINAR ON PROGRAM FUNDING & GRANTS ADMINISTRATION IN BALTIMORE, MD - SAVE THE DATE - MAY 6-8, 2015**
*NIH Notice, December 17, 2014*

The NIH Regional Seminar offers a comprehensive program for the NIH extramural community about the NIH grants process and related policies, including such topics as Fundamentals of the NIH, compliance, peer review, grant writing for success, pre-award and post-award issues for administrators and investigators, animal and human subject research, and how to interact electronically with NIH. In addition to a strong, track for of sessions for administrators, a redesigned track for new investigators will provide step-by-step guidance on mapping your
career, an understanding of the funding process and what can be expected up to the time of award. To add to the array of topic choices, special interest sessions are provided on topics like research integrity, data sharing, foreign collaborations, and more.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF LUPUS RESEARCH
NIH Notice, December 17, 2014

The NIAMS is leading an effort to evaluate progress on The Future Directions of Lupus Research (lupus plan), which was released in 2007, and to develop a coordinated action plan for future lupus research at the request of the Congressional Lupus Caucus. To help inform this process, we welcome comments from the public including significant accomplishments since the release of the lupus plan, important opportunities in lupus research, and suggestions for updating the Broad Goals and Priorities elaborated in the 2007 lupus plan.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE BRAIN INITIATIVE: CLINICAL STUDIES TO ADVANCE NEXT-GENERATION INVASIVE DEVICES FOR RECORDING AND MODULATION IN THE HUMAN CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM
NIH Notice, December 17, 2014

The NIH BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) Initiative intends to promote a new initiative by publishing a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to solicit applications for Clinical Studies to Advance Next-Generation Invasive Devices for Recording and Modulation in the Human Central Nervous System. This Notice is being provided to allow potential applicants sufficient time to develop meaningful collaborations for responsive projects. The FOA is expected to be published in January 2015 with an expected application due date in Spring 2015.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT TRIAL INNOVATION CENTERS - TICS FOR THE CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE AWARD NETWORK
NIH Notice, December 19, 2014

The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) intends to complement and enhance the existing capabilities of the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) consortium by promoting greater capacity for the CTSA hubs to collaboratively serve as an expert network of innovation in the implementation of multi-site studies. To this end, NCATS intends to publish a FOA to solicit applications for Trial Innovation Centers (TICs). These centers will build on the results of ongoing CTSA consortium activities, and will facilitate the implementation of multi-site clinical trials by developing innovative approaches to increasing clinical trial efficiency and effectiveness, and providing expert, streamlined clinical coordination so that the CTSA consortium can catalyze translation. This Notice is being provided to allow potential applicants sufficient time to develop meaningful collaborations and establish
approaches to perform these duties. The FOA is expected to be published in winter 2015 with an expected application due date in spring 2015.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT INNOVATION CENTERS (RICS) FOR THE CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE AWARD NETWORK
NIH Notice, December 19, 2014

Multi-site clinical trials are a critical scientific step in bringing new interventions to patients. However, they frequently experience challenges in recruiting participants, leading to additional cost and delays. NCATS intends to promote innovation and efficiency in participant recruitment into multi-site studies through RICs. To that end, NCATS plans to publish a FOA to establish RICs building on the existing expertise at the CTSA hubs and on current CTSA consortium initiatives. This Notice is being provided to allow potential applicants sufficient time to develop meaningful collaborations and responsive projects. The FOA is expected to be published in winter 2015 with an expected application due date in spring 2015.

FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

SPENDING BILL HOLDS SCANT, IF ANY, INCREASES FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The U.S. Senate gave final passage on Saturday to an overdue spending bill for the 2015 fiscal year that provides modest increases for research, while holding education spending mostly flat. The bill includes a one-year increase of $172 million for the National Science Foundation (NSF), and about $150 million for the NIH, the leading provider of basic research money to American universities. It cuts spending on Pell Grants by $303 million, shifting most of that money into student-loan servicing. While the maximum Pell award will still increase by $100, to $5,830, in the coming year, the cut will add to expected shortfalls down the road.

SCIENCE AGENCIES MAKE GAINS DESPITE TIGHT U.S. BUDGET
By Jeffrey Mervis and David Malakoff, Science, December 19, 2014

In Congress, clout still counts. Once the political shenanigans ended and the dust settled, the $1 trillion 2015 federal budget approved by Congress last week demonstrates that a few lawmakers can still make their voices heard. In a year in which Congress had no new money to play with, that fact was good news indeed for NASA and the NSF.

OMNIBUS REPORT LANGUAGE
American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Policy Alert, December 17, 2014
Accompanying the FY 2015 omnibus bill is report language that outlines congressional intent and provides some direction to federal agencies as to how the U.S. Congress expects appropriations to be directed and managed. Some highlights include: Climate Science: The omnibus budget report omits language included in earlier versions of the bill that would have restricted the DOE, Department of Defense, NSF, and NASA from implementing recommendations from various climate change reports such as the National Climate Assessment and the IPCC report. It does, however, call on the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Pentagon to report on how much they spend to implement recommendations from the climate reports.

NSF: The report encourages NSF to establish the National Brain Observatory working group in conjunction with other agencies. It also retains language in the FY 2015 CJS appropriations bill (House Report 113-448) that would limit increases above the President's budget request to only "math and physical sciences; computer and information science and engineering; engineering; and biological sciences." Depending on how NSF's general counsel interprets the language, it could mean the Geoscience and Social, Behavioral, and Economic Directorates would be restricted from additional growth. NIH: The report language accompanying the Labor-HHS bill includes $12.6 million in the Common Fund for the Kids First Act to support pediatric research. At the same time, it notes that the NIH should take disease burden into consideration. It also includes language that indicates that Congress expects NIH to fund research only on "scientific opportunities" and to ensure there is rigorous oversight of grant awards that reflect its "core mission;" this is an apparent nod to some congressional leaders who have highlighted specific grants that seem frivolous to them. It also gives NIH 120 days to report to Congress on how the agency plans to improve the ability of young investigators to receive first R01 grants, without specifying an age target. Finally, it encourages the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct a workshop on antibiotic resistance.

