The annual appropriations process continues to move forward. Members of Congress will debate funding for federal agencies and programs such as the National Science Foundation (NSF), veterans programs, military construction, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The appropriations hearing and debate process is expected to take its course over the rest of the year.

Congressional hearings this week included the following:

- **April 29 Senate Appropriations Committee** hearing on federal investments in innovation;
- **April 29 House Education and the Workforce Committee** hearing on the [FY15 Budget for the Department of Education](https://www.whitehouse.gov/budget/fy2015);
- **April 30 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education & Related Agencies** hearing on [FY15 Appropriations for the Department of Education](https://www.whitehouse.gov/budget/fy2015);
- **April 30 House Science, Space & Technology Subcommittee on the Environment** hearing on [FY15 Appropriations for the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration](https://www.whitehouse.gov/budget/fy2015);

On April 28, MSU nuclear physicists joined colleagues from across the county to advocate to members of Congress in support of strong funding for the Department of Energy’s nuclear physics program.

On April 29, 35 Fellows from the Michigan Education Policy Fellowship Program, sponsored by the MSU College of Education, attending a series of briefings on Capitol Hill by members of the Michigan delegation. The Fellows are mid-career professionals who work in a variety of fields, including K-12 education, social services and higher education.
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AGRICULTURE
SENATE UPS FOCUS ON FARM BILL IMPLEMENTATION
By Helena Bottemiller Evich, Politico’s Morning Agriculture, May 1, 2014

In one of the first post-2014 farm bill hearings, the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Jobs, Rural Economic Growth and Energy Innovation will meet today to discuss ways to use the landmark bill to improve economic development in rural areas. Subcommittee Chairwoman Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) notes that the farm bill, signed into law in February, directs new, targeted, federal spending through several programs. And next up, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, who was one of the four main architects of the 2014 farm bill, is calling USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to give a progress report on the department's progress in implementing the five-year overhaul to agriculture subsidies, crop insurance, conservation and other policies. The Senate Agriculture Committee will convene at 9 a.m. on May 7 for a hearing entitled "2014 Farm Bill: Implementation and Next Steps." Vilsack is scheduled to be the sole witness.

* This is the complete news article.

SENATE AGRICULTURE SPENDING BILL ONE OF FIRST UP
By Georgina Gustin, CQ.com, April 30, 2014

The timetable for the Agriculture appropriations bills is becoming a little clearer. Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara A. Mikulski says the bill will be the second that the panel takes up. “We’re looking at the end of May or the beginning of June,” she said. Agriculture also was one of the first two bills the committee brought out last year, too.

* This is the complete news article.

MICHIGAN STATE GETS $3.9 MILLION IN US FARM GRANTS
Associated Press, April 30, 2014

Michigan State University says it’s received $3.9 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a range of projects to help Michigan farmers deal with climate change, food safety and marketing. The grants announced Wednesday come from the department’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

KILL THE MITES, SAVE THE BEES
By Helena Bottemiller Evich, Politico’s Morning Agriculture, April 30, 2014

"The best chance the scientific community has at saving the honey bees that pollinate almonds, apples, apricots, blueberries, peaches and many other crops is to find better ways to kill off the Varroa destructor mites, Jeff Pettis, research leader of the Agriculture Department's Bee Research Laboratory, told a congressional subcommittee," reports Tomson and Hopkinson. "Concerns have been growing about the link between the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in
agriculture and the loss of pollinators, but USDA's top bee researcher focused instead on another nemesis when he appeared before the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Horticulture, Research, Biotechnology and Foreign Agriculture today, according to a written copy of his testimony."

* This is the complete news article.

NEW BEE LOSS NUMBERS DUE NEXT WEEK
By Georgina Gustin, CQ.com, April 30, 2014

The Department of Agriculture is looking at improving its survey of honeybee populations even as it prepares to release its estimate of 2013 bee losses next week. USDA has been relying on a survey of beekeepers representing about 20 percent to 40 percent of managed colonies and is considering turning the work over to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). NASS already surveys honey production and is positioned do a much more thorough job of estimating bee populations, Jeff Pettis, USDA's bee research leader, told a House Agriculture subcommittee Tuesday. Losses continue in the range of 30 percent a year, he said. “Beekeeping is unsustainable at that rate,” Pettis said.

* This is the complete news article.

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK ANNOUNCES NEW REPORT ON SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS FROM USDA IN 2013
USDA News Release, April 23, 2014

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced a new report on scientific breakthroughs discovered by USDA researchers that led to new patents and inventions with the potential for commercial application and potential economic growth. Innovations included in the report range from flour made out of chardonnay grape seeds that prevents weight gain to antimicrobial packets that keep food from spoiling, efforts to protect U.S. troops in Iraq from diseases carried by sand flies, new processes for turning grass clippings and raked leaves into bioenergy, and many more. "Studies have shown that every dollar invested in agricultural research returns $20 to the economy. We have accelerated commercialization of federal research and government researchers are working closely with the private sector to develop new technology and transfer it to the marketplace," said Secretary Vilsack. "USDA has a proven track record of performing research that benefits the public.”

