Subject: DC Update, News from Washington
From: Sarah Walter and Mary Malaspina, Michigan State University's (MSU's) Washington Office
Date: January 9, 2015

* Note: 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.

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NEWS SUMMARY

The 114th Congress began its first session on Tuesday. Topics covered during the week ranged from the Keystone pipeline to health care reform and redefining full-time work.

Today, in Knoxville, Tennessee, President Obama announced the latest in a series of Manufacturing Innovation Hubs: the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI). MSU is one of the Centers of Excellence that makes up the $250 million IACMI.

Earlier today, during his visit to Knoxville, the President also proposed making two years of community college free "for everybody who's willing to work for it." The White House will need Congressional approval of this plan.

On Wednesday, President Obama highlighted economic development and the resurgence of the auto industry during a speech at Ford’s assembly plant in Wayne, Michigan.

The White House has announced that it will submit its Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request to Congress on February 2.

President Obama has nominated the following individuals to his Administration:

• Deborah Birx, Director of the Division of Global HIV/AIDS in the Center for Global Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to be Ambassador at Large and Coordinator of United States Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS Globally;
• David Cohen, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the Department of the Treasury, to be Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency;
• Walter Hood, professor of Landscape Architecture, Environmental Planning, and Urban Design at the University of California, Berkeley, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts;
• Suzette Kimball, Deputy Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), to be the Director of the USGS;
• Jerilyn Mendoza, the Senior Environmental Affairs Program Manager at the Southern
California Gas Company, to be a member of the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation;

- *Mary Minow,* Adjunct Professor at the San Jose State School of Library Science and at the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board; and

- *Diane Rodriguez,* Associate Artistic Director at Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

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AGRICULTURE

USDA ANNOUNCES FELLOWSHIPS FOR FUTURE AGRICULTURAL SCIENTISTS

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) today announced the availability of more than $15 million for fellowships to train and develop the next generation of scientists who will lead agriculture into the future by solving current and future challenges facing society. NIFA will support pre- and post-doctoral fellowships, and for the first time, undergraduate fellowships... Funded fellowships will span the six [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative] AFRI challenge areas (food security, water, climate change, food safety, childhood obesity prevention, and sustainable bioenergy) and the AFRI foundational program areas. The fellowship program also will fund projects that contain well-developed and highly-engaged mentoring and training activities. NIFA will fund single-function and multi-function research,
education or extension projects...Applications for the pre- and post-doctoral fellows are due on February 11, 2015. Letters of intent for the undergraduate fellowships are due on February 18, 2015, with full applications due May 6, 2015.

**ROBERTS TAKES GAVEL**
By Ellyn Ferguson, *CQ.com*, January 9, 2015

Senate Republicans confirmed Pat Roberts as the new chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, making official what everyone expected. Roberts, R-Kan., declared on the night of his November re-election that he planned to be an active chairman of the committee. Former Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, a Michigan Democrat, will become ranking member. “I look forward to an aggressive schedule with hearings providing much-needed oversight of our farm programs, school meals, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency,” Roberts said in a statement Thursday. “I am humbled to serve as chairman and will continue to be a champion for rural Kansas.”

* This is the complete news article.

**COCHRAN TAKES SENATE APPROPRIATIONS; HEAD OF AG PANEL STILL NOT CHOSEN**
By Ellyn Ferguson, *CQ.com*, January 7, 2015

Thad Cochran, as expected, got the nod to lead the Senate Appropriations Committee today as Republicans began selecting committee chairmen. Heads of the Agriculture and other subcommittees remain to be named. *Republicans Organizing: Cochran, R-Miss., will select the 12 Appropriations subcommittee chairmen based on seniority on the full committee. CQ Roll Call’s Tamar Hallerman provides an overview of Cochran’s style and challenges he may face as chairman. The contest for chairmanship of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee appears to be between Jerry Moran of Kansas and John Hoeven of North Dakota. Moran has more seniority and may prefer the top post on another subcommittee, possibly leaving the Agriculture seat to Hoeven. Hoeven said earlier today that he hopes to know which position he’ll get this week or early next week. He said it could be one of three possibilities: Agriculture, Financial Services or Homeland Security.*

* This is the complete news article.

**21ST CENTURY CONSERVATION SERVICE CORPS PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY**
*Federal Register*, December 22, 2014

The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) National Council is requesting letters of interest from all conservation corps, youth, and veteran programs that would like to be identified as a 21CSC member organization. We are initiating this outreach in order to catalyze the establishment of a 21CSC to engage young Americans and returning veterans in the
conservation and stewardship of America’s public lands and water.