* This is the complete news article.

OMB DIRECTOR SHAUN DONOVAN ON THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 83, CONSOLIDATED AND FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Blog, December 17, 2014

The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, continues last winter’s progress in returning to a more regular order budget process and avoiding manufactured crises while continuing to make needed investments in economic growth and opportunity. For the first time since the financial crisis, this agreement marks two consecutive stable years of funding for agencies, allowing them to adapt to changing needs while also giving agencies the certainty that will allow them to plan and execute their budgets to serve the American people. As the President has said, the legislation is a compromise and no one got everything they wanted. But, it is a step towards proving that a divided government can work without governing by crisis or threatening an economic recovery that’s growing stronger.

APLU SIGNED ONTO NDD UNITED LETTER REGARDING SEQUESTRATION; CAMPUSES INVITED
APPROPRIATORS FACE LONG ODDS FOR FISCAL 2016

By Tamar Hallerman, CQ.com, December 18, 2014

For the second time in two years, appropriators managed to find an ugly, but viable, path toward clearing spending bills that fund the bulk of the federal government, no small accomplishment in a gridlocked Congress. Next year, it's only going to be more difficult, even though Republicans, with control of both chambers, will try to mount a unified front on spending matters. For one thing, appropriators do not have the benefit of having their top-line spending limits in place months ahead of time like they did last year under the 2013 budget agreement (PL 113-67). In addition to a head start, the agreement prevented appropriators from getting consumed in debates over defense versus nondefense priorities and limited the overall scale of the disagreements on spending choices. Appropriators' timeline could be compressed for fiscal 2016 if there is a drawn-out debate over fiscal 2015 funding for the Homeland Security Department. DHS funding expires February 27 under the fiscal 2015 wrap-up package the president signed into law Tuesday (HR 83) and many Republicans would like to use the next funding bill as leverage to respond to the president's executive actions on immigration. If that debate stretches into overtime, other work on the budget resolution and fiscal 2016 appropriations could be delayed. The sequester mechanism also comes back into effect for fiscal 2016 if lawmakers do not adhere to rigid defense and nondefense spending caps, or pass a law to temporarily or permanently end the across-the-board cuts. This could tempt lawmakers to pass bills with higher spending levels, and, if they can't reach a deal to change the caps, allow the sequester to bring things back in line. New challenges could also arise as Republican leaders decide whether they would like to showcase compromise or highlight their differences with the White House on fiscal issues ahead of the 2016 elections. Republican leaders are eager to show voters they can govern ahead of the elections. But other political factors at play - mainly the push for higher defense spending and the desire to challenge the president on immigration, health care, and regulations regarding the environment and Wall Street -- will significantly complicate any efforts to move spending bills in the 114th Congress. Budget Resolution: For fiscal 2016, lawmakers will be returning to the discretionary limits set by the debt limit law (PL 112-25). For the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, 2015, defense spending is set to rise by $1.7 billion to $523 billion, while non-defense spending will fall slightly to $492.3 billion in 2016 from $492.4 billion, according to Congressional Budget Office estimates. A big factor that could determine whether appropriators can complete their work
will be the defense and nondefense top-line figures the Budget committees choose to set for fiscal 2016 this spring. Those numbers determine how much money appropriators have to divide between their 12 subcommittees, and any perceptions of imbalance among the numbers could lead to dissent down the line as appropriators look to pass their bills in committee and on the floor. There is pressure from many Republicans to increase the money available for defense programs for fiscal 2016 above the level in the deficit law. Democrats will insist on equal boosts for nondefense spending. As the fiscal 2015 omnibus demonstrated, Republican leaders will likely need to woo some Democrats since a block of conservatives will never vote for any appropriations bill. Any budget deal that does not include such a compromise on defense and nondefense would likely draw a veto threat from the White House and criticism from GOP appropriators, who have argued in the past that the cuts in non-defense spending would make it difficult to pass appropriations bills through Congress. "You will see that play out again next year," said John Hoeven of North Dakota, a Senate GOP appropriator, of the tension between the parties on defense and nondefense spending. The onus will be on the House and Senate Budget committees to renegotiate a spending framework, but with Republicans controlling both chambers, any product will likely be more partisan. That would make the road ahead for appropriators all the tougher, especially in the Senate where they will need Democratic votes to pass any bill. "Republicans have the opportunity to show the country that they can govern. If they simply have arbitrary and capricious rules that take the responsibility of governing off their hands and blindly drive by autopilot, they won't be reelected next time around," said Robert Livingston, former Republican Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee who is now a lobbyist at the Livingston Group. Republicans will want to avoid the situation that occurred on the House floor in July 2013, when Democrats and Republican moderates rebelled against the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill because they perceived the top line to be too austere. In that case, the Transportation-HUD funding level had been cut significantly by GOP appropriators so that defense spending could be boosted under the caps set in that year's budget resolution. A similar dynamic could play out again next year. "It's possible to have a revolt by a broad segment of members against the spending limitations of both defense and nondefense because they have become increasingly hard to deal with," said Scott Lilly, a senior fellow at the liberal Center for American Progress who previously worked as Democratic staff director on House Appropriations. Policy Riders: The Republican desire to fight Obama administration's signature domestic policy pieces could also make some sort of spending agreement tough to secure this year. Incoming Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has vowed to use policy riders in must-pass spending bills to challenge the president on EPA regulations, the healthcare law (PL 111-148, PL 111-152) and the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory overhaul (PL 111-203). "If you believe one of the biggest problems confronting the country is over-regulation by this administration, the single most effective way to begin to rein in the aggressive regulators, who in my view have done great damage to this economy, is in the bills that fund the regulators," McConnell told CQ Roll Call. But any provisions that too severely challenge the president would cause Democrats to balk and would likely draw a veto from the president, which could put appropriations work in jeopardy. Immigration will likely be the most tempting target for the GOP in spending bills. Republican leaders were able to dissuade their searing ranks from fighting the president's executive actions in the text of the 2015 omnibus. But in addition to the DHS spending bill in February, Republicans will likely want to take more swings at the president in any fiscal 2016 spending bill. Regardless of the politics of the new Congress, many observers believe the omnibus spending agreements of the last two years have
set a precedent that Republican leaders will likely be under pressure to replicate, especially if they want to prove to voters they can govern. "The fact that we've had two omnibuses in the last two years sets a precedent that I think Republicans need to try to conform to if they can," said Lilly. "Part of their campaign rhetoric was that if they won the Senate they could make the place run better. If the two bodies start quarreling and can't produce a budget resolution and an omnibus or appropriations bills that pass, then it's going to look like they couldn't keep their promise." But it's unclear how the process will unfold in the interim and whether Republicans can even get to the point where omnibus negotiations are possible. Paul M. Krawzak and Niels Lesniewski contributed to this report.