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

UPTON, DEGETTE LAUNCH MULTI-YEAR, COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE TO ACCELERATE THE PACE OF CURES IN THE 21ST CENTURY
House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) today announced the launch of 21st Century Cures, a new initiative that aims to accelerate the pace of cures and medical breakthroughs in the United States. Chairman Upton, along with committee member Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), explain in a new video that over the next several months, members will take a comprehensive look at the full arc of this process – from discovery to development to delivery – to determine what steps we can take to ensure we are taking full advantage of the advances this country has made in science and technology and use these resources to keep America as the innovation capital of the world. The committee seeks to broadly collaborate with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Food and Drug Administration, and other agencies, as well as the nation’s patients and scientific pioneers in academia and industry.

**NIH TO SUPPORT COMMERCIALIZATION OF PROMISING INNOVATIONS**
*American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Policy Alert, April 30, 2014*

The NIH is planning to pilot a version of the I-Corps program started at the National Science Foundation to support the development of commercialization plans based on federally-funded academic research. The program will initially target the recipients of Small Business Innovation Research awards. Relatedly, the NIH has just released a funding opportunity announcement for proof-of-concept centers that facilitate and accelerate the translation of biomedical innovations into commercial products that improve patient care and enhance health. Qualified institutions will receive the initial investment and resources "to nurture innovators to develop high priority early-stage technologies within the NIH's mission by providing: (1) infrastructure for identifying the most promising technologies, (2) funding for product definition studies (e.g. feasibility studies, prototype development, or proof-of-concept studies), (3) coordinated access to expertise in areas required for early stage technology development (including scientific, regulatory, reimbursement, business, legal, and project management), and (4) skills development and hands-on experience in entrepreneurship."

* This is the complete news article.

**A LOOK AT PROGRAMS TARGETING NEW SCIENTISTS**
*By Sally Rockey, Rock Talk, April 29, 2014*

The strength of the biomedical research enterprise depends on new researchers becoming independent NIH-funded researchers, bringing fresh ideas and perspectives for solving scientific questions. As we have discussed here and in other venues, we are keenly aware that the long training period, aging of the biomedical workforce, and the fiscally challenging times all impact the ability of individuals to move from training positions into independent research positions. Because of this, NIH has a number of policies and programs in place which facilitate innovative and exceptional science from people who are just launching their independent research careers.

**FASEB RELEASES UPDATED NIH STATE FACTSHEETS**
*Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) News Release, April 22, 2014*
FASEB has released updated factsheets for fiscal year (FY) 2013 highlighting how funding from the NIH benefits each of the 50 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico. NIH is the nation's leading source for biomedical research funding, investing $29.2 billion in FY 2013 in medical research, 80 percent of which was distributed through approximately 50,000 competitive grants to more than 300,000 researchers at over 2,500 universities and other institutions throughout the U.S. Each factsheet demonstrates how research grants provided by NIH adds value to local communities by improving health, training the next generation of scientists, and boosting the economy through the creation of new businesses and higher paying jobs.

**ELECTION 2014**

**ELECTION 2014: THE MOST COMPETITIVE SENATE RACES**

The Democrats face some challenging math in their quest to hold onto the US Senate. In all, 21 Democratic-held seats are up for election this November, versus 15 Republican-held seats. And political analysts deem far more of the Democratic seats vulnerable. To take control of the Senate, the Republicans need a net gain of six seats. One already looks set to flip: the seat held by retiring Sen. Tim Johnson (D) of South Dakota. Twelve other Senate races are seen as competitive – 10 seats held by Democrats, two by Republicans. Here’s the rundown. [The Michigan Senate race is listed as #5.]

**FEDERAL BUDGET STATUS**

**ERIC CANTOR OUTLINES HOUSE’S SPRING AGENDA**

House Republicans will take up several 2015 spending bills in the coming weeks but have no plans to move forward on immigration reform or a minimum-wage increase — key priorities for President Barack Obama and Democrats...The House is currently scheduled to be in for three weeks - a total of 12 legislative days - during May, according to the official calendar maintained by Cantor’s office. Cantor said that House Republicans will move forward on bills allowing states to use federal funds for charter schools, as well as six legislative initiatives designed to combat human sex trafficking, and issue with huge bipartisan support. In addition, Cantor said the House would move on a tax extenders package that includes a permanent extension of a research and development tax credit.

**U.S. SCIENCE CHIEFS FIELD QUESTIONS, HARD AND SOFT, AT INNOVATION HEARING**
Members of a key congressional spending panel voiced strong, bipartisan support yesterday for increasing the federal investment in basic research. But given the tight spending limits facing Congress this year, scientists should not expect to take that support to the bank.