* This is the complete news article.

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

**A NEW SYSTEM OF COLLEGE RATINGS-- INVITATION TO COMMENT**

...The college ratings system has multiple related purposes. A critical purpose of the ratings system is to recognize institutions that are succeeding at expanding access, maintaining affordability, and ensuring strong student outcomes and setting them apart from institutions that need to improve. By shedding light on key measures, the ratings system will support greater accountability and incentivize schools to make greater progress in these areas of shared priorities, especially at serving and graduating low income and first generation students and holding down the cost of college. In and of itself, expanded information around a small number of critical measures, with appropriate attention to institutional variation, can be useful to the general public, researchers, philanthropists, policymakers, and other decision-makers. Researchers and policymakers will have new tools to examine colleges’ performance, identifying underperforming institutions, and recognizing excellence, which can in turn help the academic enterprise explore the policies and practices that can strengthen efforts at colleges and universities to improve. Some existing college “rankings” have rewarded exclusivity and rising college costs, moving our nation away from tackling some of the toughest challenges facing our American higher education system. Using better performance information (and continuing to improve upon the data we have) can help realign the incentives towards our goal of helping more students from all backgrounds succeed.

**RATINGS PLAN ARRIVES, DETAILS SCANT**

After nearly a year and a half of public debate over its proposed college ratings, the Obama administration on Friday provided the first glimpse into how it will structure such a system, including the criteria it will use to judge colleges. The administration’s “framework” identifies nearly a dozen metrics that officials are planning to use -- but leaves a host of important questions unresolved...
BEHIND THE RATINGS
By Michael Stratford, Inside Higher Ed, December 19, 2014

Friday’s release of a college ratings “framework” was a relatively anticlimactic milestone that capped months of speculation, delays and sometimes-fierce criticism from higher education leaders. The U.S. Department of Education published just a handful of pages of information, much of which underscores what officials have been saying publicly for months.

GOP GIVES FEDS’ COLLEGE RATING PLAN AN F
By Stephanie Simon and Allie Grasgreen, Politico Pro, December 18, 2014

The Obama administration will soon publish its plan to rate more than 6,000 colleges nationwide based on the value they provide to students and to society. The goal is to steer billions in federal financial aid toward the colleges that rate highly — and to yank funds from those that fail to meet administration standards on yardsticks such as the graduation rate, the cost of tuition or the percentage of low-income students on campus. Congressional Republicans, outraged, are already going on the attack.

U.S. ANNOUNCES RULEMAKING ON INCOME-BASED REPAYMENT
Inside Higher Ed, December 19, 2014

The U.S. Department of Education is soliciting nominations for its rulemaking panel that will convene next year to carry out President Obama’s directive to make an additional 5 million loan borrowers eligible for federal government’s most generous income-based repayment program.

GAO REPORT EXAMINES STATE FUNDING CUTS AND REDUCED COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY
Association of Universities (AAU), December 17, 2014

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) this week released a report to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee that examines how state funding cuts to public colleges and universities have contributed to tuition increases at those institutions. The report offers possible ways for the federal government to encourage states to make college more affordable, such as creating new grants, providing more consumer information on affordability, and changing federal student aid programs.

* This is the complete news article.
GOODLATTE AND ISSA: THE NEW ODD COUPLE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
By Erin Mershon, Politico's Morning Tech, December 15, 2014

Look out for plenty of jurisdictional jostling next year, as House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte and Darrell Issa stake out their roles on copyright and patent policy - and risk a turf war in the process. Kate and your MT'er have the story, new this morning: When Goodlatte appointed Issa 'to head the panel's intellectual property subcommittee last week, the Virginia Republican made it abundantly clear that copyright issues wouldn't be part of Issa's portfolio - taking a huge bite out of his new territory. The apparent concession to Issa: He'll get more leeway on patent reform, an issue of personal interest to the California Republican, who holds 37 patents for car alarm technology. But while many in Congress expect Goodlatte's patent bill, the Innovation Act, to be the focus of reform efforts in the House next year, Issa may have other plans. He said in interview this week -- standing mere steps away from Goodlatte off the House floor -- that he wants to hold a new legislative hearing on the subject. 'And copyright, of course, is an area of particular interest for Goodlatte. 'Issa, however, isn't concerned about Goodlatte's move to keep copyright under the jurisdiction of the full committee. He still envisions himself playing an important role in that area - and he's already identified specific areas he'd like to reform, he said in an interview...According to a House Judiciary aide, however, Goodlatte plans to run the show on copyright. 'All copyright matters will now be handled at the full committee, and all patents, trademarks and courts issues will continue to be handled by the [intellectual property] subcommittee,' the aide said.'