ORGANIZATIONS SUBMIT TESTIMONY FOR SENATE INNOVATION HEARING ON APRIL 29
Association of American Universities (AAU) Weekly Wrap-Up, April 25, 2014

A group of 50 scientific, business, higher education, and patient organizations—including AAU, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and The Science Coalition—has submitted written testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee for its hearing on April 29, “Driving Innovation through Federal Investments.” Some AAU universities, as well as other organizations, are submitting their own testimony. The testimony was accompanied by an infographic that shows the importance of the campaign to “Close the Innovation Deficit.” The Appropriations Committee has actively solicited written statements about the role of federal funding in innovation, and is using social media to encourage members of the public to “be part of the conversation,” with the hashtag #innovationdeficit. The witnesses at next Tuesday’s hearing will include the President’s Science Advisor, as well as the leaders of the National Institutes of Health, the NSF, the Department of Energy, and [the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency ] DARPA. When Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) announced the hearing on April 2, she said its purpose was “to make sure that budget cuts and the possibility of future sequester do not dampen our standing as a world innovation leader.” She added that appropriators were concerned not only about the federal budget deficit, but also about the innovation deficit.

* This is the complete news article.

HOUSE GOP DEBUTS $51.2B APPROPRIATIONS BILL
By David Rogers, Politico, April 29, 2014

House Republicans rolled out their budget for science, commerce and justice programs Tuesday — a $51.2 billion package that outbids President Barack Obama in many cases and will require future cuts from other domestic accounts to make room under the 2015 spending caps. The NSF is promised $7.4 billion, an increase of $237 million more than current levels and an estimated $160 million above Obama’s core budget request. NASA would get $17.9 billion or $494 million more than Obama again.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

DUNCAN IN THE HOT SEAT
By Paul Fain, Inside Higher Ed, April 30, 2014

Congressional Republicans lobbed criticism at the Obama administration’s regulatory approach
to higher education Tuesday, with tough questions for Education Secretary Arne Duncan about the proposed college ratings system and gainful employment regulations. Duncan appeared before the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Education and the Workforce to discuss the president’s $67 billion discretionary budget request for education. While most of the lengthy, wide-ranging hearing was about K-12, there were a few fireworks over higher education.

**COLLEGE-RATING SYSTEM WILL GO FORWARD, DUNCAN SAYS**

The U.S. Department of Education plans to continue its push for a college-rating system, even if Congress doesn't shell out the $10 million the agency is requesting to develop the program and put it in place. When Education Secretary Arne Duncan appeared before a Senate subcommittee that oversees appropriations for education on Wednesday to discuss the department's proposed budget, Sen. Jerry Moran asked what the agency would do if it didn't get the money. Duncan responded by saying the department would move forward with the initiative, but the money "would be very, very beneficial."

**INSIDE APLU: SUPPORTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**
By Howard Gobstein, *APLU A Public Voice*, April 30, 2014

The APLU believes higher standards in education are important and we support the Common Core State Standards. Developed at the behest of governors, chief state school officers, and business leaders, the standards have been adopted in a large number of states in part as a response to lagging international standing by U.S. students. APLU has endorsed the Higher State Standards Partnership, a group supported by the Business Roundtable, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and hundreds of individual businesses and local chamber chapters.

**WORRIED BY FCC PLAN, NET-NEUTRALITY ADVOCATES AT COLLEGES GAUGE NEXT STEPS**

Some members of the higher-education community, including major professional associations and individual scholars, say they will fight proposed rules from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that would reportedly allow Internet-service providers to charge a premium for faster connection speeds. The rules, which will be publicly presented at the FCC's May 15 meeting, have been characterized by some as a death knell for what's known as net neutrality -- the equitable treatment of all flows of information on the Internet.

**IMMIGRATION**

**CONSERVATIVES REVOLT AGAINST BOEHNER ON IMMIGRATION**
By Seung Min Kim, *Politico*, April 30, 2014

John Boehner teased them last week for whining about the fact that they couldn’t tackle a tough topic like immigration reform. But conservative immigration foes have yet to let go of the speaker’s remarks about them. In the aftermath, they are stepping up their efforts to thwart any plan that might be afoot among House leadership to jam reform through the House by the end of this year. A group of conservatives plans to meet and strategize this week, and are scouring bills searching for offending language that might somehow slip through their gates.

**INNOVATION**

**SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE LIKELY TO POSTPONE MKAPUP OF PATENT BILL**

*AAU Council of Federal Relations Update, April 30, 2014*

The Senate Judiciary Committee continues to work on patent legislation in search of compromise language that could generate sufficiently broad support to move forward to a markup. It appears, however, that further work is needed, and it seems certain that tomorrow’s scheduled markup will be postponed. Earlier this week, a broad coalition of organizations – including AAU and APLU – concerned about several provisions being considered for inclusion in the bill reissued an April 2 letter to Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Ranking Member Charles Grassley (R-IA) expressing strong concern about the lack of balance in those provisions between curbing abusive patent practices and protecting legitimate patent enforcement. Absent such balance in key provisions, the letter says, the organizations would have to oppose the legislation. The goal of reissuing the letter, with added signatories, including individual universities, was to emphasize that balance is still lacking. Following a request from AAU and APLU, more than 100 universities have signed the reissued letter. Thanks to all institutions that signed. The Supreme Court on April 29 issued a potentially far-reaching decision on fee shifting in Octane Fitness v. Icon Health and Fitness. In its ruling, the Court substantially lowers the threshold for courts to call for fee shifting, or “loser pays,” under which the non-prevailing party pays the prevailing party’s fees in a given patent case. The impact of the lowered-threshold would make fee shifting more likely, thus obviating the need to include fee shifting—one of the greatest concerns for universities—in the pending patent legislation. That is the position taken by the Innovation Alliance, a group with which the university associations have been working, in a statement the group issued yesterday. However, some supporters of fee shifting reportedly are arguing that the Supreme Court’s decision makes the inclusion of fee shifting in the current legislation even more necessary. It is unclear how the Senate Judiciary Committee will respond.

* This is the complete news article.

**BIG TECH TRACKS ARE ALL OVER D.C. PATENT WAR**

The Coalition for Patent Fairness talks up the importance of innovation. The Main Street Patent Coalition says it's standing up for the little guy. The Partnership for American Innovation harps on job growth, and the Innovation Alliance chats up small inventors. What they’re not trumpeting: These groups are political agents of Google, Apple, Microsoft, Qualcomm and a veritable army of other deep-pocketed D.C. tech players.

**MONIZ PICKS UP ARPA-E NOMINEE TO WORK ON TECH TRANSFER**

By Alex Guillen, *Politico’s Morning Energy*, April 30, 2014

Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said yesterday that he has folded Ellen Williams, a University of Maryland physics professor on leave while working as BP's chief scientist, into DOE as a senior advisor for technology transfer. Williams was approved by Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee in January to take over DOE's popular [Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy] ARPA-E program but is currently helping to "conceptualize"-as Moniz put it - the tech transfer operation until she's confirmed by the full Senate. DOE has nine appointees in need of Senate confirmation, but there, Moniz seemed to have a better outlook than he did a few months ago, saying, "We're optimistic that we're going to be seeing more... action."

Tangentially, Moniz also told reporters that he's having some trouble finding the right person to do the tech transfer job permanently, which would establish better bridges between national lab research and the private sector. "Frankly, I've been having a hard time finding somebody to fill that role that fits the spec that I want," he said.

* This is the complete news article.

**INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES**

**NIH CENTER SETS NEW GOALS FOR GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND TRAINING**

NIH News Release, April 29, 2014

Global health research and training efforts should focus on combatting the growing epidemic of noncommunicable diseases, better incorporating information technology into research and training, and more effectively converting scientific discoveries into practice in low-resource settings, according to the Fogarty International Center’s new strategic plan, released today. Fogarty is the component of the National Institutes of Health solely focused on supporting global health research and training, and coordinating international research partnerships across the agency.

**[TITLE VI PROGRAMS] ENDANGERED SPECIES**


With Russia’s annexation of Crimea, U.S.-Russian relations are at their lowest point in decades.
Consequently, after two decades on the sidelines, America's senior experts on Russia — many of whom came of age during the Cold War — are suddenly in demand again. They are sounding alarms not only about Kremlin aggression, but also the lack of young Russia experts who'll take their places once they retire. “It is certainly harder for the White House, State Department and intelligence community to find up-and-coming regional experts,” admitted Strobe Talbott, President Clinton’s top Russia adviser and head of the Brookings Institution.

**WIRELESS INNOVATION BETWEEN FINLAND AND U.S.**
NSF Program Solicitation, April 30, 2014

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time): August 01, 2014. In 2011, the NSF, Tekes - the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, and the Academy of Finland jointly funded the Wireless Innovation between Finland and US (WiFiUS) SAVI (Science Across Virtual Institutes) to help build long-term research and education collaborations between the two world leaders of wireless networking. Given the success of the WiFiUS SAVI, NSF, Tekes, and the Academy of Finland have agreed to embark on a collaborative research program to enlarge the SAVI effort and address compelling research challenges on novel frameworks, architectures, protocols, methodologies and tools for the design and analysis of robust and highly dependable wireless networks, including cognitive radio networks.

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING**

**ARPA-E ANNOUNCES $60 MILLION FOR DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES TO CUT EMISSIONS, BOOST ENERGY EFFICIENCY**
ARPA-E News Release, April 29, 2014

Today, at the Advanced Energy Conference in Albany, New York, Acting ARPA-E Director Cheryl Martin announced up to $60 million for two new programs to detect and measure methane emissions and develop innovative localized thermal management systems that cut the energy needed to heat and cool buildings. The Energy Department’s Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, or ARPA-E, encourages America’s top scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs from different organizations, scientific disciplines, and technology sectors to form new projects teams for applications that leverage interdisciplinary and cross-organizational collaboration.