* This is the complete news article.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

OBAMA FORGES NEW OPENING WITH CUBA
By CQ Staff, CQ.com, December 17, 2014

The Obama administration announced Wednesday it would begin reversing the half-century-old U.S. policy of isolating Cuba, including an easing of sanctions and the launch of talks to establish diplomatic relations with the island nation. The move would effectively undo one of the most significant remaining policies from the Cold War, as well as fulfill a pledge by President Barack Obama to explore possible openings with the communist regime. U.S. officials said Washington would reopen its embassy in Havana in the coming months, enlarge the scope of allowable travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens and expand trade in certain goods, including building materials and agricultural equipment, between the two nations. But travel for tourism to Cuba for now will continue to be restricted. “These steps will be the most significant changes to our Cuba policy in more than 50 years,” a senior administration official said in a call with reporters. "Openness is a better policy than isolation in advancing the policies that we care about in Cuba.” Obama spoke with Cuban leader Raul Castro on Tuesday, according to senior administration officials, who added that Obama made it clear that the United States intends to move to full diplomatic relations, but “also to continue our advocacy for human rights in Cuba."
U.S. officials also announced that U.S. citizen Alan Gross had been freed from a Cuban prison, where he had been held for five years on spying charges. Congressional leaders and senior committee members have been briefed on the changes, which administration officials said did not need congressional approval. "We understand that Congress is unlikely to take those steps in the immediate future, so what we are doing today is acting within the boundaries of the law," a senior official said, "through what the president can do." The official added, "We’d encourage members of Congress to look at what they can do to” to advance these policies.

A senior Democrat immediately hailed the changes, which were announced a day after the 113th Congress held its final day. "Opening the door with Cuba for trade, travel, and the exchange of ideas will create a force for positive change in Cuba that more than 50 years of our current policy of exclusion could not achieve," Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, the No. 2 Democrat in the Senate, said in a written statement. But it's clear that many Republicans will be angry with decision, which means the issue is likely to be a battleground in the 114th Congress. Florida Sen. Marco Rubio called it "inexplicable" and characterized it as an attempt to appease a rogue regime. "I intend to use my role as incoming Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s Western Hemisphere subcommittee to make every effort to block this dangerous and desperate attempt by the President to burnish his legacy at the Cuban people’s expense," Rubio said in a written statement. "Appeasing the Castro brothers will only cause other tyrants from Caracas to Tehran to Pyongyang to see that they can take advantage of President Obama’s naïveté during his final two years in office." Administration officials tried to paint the move as a strategic way to bring about the kind of changes in Cuba that 53 years of sanctions and embargo had been unable to do. “We believe that this policy shift and the way we will engage the Cuban government on democracy and human rights will greatly help our policy initiatives around the hemisphere.” The reexamination of U.S. policy will also include a review of Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism, according to a White House fact sheet.

* This is the complete news article.

**GOP DIVIDED ON OBAMA’S OPENING TO CUBA**

By Rachel Oswald and Rob Margetta, *CQ.com*, December 17, 2014

Republican lawmakers are divided on President Barack Obama's moves to normalize relations with Cuba, reflecting longstanding differences between foreign policy hawks rigidly opposed to the Castro regime and Republicans who want to get more American agricultural and manufactured goods into Cuban markets. Florida Republican Marco Rubio, a Cuban-American who will chair the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Western Hemisphere in the new Congress, pledged to lead efforts to "unravel" the president's actions and block any attempt to lift the statutory embargo against Cuba imposed during the Kennedy administration. But Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona — who joined two Democratic lawmakers in flying to Cuba to escort released American contractor Alan Gross home — predicted broader support among fellow Republicans for a thaw in relations with Cuba. Former Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard G. Lugar, an Indiana Republican who now heads a think tank affiliated with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, called Obama's actions "a constructive move" and said it creates "more opportunities for relationships between Americans and Cubans that many have sought for the past five decades or so." But Lugar also
said broader Republican opposition to Obama's executive action on immigration could complicate matters. "I think those arguments will intensify as Congress returns and immigration is discussed," Lugar said. Many Republican lawmakers appeared to be taking a wait-and-see approach Wednesday, after Obama laid out plans to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba, open a U.S. embassy in Havana, allow more Americans to travel to the country, permit Cuban-Americans to send more money to relatives back home, authorize an expansion of exports and review the nation's listing as an official state sponsor of terrorism.