**DOE OFFICE OF SCIENCE SEEKS COMMENTS ON NEW ACCELERATOR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**
*The American Institute of Physics Bulletin of Science Policy News, April 28, 2014*

The [Department of Energy] DOE Office of High Energy Physics is establishing a cross-cutting program in Accelerator Stewardship and is requesting input on this initiative by May 19. The Request for Information states: “The objective of this request for information is to gather information about opportunities for research and development of accelerator technologies to address national challenges in energy and the environment.”
**NASA SPINOFF 2013 SHOWS HOW MUCH SPACE IS IN OUR LIVES**
NASA News Release, April 28, 2014

Water filtration bottles, comfortable car seats and remote medical monitoring devices all have one thing in common -- they all have benefited from NASA technology. These products are featured in Spinoff 2013, an online publication now available that highlights commercial products created using NASA-developed technology. Also featured in the 2013 edition is an air purification system that can sustain miners in the event of a disaster, a solar-powered vaccine refrigerators saving lives in remote areas throughout the world, and a powerful heat shield used on the first commercial spacecraft to successfully achieve orbit and return to Earth.

**NASA SEEKS IDEAS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR USE OF ISS, FUTURE COMMERCIAL SPACE FACILITIES**
By Marcia Smith, Space Policy Online, April 28, 2014

NASA is seeking ideas on how the private sector can use the International Space Station (ISS) in new ways and ultimately "pave the way for private microgravity research facilities of the future." The Obama White House approved extending operations of the ISS until at least 2024 in January. Previously it had committed only to operations through 2020 and is still seeking agreement from some of the ISS partners for that extension, never mind 2024.

**NOAA DEFENDS FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS**
By Georgina Gustin, CQ.com, April 30, 2014

In a House subcommittee hearing this morning, the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) defended her agency’s fiscal year 2015 budget request, saying the agency needs to focus on climate research and the larger forces behind atmospheric changes that are threatening fisheries and impacting drought. Kathryn Sullivan called ocean acidification – for which the agency is requesting a nearly $9 million boost for research – “one of the silent creeping hazards of our changing planet.” She told the panel that acidification, as well as algae blooms in the Gulf of Mexico and Great Lakes, are “very much one of the key focal points” for the agency. Sullivan testified at the environment subcommittee of the Science Space and Technology Committee. Her comments were met with a positive response from Oregon Democrat Suzanne Bonamici, the subcommittee’s ranking member, who noted that ocean acidification could “disrupt coastal food webs.” Oregon’s fisheries are already feeling the impacts, Bonamici said. The NOAA request totals about $5.5 billion, representing a topline increase of $174.1 million, or about 3.2 percent, above the fiscal 2014 enacted levels. In a study released by the agency today, a NOAA research team said that it has found the first evidence that ocean acidification off the west coast is dissolving the shells of tiny marine snails called pteropods, which are fodder for salmon, mackerel and herring. The research team estimates that the rate of shell dissolution has doubled since the pre-industrial era and could triple by 2050. The study was published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B.

The full committee chairman, Lamar Smith , R-Texas, challenged NOAA’s emphasis on climate
research in general. “Instead of hyping climate alarmism,” he said, “NOAA should focus its efforts on other areas such as improving weather forecasting.” In the wake of major tornadoes across the south in the past two days that killed at least 34 people, Sullivan was also challenged by subcommittee member Jim Bridenstine, R-Okla., on the agency’s cuts to weather research under the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. “The priority of NOAA is to save lives and property,” Bridenstine said, adding “yet all the research elements are going to climate change.” Sullivan told the panel that the agency’s potentially life-saving, predictive capability “doesn’t come from understanding weather, it comes from understanding oceans and the atmosphere.”

* This is the complete news article.

RESEARCH POLICY

EXCESSIVE REGULATIONS TURNING SCIENTISTS INTO BUREAUCRATS
NSF Press Release, May 1, 2014

Excessive regulations are consuming scientists' time and wasting taxpayer dollars, says a report released today by the National Science Board (NSB), the policymaking body of the NSF and advisor to Congress and the President...Thousands of federally funded scientists responded to NSB's request to identify requirements they believe unnecessarily increase their administrative workload. The responses raised concerns related to financial management, grant proposal preparation, reporting, personnel management, and institutional review boards and animal care and use committees. Scientists and institutions pinpointed regulations they believe are ineffective or inappropriately applied to research, and audit and compliance activities that take away research time and result in university over-regulation.

HOUSE PASSES DATA ACT
AAAS Policy Alert, April 30, 2014

On April 29, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "Digital Accountability and Transparency Act" (S. 994; also known as the DATA Act), sending the bill to President Obama for signature. The bill seeks to improve the "availability, accuracy, and usefulness" of federal spending information by setting standards for reporting government spending on contracts, grants, etc. The legislation would also require that [Office of Management and Budget] OMB develop a two-year pilot program to evaluate reporting by recipients of federal grants and contracts and to reduce duplicative reporting requirements.

* This is the complete news article.

RESEARCH TRENDS
ANNUAL AAAS R&D REPORT NOW AVAILABLE
AAAS Policy Alert, April 30, 2014

The AAAS R&D Budget and Policy Program has publicly released AAAS Report XXXIX: Research and Development FY 2015, the latest edition in a long-running series assessing R&D funding in the President’s budget. The report is a collective product of the Intersociety Working Group, composed of more than 30 leading science societies and non-governmental organizations in the science and innovation policy space. The report can be viewed and downloaded for free here, and print versions will be available for purchase in mid-May following the 2014 AAAS Forum on Science and Technology Policy.

* This is the complete news article.

SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY

WHITE HOUSE ISSUES REPORT ON STEPS TO PREVENT SEXUAL ASSAULT AT COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Federal officials will launch a Web site called NotAlone.gov to support survivors of sexual assault on campuses and also plan to challenge colleges to survey their students next year about sexual misconduct and other safety issues, a White House task force reported Monday night.

NOT ALONE – PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT
White House Fact Sheet, April 29, 2014

One in five women is sexually assaulted while in college. Most often, it happens her freshman or sophomore year. In the great majority of cases, it’s by someone she knows – and also most often, she does not report what happened. And though fewer, men, too, are victimized. The Administration is committed to putting an end to this violence. That’s why the President established the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault on January 22, 2014, with a mandate to strengthen federal enforcement efforts and provide schools with additional tools to combat sexual assault on their campuses. Today, the Task Force is announcing a series of actions to: (1) identify the scope of the problem on college campuses, (2) help prevent campus sexual assault, (3) help schools respond effectively when a student is assaulted, and (4) improve, and make more transparent, the federal government’s enforcement efforts. We will continue to pursue additional executive or legislative actions in the future.

ADMINISTRATION SAYS 55 COLLEGES FACE SEX ASSAULT COMPLAINTS
By Carolyn Phenicie, CQ.com, May 1, 2014
The Education Department Thursday released for the first time a list of colleges and universities under investigation for mishandling complaints of sexual assaults on campus, a violation of federal civil rights laws. Fifty-five schools in 27 states and the District of Columbia are under investigation as of May 1, including high-profile institutions such as Harvard, the University of Virginia and Princeton and schools with large student populations such as Penn State, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and Florida State. “We are making this list available in an effort to bring more transparency to our enforcement work and to foster better public awareness of civil rights,” Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine E. Lhamon said in a release. The department emphasized that an investigation does not indicate the school has or is violating federal law. Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in education, including sexual harassment and assault. At the conclusion of investigations, schools usually enter into voluntary resolution agreements with the Education Department in which they commit to making changes in their handling of assaults and rapes on campus. If a college doesn’t agree to or rescinds its agreement – as Tufts University did a few days ago – the department may ultimately move to end its eligibility for federal financial aid. The issue of sexual assaults on college campuses has recently caught the attention of both Congress and the White House. The Obama administration Tuesday released recommendations to combat the problem, including making federal enforcement efforts more transparent. Also, Sens. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., have called for increased funding for the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), which undertakes the investigations. McCaskill said the move is an “important, helpful step” for students and parents who otherwise may not have known if their school was under investigation. “We’ll continue working to help schools provide the highest level of responsiveness and protection for victims and to require the federal government to provide the highest level of transparency on compliance and enforcement,” she said in a statement. Advocates have said that the investigations, which are usually spurred by student complaints but also can be started proactively by the OCR, often are opaque and leave victims, perpetrators and school administrators alike without any information as they proceed. Unless student complainants publicized a complaint filing, the existence of an investigation often was not made public until the school entered into a voluntary resolution agreement with the Education Department. The department will not disclose any case-specific information about the schools under investigation. The list will be updated regularly and made available to the public and media upon request. [MSU is among the institutions listed by the Administration.]

* This is the complete news article.

**PROMISE UNFULFILLED?**

In a recent surge of demands that colleges step up their response to rape, students have put their faith in the federal civil-rights law known as Title IX. Meant to prohibit sex discrimination, the law requires colleges to investigate and resolve reports of sexual misconduct—including assault—whether or not the police are involved. It has inspired the name of an informal national network of self-described survivors (the IX Network) and a grassroots campaign to end sexual violence on campus (Know Your IX). Two women who filed a federal complaint against
their university last year, alleging that it mishandled their cases, had the law’s Roman numerals tattooed on their ankles.

**HOW TO HANDLE REPORTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: NEW Q&A OFFERS COLLEGES ADVICE**

Campus officials are commonly confused about their legal obligations in resolving reports of rape. The federal civil-rights law known as Title IX compels them to take action, periodically updated rules have offered some direction, and a new series of questions and answers from the U.S. Department of Education attempts to provide additional clarity. Since the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights issued prescriptive guidance in the form of a "Dear Colleague" letter, in 2011, it has been collecting questions from students, colleges, and professional groups, such as the National Association of College and University Attorneys. The 52-point Q&A, released on Monday along with recommendations from the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault, goes into significant detail—and repeatedly reflects the contention by many victims that the campus reporting process retraumatized them.