“The new U.S. policy announced by the administration is no doubt sweeping, and as of now there is no real understanding as to what changes the Cuban government is prepared to make," said incoming Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker, R-Tenn. "We will be closely examining the implications of these major policy changes in the next Congress." Montana Republican John Thune, incoming Commerce, Science and Transportation chairman, called Obama's announcement "the biggest change to U.S.-Cuban policy in the last 50 years." "The embargo on Cuba is codified by law and can only be changed by Congress," Thune said. "I will be joining my colleagues in closely examining the implications of the policy changes announced today as we move into the next Congress.” Crossfire Between Constituencies: Congressional Republicans have long been caught in the crossfire between Cuban-Americans opposed to the Castro regime and business and agricultural constituencies favoring more trade with Cuba. Those tensions were apparent as GOP lawmakers reacted to Obama's announcement, which followed a deal by Cuba to let Gross leave the country and release more than 50 political prisoners, while also swapping a jailed U.S. intelligence operative for three Cuban spies held by the United States. Rubio called Obama "naive" for believing that engaging Cuba would do more to advance U.S. interests than trying to isolate the Castro regime. The potential 2016 presidential contender said the White House "conceded everything and gained very little" and he blasted Obama for not securing binding commitments for free elections, an uncensored Internet and the formation of political parties. "We're going to have a very interesting couple of years discussing how you are going to get an ambassador nominated and an embassy funded," Rubio said, while conceding that "many of the changes that have been made today fall within the purview of the presidency." Rubio is joined in opposition by another Cuban-American, outgoing Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Robert Menendez, D-N.J., who said the president's actions were "intended to circumvent the intent and spirit of U.S. law and the U.S. Congress." Menendez said the United States "has just thrown the Cuban regime an economic lifeline." But Flake, who supported lifting the Cuban embargo during his years in the House, rejected Rubio's characterization of the deal as a giveaway to Cuba. "That is the wrong way to look at it," Flake said. "It is simply wrong. The policy that we have had in place for the past 50 years has done more to keep the Castro regime in place than anything we could have done." Flake suggested many Republicans share his view. "My sense is that most of my colleagues feel we are long past due," he said. "Fifty years. So I think the politics are good." Among the 22 House Republicans who voted in favor of a 2006 appropriations amendment that would have had the effect of lifting the embargo on trade with Cuba were three current senators: Flake, John Boozman of Arkansas and Jerry Moran of Kansas. The votes by Boozman and Moran reflected support in agricultural states for getting more American farm products into Cuban markets. The U.S. Trade Representative says $350 million in American farm products were exported to Cuba in 2013. Moran released a statement Wednesday welcoming the release of Gross, though refraining from commenting on the broader plans to normalize relations with Cuba. Not all farm-belt Republicans favor easing sanctions on Cuba. Sen. Charles E. Grassley of
Iowa called the policy change a "gift for the Cuban government that has done nothing to provide basic, fundamental human rights to the Cuban people." He said Obama's decision "rewards a brutal regime." Diplomatic Funding Threatened: The appropriations process is one avenue that might give congressional Republicans some leverage to thwart Obama's Cuban policy. South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham, the likely chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations, said in a Twitter post that he would do "all in my power to block the use of funds to open an embassy in Cuba. Normalizing relations with Cuba is a bad idea at a bad time." But Sen. Patrick J. Leahy — who accompanied Flake and Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., on the flight to Cuba to retrieve Gross — said denying funds for diplomatic activities would leave Americans stranded in Cuba without an embassy's protection. "I don't think American businesses would like that, certainly the businesses we have spoken to wouldn't like that," the Vermont Democrat said. Flake agreed: "It would be really counterproductive to block funding for an embassy. We're going to have more Americans traveling to Cuba."

* This is the complete news article.

**EASIER PATH TO CUBA**
By Elizabeth Redden, *Inside Higher Ed*, December 18, 2104

Wednesday's announcement by the White House that the U.S. will re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba will have implications for further expanding academic travel to the island nation. [The] announcement, which relates in part to travel, educational and otherwise, promises to open things further. A White House press release says that general licenses will be available to "all authorized travelers" in 12 categories, several of which are education- or research-related and have implications for students or faculty...Obama also announced plans to loosen restrictions on banking, including by permitting the use of U.S. credit and debit cards by travelers in Cuba.

**RESEARCHERS APPLAUD U.S.-CUBA ACCORD**

A new era in U.S.-Cuba relations could be a boon for scientific cooperation between the two nations. The diplomatic breakthrough between the Cold War foes, announced separately today by U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro, is expected to immediately loosen restrictions on U.S. and Cuban scientists getting together for joint research. It may also pave the way for U.S. organizations to sponsor workshops and meetings in Cuba and to export state-of-the-art instruments to Cuba, activities now essentially prohibited under U.S. law.

**RAJIV SHAH TO LEAVE USAID IN FEBRUARY**
By Ellyn Ferguson, *CQ.com*, December 17, 2014

Rajiv Shah, administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, will leave
he said he is optimistic that supporters could get the bill through the 114th Congress quickly. Sen. Bob Casey, R-Penn., who also sought authorization for Feed the Future, stayed optimistic last night that supporters could move quickly on the issue in 2015. Shah and USAID’s public profile rose considerably this year as the agency became the administration’s on-the-ground coordinator for U.S. efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

* This is the complete news article.

CLOUDY CRYSTAL BALL ON FEED THE FUTURE
By Ellyn Ferguson, CQ.com, December 17, 2014

Sen. Robert Casey said there’s a slim chance the Senate will act on legislation codifying the Feed the Future initiative before adjourning for the year. [The Senate did not vote on the legislation.] The House passed the legislation (HR 5656) by voice vote last week before going into recess. “There’s no substantial opposition (to the bill),” Casey, D-Pa., said Tuesday. The larger challenge, he said, is the Senate clock. Casey and Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., have their own bill (S 2909) to authorize Feed the Future, a $1 billion a year strategy by the Obama administration to boost economic development and agriculture production in selected poor countries. But the senators and the sponsor of the House bill, Rep. Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J., worked to agree on a compromise they could support as Congress approached adjournment. The amended House bill would authorize the initiative for fiscal 2015 and move reporting requirements on the programs coordinated by the U.S. Agency for International Development closer to the ones in the Senate bill. Casey said he would continue to work for Senate approval this year. However, he said he is optimistic that supporters could get the bill through the 114th Congress quickly.
with bipartisan support.