**BEHIND FOCUS ON COLLEGE ASSAULTS, A STEADY DRUMBEAT BY STUDENTS**

In March, two women who were sexually assaulted when they were students at the University of North Carolina arrived unannounced at the office of Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand with a request: Help us stop sexual assault on college campuses. Knowing that Ms. Gillibrand, a New York Democrat, was active in the fight against sexual assault in the military, they hoped to grab her attention for their battle — a long-simmering and, until recently, largely ignored problem on Capitol Hill. Ms. Gillibrand met with the two women, who had formed an organization called End Rape on Campus, and agreed to work on legislation and appeal to the White House for their cause. The two women help explain what might at first seem to be a sudden focus in Washington, most notably at the White House, on the problem of sexual assault on college campuses. In fact, attention to the problem has been quietly but steadily building because of a convergence of factors: successful lawsuits filed by women against their universities, a stepped-up enforcement of civil rights by the Obama administration, and the political savvy of student activist groups.

**CAMPUSSexual Assault GAINS A SPOTLIGHT IN CONGRESS**
By Carolyn Phenicie, *CQ.com*, April 28, 2014

Sen. Claire McCaskill has turned her attention to combating the problem of sexual assault on college campuses, part of an increasingly visible national conversation on the issue. Meanwhile, the White House on Tuesday morning unveiled recommendations focused broadly on identifying problems on campus, preventing assaults from occurring, responding effectively when assaults do happen and improving government effectiveness and transparency. Notably, the Obama administration will provide a toolkit for schools to conduct campus surveys that
anonymously collect data on the number of victims on campus as well as students’ knowledge of support services and disciplinary procedures. McCaskill, D-Mo., has been instrumental in the Senate in pushing for better protections for victims of sexual assault in the military. She’s now interested in the dimensions of the problem in higher education, planning both roundtables and hearings for later this year. A subcommittee headed up by McCaskill will survey 350 college campuses on how they handle rape and sexual assault, including how those crimes are reported and investigated and how students are notified about available support services. The senator also met recently with representatives from the civil rights divisions of the Education and Justice departments to discuss existing regulations and reporting procedures and how schools are held accountable when they fail to meet their obligations under federal law. A 2007 study found that nearly one in five women and 6 percent of men are the victims of attempted or completed sexual assaults during their undergraduate years. The problem of sexual assault is exacerbated in closed environments like military bases or college campuses, McCaskill said. Complex and sometimes contradictory reporting mechanisms, regulations and laws make for a justice system that is “not victim-centric enough,” McCaskill said in an interview. That emphasis on helping victims will be at the forefront of any legislative moves aiming to remedy the issue, said McCaskill, who cited her college-age daughters and experience as a prosecutor as additional reasons she is pursuing change. “We need to make the victims the focus of a process so that it is all victim-friendly and all designed to encourage victims to report and to give them the confidence that they’re going to be treated fairly and with respect if they do want to report,” she said. Too many young women believe that they may somehow be at fault if they are victims of sexual assault because they had too much to drink or agreed to go somewhere with someone they didn’t know well, McCaskill said. “We need to make sure we’re doing some pretty aggressive orientation of college students as they arrive on campus so they understand that just because you don’t have perfect judgment doesn’t mean anyone can commit a felony against you,” she said. Victims are often unwilling to report these crimes, either because they believe they are at least partly at fault or because they believe the perpetrator won’t face any real repercussions, she said. “We’ve got to work on that, because that’s allowing way too many of these perpetrators to walk away without any kind of meaningful punishment, and that’s unacceptable,” McCaskill added. **First Step, Surveys:** McCaskill’s 350-school survey is a beginning. Researchers have reassured colleges that they will not publicize individual schools’ responses because they want the universities to be very forthcoming, she said. The survey will be conducted through a Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs subcommittee that McCaskill chairs, with assistance from the Government Accountability Office in identifying colleges to include in the study. Once results are collected — which she said would happen around mid-May — and tabulated, she will hold a series of roundtable discussions and hearings on the issue before the November elections. Any legislative remedies would be drafted shortly after and may mirror provisions in a similar measure (S 1917) the Senate passed earlier this year about military sex assault, she said. Colleges’ federal obligations concerning sexual assaults fall under two statutes: the Clery Act (PL 101-542), which requires colleges to report on a broad array of crimes that occur on and near campuses, and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act (PL 88-352), which bans sex discrimination more generally and requires colleges to provide an atmosphere free of sexual harassment, including sexual assault. McCaskill, with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who also advocated for changes to military sex assault provisions, wrote to leaders of the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations Subcommittee to request additional funding for the Education Department’s Office of Civil Rights, which conducts
R. Biden Jr. in a statement. “We need to give victims the support they need — like a confidential

assault. No more turning a blind eye or pretending it doesn’t exist,” said Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in a statement. “We need to give victims the support they need — like a confidential
place to go — and we need to bring the perpetrators to justice.” Additional recommendations focus on training for school officials and recommendations on campus reporting procedures, including removing mandatory reporter requirements to give victims a confidential option to report assaults and receive assistance, an administration official said. The recommendations — the first report from the White House’s Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault — are just a starting point and more recommendations will be forthcoming, administration officials emphasized.

* This is the complete news article.

**SOCIAL SCIENCES & THE HUMANITIES**

'THE VALUE OF THE HUMANITIES'

While there exists a long tradition for defending the study of the humanities, in recent years the tone of such arguments has become rather more urgent. In an era of retrenchments and increased focus on immediate employment outcomes, those in disciplines whose vocational relevance may seem less than obvious have become increasingly outspoken about the value of their work (often in this very publication).