* This is the complete news article.

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO PUBLISH A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR GLOBAL INFECTION DISEASE RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENT AWARDS FOR LOW-TO MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY**
NIH Notice, December 17, 2014

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases intends to promote a new initiative by publishing a FOA to solicit applications for Global Infectious Disease Research Administration Development Awards for Low-to Middle-Income Country Institutions. This Notice is being provided to allow potential applicants sufficient time to develop responsive projects and to plan and coordinate collaborations with in-country grants management/business offices and U.S. grants management offices that manage NIH awards. The FOA is expected to be published in January 2015 with an expected application due date in July 2015.

**REPORT ON THE SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015**
*Federal Register*, December 17, 2014

This report is provided in accordance with section 608(d)(1) of the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003...The Act requires the Millennium Challenge Corporation (‘‘MCC’’ ) to determine the countries that will be eligible to receive MCA assistance for the fiscal year, based on their demonstrated commitment to just and democratic governance, economic freedom, and investing in their people, as well as on the opportunity to reduce poverty and generate economic growth in the country.

**INTERNET POLICY**

**NEW ON COMMERCE: PETERS, WHO’S ALREADY WEIGHED IN ON NET NEUTRALITY**

Senate Democrats are losing two seats on the Commerce Committee and a seat on Judiciary, too, per a list of committee assignments circulated. Sens. Tom Udall, Joe Manchin and incoming Sen. Gary Peters are joining Commerce. Peters, who replaces Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan, was more outspoken than most congressional candidates on the issue of net neutrality -- he wrote to [Federal Communications Commission] FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler back in July to urge him to prevent paid prioritization and discrimination by ISPs. Sen. Mazie Hirono lost her seat on Judiciary (though she's trading it for a spot on Intelligence). No one is set to join. Senate Republicans are expected to finalize their committee assignments next week.
**WHEELER REBUFFS ANTITRUST-BASED APPROACH TO NET NEUTRALITY**


Part of the Republican argument against new FCC net neutrality rules has been that antitrust law already on the books could be enough to protect consumers. But FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler -- as you might expect -- is a firm believer that his agency needs to take the reins, he told House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte in a letter sent last week and made public Monday. 'At the core of all of these commission efforts has been a view endorsed by four chairmen and a majority of the commission's members in office during that time: that FCC oversight is essential to protect the openness that is critical to the Internet's success.' Wheeler's letter was a response to Goodlatte's missive on the issue sent last month, in which he promises further oversight from the Judiciary Committee and consideration of 'whether legislative action is necessary to ensure that antitrust law is the preferred method of enforcement' for keeping the Internet open.

* This is the complete news article.

**FOR THE NET NEUTRALITY RECORD**


FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler has decided that there's no need for the commission to issue a public notice to bolster the record for a Title II approach to its new open Internet rules, commission sources tell Brooks. Wheeler considered issuing a public notice after President Barack Obama called for the commission to take the utility approach to network neutrality, but a flurry of new comments and ex parte meetings have filled the blanks, and the thinking now is that issuing a public notice would just slow the commission down. It's still unclear when Wheeler will ask the commission for a vote, but look for one in the first quarter of 2015.

* This is the complete news article.

**MICHIGAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

**NEW FACES, POPULATION DROP HURT MICHIGAN’S INFLUENCE**

By Dennis Lennox, *The Detroit News*, December 18, 2014

Overnight, as the clock strikes 2015, Michigan will lose its status of having one of the most important congressional delegations when the 114th Congress convenes. Despite the Wolverine State’s hard power dwindling with the changing economic and industrial realities over the past 30 years, the amount of soft power levied by the state’s members of Congress
increased over time. In the halls of government, seniority is everything.

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING**

**ANTARCTIC RESEARCH**
NSF Program Solicitation, December 17, 2014

The NSF’s Antarctic Sciences Section, Division of Polar Programs, fosters research on globally and regionally important scientific problems. In particular, the Antarctic Sciences Section supports research that expands fundamental knowledge of the region as well as research that relies on the unique characteristics of the Antarctic continent as a platform from which to support research. Antarctic fieldwork will only be supported for research that can only be performed or is best performed in Antarctica. The Antarctic Sciences Section strongly encourages research using existing samples, models, and data as well as research at the intersection between disciplines.

**NUTRIENT SENSOR CHALLENGE**
National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) News Release, December 17, 2014

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is today announcing that a coalition of Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NIST, and United States Geological Survey, is launching the Nutrient Sensor Challenge—an open-innovation competition to accelerate the development and deployment of affordable sensors that can measure nutrients in aquatic environments.

**BIPARTISAN CYBERSECURITY R&D BILL HEADED TO PRESIDENT’S DESK**
House Science, Space and Technology Press Release, December 12, 2014

The House of Representatives yesterday approved bipartisan Science Committee legislation to coordinate and drive research and development across federal agencies to address cyber threats to America's high-tech infrastructure. The Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014 (S. 1353) is the work of a bicameral, bipartisan compromise prioritizing R&D to help create new technologies and standards to protect America's information technology systems. The bill primarily addresses cybersecurity research efforts conducted by the NSF and NIST.