**EDUCATION DEPT. TO MOVE FORWARD WITH PLANS FOR IMPROVING TEACHER PREPARATION**

To strengthen the nation’s teacher-preparation programs, President Obama is asking the Department of Education to move forward with a plan to issue draft regulations that encourage and support states in developing systems for rating programs and providing them with information to help the programs improve. "Poor programs, what they do is produce teachers who are underprepared, are ineffective, and who are frustrated," Arne Duncan, the secretary of education, said during a conference call with reporters on Thursday. "Too many teacher-prep programs give little or no information about how their graduates are actually doing once they enter the teaching profession. That is simply unacceptable and must change.

**GIFTED AND TALENTED RESEARCH RESURRECTED**
By Caitlin Emma, *Politico’s Morning Education*, April 30, 2014

The federal government is back in the business of studying gifted and talented students. *The Institute of Education Sciences is creating a research center* devoted to studying how to best meet the needs of and improve outcomes for these students, in particular those who come from traditionally underserved groups. The money comes from the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Program, which went unfunded for a few years but was funded in the 2014 budget.
This is the complete news article.

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY PROGRAM - DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (CA-DDRIG)
NSF Program Solicitation, April 28, 2015

Full Proposal Target Date(s): August 15, 2014, August 15, Annually Thereafter. January 15, 2015, January 15, Annually Thereafter...The primary objective of the Cultural Anthropology Program is to support basic scientific research on the causes, consequences, and complexities of human social and cultural variability. Anthropological research spans a wide gamut, and contemporary cultural anthropology is an arena in which diverse research traditions and methodologies are valid. Recognizing the breadth of the field’s contributions to science, the Cultural Anthropology Program welcomes proposals for empirically grounded, theoretically engaged, and methodologically sophisticated research in all sub-fields of cultural anthropology. Because the NSF’s mandate is to support basic research, the NSF Cultural Anthropology Program does not fund research that takes as its primary goal improved clinical practice or applied policy.

BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY PROGRAM - DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (BA-DDRIG)
NSF Program Solicitation, April 28, 2015

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer’s local time): July 28, 2014; March 12, 2015; November 10, 2015; July 14, 2016; March 09, 2017; November 09, 2017; July 11, 2018; March 14, 2019; November 14, 2019; July 09, 2020. The Biological Anthropology Program supports multifaceted research which advances scientific knowledge of human biology and ecology, including understanding of our evolutionary history and mechanisms which have shaped human and nonhuman primate biological diversity. Supported research focuses on living and fossil forms of both human and nonhuman primates, addressing time scales ranging from the short-term to evolutionary, encompassing multiple levels of organization and analysis (molecular and organismal, to the population and ecosystem scales), and conducted in field, laboratory, and captive research environments. Areas of inquiry which promote understanding of the evolution, biology, and adaptability of our diverse species include, but are not limited to, human genetic and epigenetic variation and relationships to phenotype; human and nonhuman primate ecology, socioecology, functional anatomy and skeletal biology; human and nonhuman primate paleontology; and the anthropological science of forensics.

UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT OFFICE TO ADJUST FEES

The U.S. Copyright Office of the Library of Congress is amending its fees for certain public services effective May 1. The new fee schedule governs registration, recordation, licensing activities and FOIA services, among others. The Copyright Office revisits its fee schedule every few years to align its fees with the cost of providing services, as required by the Copyright Act.
This is the first fee adjustment since 2009.

NEW DIPLOMACY MUSEUM WILL SHOWCASE MORE THAN 'A BUNCH OF PENS'
By Charles Clark, Government Executive, May 1, 2014

The General Services Administration on Thursday announced selection of a construction contractor for the coming U.S. Diplomacy Center, a privately funded museum to be built at the 21st Street Northwest State Department headquarters in Washington... Organizers emphasize that the Diplomatic Center fulfills an educational function pondered since Benjamin Franklin's time but never realized. Its proximity to the National Mall will make it a tourist attraction, they added. The exhibits will be free to the public, but visitors will be required to go through security detectors.

STUDENT AID

ONE LOAN: IT’S REALLY THAT SIMPLE
By Rick Shipman, Student Aid Perspectives, April 29, 2014

During the several federal student loan panels I have participated in the past two years, one issue has always emerged: the “one loan program.” Although the idea of a single federal student loan program has strong support among some financial aid professionals (and many believe it would have strong support with families), it has not gathered support at the federal level. What do those in the financial aid trenches see that lawmakers do not? Conversely, what do lawmakers see that financial aid professionals might be missing?

THE FUTURE OF STUDENT LOANS: A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES
Inside Higher Ed, May 1, 2014

With student borrowing rising -- and political concern about debt growing with it -- Inside Higher Ed today publishes a free compilation of articles about the future of student loans. The news and opinion articles -- in a print-on-demand booklet -- explore the impact of federal policies, strategies some institutions are adopting, and the views of thought leaders on the issue.