**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PROVES TO BE POLITICAL SWEET SPOT**
By Jeffrey Mervis, ScienceInsider, December 17, 2014

Last week's 1600-page bill to finance the U.S. government through September 2015 contains a section creating a network of research institutes aimed at strengthening U.S. manufacturing. It also requires the government to draw up a national manufacturing strategy that would be
reviewed every 4 years. The idea of allowing government to help repair this former cornerstone of the U.S. economy was once derided as industrial policy by many Republicans. But now it's entered the political mainstream.

**U.S. FUSION EFFORT MELTS DOWN**  

Dysfunctional, broken, in complete disarray: That's how numerous insiders describe the United States' research effort in fusion, which aims to generate energy using the same process that powers the sun. A rift has opened between officials in the DOE's Fusion Energy Sciences program and the research community it supports. Many scientists say program officials operate opaquely, but the community itself has a reputation for being unmanageable.

**CONGRESS KEEPS NASA EDUCATION PROGRAMS ALOFT**  
By Jeffrey Mervis, *ScienceInsider*, December 18, 2014

Next week is the deadline for teachers to apply to be part of the next cohort of airborne astronomy ambassadors. But the fate of that NASA-funded education program and many others was very much up in the air until this week, when Congress passed a $1 trillion spending bill to fund the federal government through 30 September 2015. The legislation, signed into law on Tuesday, restores funding for what NASA calls education and public outreach (E/PO) programs operated by SOFIA and dozens of other scientific missions. Many educators are relieved, but are also watching closely as the agency reshuffles some of its E/PO programs.

**CRITICAL RESILIENT INTERDEPENDENT INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**  
NSF Dear Colleague, December 19, 2014

The goals of the Critical Resilient Interdependent Infrastructure Processes and Systems solicitation are to: (1) foster an interdisciplinary research community of engineers, computer and computational scientists and social and behavioral scientists, that creates new approaches and engineering solutions for the design and operation of infrastructures as processes and services; (2) enhance the understanding and design of interdependent critical infrastructure systems (ICIs) and processes that provide essential goods and services despite disruptions and failures from any cause, natural, technological, or malicious; (3) create the knowledge for innovation in ICIs so that they safely, securely, and effectively expand the range of goods and services they enable; and (4) improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which they deliver existing goods and services.

**US-SOUTH KOREA COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING**  
NSF Dear Colleague, December 16, 2014

In May, 2013, in Pohang, Korea, and August, 2014, in Reno, Nevada, the U.S. NSF and the
National Research Foundation of Korea hosted workshops to identify areas of mutual interest for research in advanced manufacturing. The final report of these workshops is forthcoming and will be posted on the NSF Division of Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI) website. As a result of these workshops, the NSF Engineering Directorate and the National Research Foundation of Korea Division of Engineering are partnering to encourage joint research by U.S.-Korean teams collaborating on fundamental research in advanced manufacturing. The workshops identified opportunities potentially beneficial to both countries for collaborative research in the following areas:

- Robotics for manufacturing
- Materials Processing
- Manufacturing Mathematics and Smart Manufacturing
- Micro/nano Manufacturing
- Additive Manufacturing

U.S.-based researchers, through their U.S. institutions, may submit unsolicited proposals to collaborate with Korea-based researchers on any of the topics listed above to appropriate programs in CMMI. All unsolicited proposals directed to CMMI must be submitted during one of two annual unsolicited proposal submission windows, February 1-15 and September 1-15, and they must be submitted in accordance with the current version of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide.

**RESEARCH POLICY**

**FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET’S UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS**

*Federal Register, December 19, 2014*

This joint interim final rule implements for all Federal award-making agencies the final guidance Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) published by the OMB on December 26, 2013. This rule is necessary in order to incorporate into regulation and thus bring into effect the Uniform Guidance as required by OMB. Implementation of this guidance will reduce administrative burden and risk of waste, fraud, and abuse for the approximately $600 billion per year awarded in Federal financial assistance. The result will be more Federal dollars reprogrammed to support the mission, new entities able to compete and win awards, and ultimately a stronger framework to provide key services to American citizens and support the basic research that underpins the United States economy.

**HONORING WOMEN IN STEM**

*AAAS Policy Alert, December 17, 2014*

The White House has posted a website with audio stories about women in science, technology,
engineering, or math (STEM) who have contributed to critical advancements in their field. The Administration is encouraging others to submit their own stories of women in STEM who have inspired them (e.g., school teacher) to pursue a STEM degree and/or who have contributed to S&T advancements. Go here to submit your story.

* This is the complete news article.

**NSF UPDATE ON RELOCATION TO ALEXANDRIA, VA.**
NSF Press Statement, December 13, 2014

In June 2013, the General Services Administration (GSA) announced a new lease agreement for the NSF’s national headquarters to be located in Alexandria, Va. In January 2014, construction began on the 660,848 square feet of space. Throughout this process, NSF management has been negotiating with NSF’s union AFGE Local 3403 on the design of the building space, which ultimately came before the Federal Service Impasses Panel (FSIP) for resolution. As a result, NSF has directed GSA to conduct a redesign of the new NSF headquarters to implement the FSIP decision. NSF and GSA are working together to mitigate costs and schedule slippage.

**HIGHER ED COMMUNITY ASKS FAA TO RELAX DRONE REGULATIONS**
By Rob Stott, Associations Now, December 18, 2014

An interesting, and perhaps unexpected, player has emerged in the debate over how small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS)—more commonly known as drones—ought to be regulated: higher education. In a letter sent to the federal Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs earlier this month, the AAU and the APLU stated their case for less restrictive drone regulations and a speedier process for approving drone research permits. The FAA is in the process of developing a complete set of rules for commercial use of drones, but the agency is not expected to meet its September 2015 deadline. In fact, those rules might not be ready until sometime in 2017, Gerald Dillingham, director of civil aviation at the Government Accountability Office, said in recent congressional testimony.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY**

**PROTECTING WHOM?**
By Jake New, Inside Higher Ed, December 16, 2014

The U.S. Department of Education is seeking to help block the release of records about how the University of Montana punished a student accused of sexual assault, citing student privacy laws -- at a time when the Obama administration is pressuring colleges to become more transparent about the issue.
RESEARCHERS CRITICIZE PLAN TO REMOVE KEY QUESTION IN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

[T]he U.S. Census Bureau wants to stop asking people in a key national survey about their field of study. Elimination of the question would leave researchers with "no data sources large enough to study small but crucial academic specializations," said [John R. Gawalt, director of the NSF’s National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics] noting that the data provide context for efforts to focus on underrepresented populations in the STEM fields, including women, members of minority groups, and people with disabilities.

INVESTING IN BREAKTHROUGH LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
By Kumar Garg, White House Office of Science & Technology Blog, December 19, 2014

Technology is changing and improving many aspects of our daily lives, our economy, and our Nation. But these positive advancements aren’t coming quickly to our education sector, despite the fact that we know technology can be a powerful tool and equalizer for teachers and students. One reason for that is the lack of robust technology infrastructure in our nation’s schools. Through the President’s ConnectED Initiative and similar efforts, the Administration has made great progress in addressing this important issue. A critical complementary investment we must also undertake is dedicated research and development on breakthrough education technology—which is why the President has called for an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Education (ARPA-ED).

NIJ: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON FORENSIC SCIENCE
COSSA Washington Update, December 19, 2104

In a recently issued Dear Colleague letter, Acting National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Director William Sabol emphasized NIJ's interested in receiving proposals "that examine the social science questions related to the effective use of forensic evidence to identify and process criminal offenders and to explore the impact of these advances on the criminal justice system."
Particular areas of interest for fiscal year 2015 include digital forensics, ballistics forensics, and crime scene scanning technology.

* This is the complete news article.

APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS FOR 2015 NATIONAL DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP RESIDENCY PROGRAM
Institute of Museum & Library Studies New Release, December 18, 2104

The Library of Congress and the Institute of Museum and Library Services announce the official open call for applications for the 2015 National Digital Stewardship Residency, to be held in the Washington, D.C. area. Applications opened December 17 and will close on January 30, 2015. To apply, go to the official USAJobs link at https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/389615400. For the 2015-16 class, five residents will be chosen for a 12-month residency at a prominent institution in the Washington, D.C. area. The residency will begin in June, 2015, with an intensive week-long digital stewardship workshop at the Library of Congress. Thereafter, each resident will move to his or her designated host institution to work on a significant digital stewardship project. These projects will allow them to acquire hands-on knowledge and skills involving the collection, selection, management, long-term preservation, and accessibility of digital assets.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS 2015 FUNDING GUIDELINES POSTED

Guidelines and application materials for two National Endowment for the Arts funding categories have been posted on the NEA’s website. The 2015 Art Works and Challenge America programs support projects anticipated to take place beginning in 2016. Any nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, unit of state or local government, or federally recognized tribal community with at least a three year programming history is eligible to apply for project-based support through these two programs. Together, Art Works and Challenge America constitute approximately 75 percent of the NEA's annual direct grantmaking (exclusive of state and regional partnership agreements).

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS TO OFFER JUNIOR FELLOWS SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

The Library’s Junior Fellows Summer Internship Program once again is offering 10-week paid fellowships to college students. For a stipend of $3,000, the 2015 class of Junior Fellows will work full-time with Library specialists and curators from June 1 through Aug. 7, 2015, to inventory, describe and explore collection holdings and to assist with digital-preservation outreach activities throughout the Library. The program aims to increase access to collections and awareness of the Library’s digital-preservation programs by making them better-known and available to Members of Congress, scholars, researchers, students, teachers and the general public. The fellows will be exposed to a broad spectrum of library work: copyright deposits, digital preservation, reference, access standards and information management.

STUDENT AID

NO STRATEGY ON LOAN DEFAULTS?

As the U.S. Department of Education manages an increasingly larger portfolio of federal student loans, officials at the agency lack a coordinated plan for preventing borrowers from defaulting, the department’s independent watchdog said Friday.

**TAX POLICY**

**HATCH TO REVEAL STEPS TO MOVE TAX REFORM FORWARD**
By Hillary Flynn, *Politico’s Morning Tax*, December 17, 2014

In a speech later on the Senate floor Tuesday, Hatch said he would not accept revenue increases as part of an overhaul of the tax code while announcing that he planned to "reveal additional steps" soon to push tax reform forward. This effort to overhaul the tax code comes shortly after Incoming Way and Means Chairman Paul Ryan and the White House said they are considering corporate-only tax reform next year, and is seen as a positive for such reform. "I've said it many times before and I'll say it again today: I'm willing to work with anyone --Republican or Democrat -- to reform our nation's tax code. And I look forward to continuing this effort in the 114th Congress and, if necessary, beyond," Hatch said.

* This is the complete news article.

**VETERANS**

**SERVICE MEMBERS, SPOUSES AND VETERANS OFTEN NEED A NEW KIND OF COLLEGE EDUCATION**
By Carolyn Baker and Dr. Donald Bird, *Roll Call*, December 16, 2014

When the newly elected Congress convenes, it will consider two seemingly unrelated issues: funding a new military involvement in the Middle East and reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, which governs student aid. Both issues raise a crucial question: How will the nation repay its debt to the servicemen and women who have sacrificed so much, as well as to the family members who have held their households together during the demanding years since 9/11?