THE ARTS

$1 MILLION IN NEW GRANT FUNDING AVAILABLE TO CELEBRATE THE ARTS AND NATIONAL PARKS

“Art is the child of Nature,” said American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. A new grant initiative created in partnership by the NEA and the National Park Service celebrates the intersections between the two in honor of the NEA’s 50th anniversary in 2015 and the National Park Service’s centennial in 2016. “Imagine Your Parks” will provide $1 million in funding through the NEA Art Works grant category to projects that use the arts to engage people with memorable places and landscapes of the National Park System.

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

BRAINSTORMERS: OBAMA’S BIG RESEARCH PUSH KICKS OFF WITH A MEETING OF THE MINDS

...Eighteen months after President Obama launched an ambitious brain-research initiative, likened by some to the moonshot of the 1960s, federal officials are trying to create a new model for neuroscience research, one that emphasizes innovation and cooperation across specialties and institutions.

NEW FEDERAL HEALTH IT STRATEGIC PLAN RELEASED
Association of American Medical Colleges News, December 19, 2014

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology has released a five-year strategic plan focused on the efforts of more than 35 federal departments and agencies to advance practices around collecting, sharing, and using electronic health information to improve health care. The plan is open to public comment through February 6, 2015. For more information: http://ow.ly/G7ias

* This is the complete news article.

FISCAL POLICIES FOR 2015
By Sally Rockey, Rock Talk, January 7, 2015

Happy 2015! Just a quick blog to let you know that last week, NIH announced policies for fiscal
operations for fiscal year (FY) 2015, implementing the 2015 Consolidated Appropriations Act signed by President Obama on December 16, 2014. NIH has a budget of $30.31 billion, an increase of approximately $240 million over the FY 2014 final budget allocations of $30.07 billion. We also announced the stipend levels for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards, and salary limits for individuals receiving their salaries from an NIH grant, cooperative agreement, or contract.

**PCORI OFFERS UP TO $150.7 MILLION TO SUPPORT SECOND PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT OF PCORNET, ITS NATIONAL PATIENT-CENTERED CLINICAL RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

PCORI Press Release, December 22, 2014

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) today issued two funding announcements offering a total of up to $150.7 million to support further development of the health systems-based and patient-powered data networks that comprise PCORnet, the National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network. PCORnet is a large, national network for conducting comparative effectiveness research and other types of health studies more rapidly and efficiently.

**MEMBERS OF CONGRESS REQUEST INVESTIGATION OF NIH RESEARCH**

*American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Policy Alert, January 8, 2015*

Four members of Congress sent a [letter](#) to National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Francis Collins asking for investigation of psychological experiments on monkeys being carried out at an NIH lab in Poolesville, Maryland. The letter argues that since 1983, the project has measured anxiety and depression in macaques by subjecting them to stressful procedures, including removing them from their mothers at birth. Some have also been addicted to alcohol. A bioethical report was requested by February 27.

* This is the complete news article.

**LARGEST U.S. BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY WEIGHS IN ON NIH’S BUDGET WOES**

*By Jocelyn Kaiser, ScienceInsider, January 9, 2015*

As 2015 begins, biomedical researchers are once again wringing their hands about a surfeit of scientists chasing too few research dollars and academic jobs. In a report released today, the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, which represents more than 120,000 scientists, endorses familiar solutions and adds a few new ones. The [report](#) goes over well-trodden territory, noting that the more than 20% decline in inflation-adjusted dollars in the NIH’s budget since 2003 has meant an even steeper drop of 34% in R01-equivalent research grants, the bread-and-butter grants that support most independent labs.

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**
COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE
By Caitlin Emma, Politico's Morning Education, January 9, 2015

President Barack Obama is headed to Pellissippi State Community College in Tennessee today, where he'll propose making two years of community college free "for everybody who's willing to work for it." But he'll need the approval of Congress to make it happen. So far, the plan doesn't have a price tag -- at least not officially; all White House officials will say is it's "significant." If all 50 states participate, the proposal could benefit 9 million students each year and save them an average of $3,800 in tuition. (David Leonhardt of The New York Times estimated the cost could reach $15 billion annually: http://nyti.ms/1Kr23Ey) But administration officials insist it's "a proposal with bipartisan appeal." The plan is inspired by -- but not identical to -- the Tennessee Promise, the brainchild of Republican Gov. Bill Haslam. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) was quick to state his support Thursday night, framing community colleges as "a more affordable, higher quality alternative to for-profit colleges." But there are potential drawbacks, said Don Heller, dean of Michigan State University's College of Education. Take California, he said, where many students enroll at community colleges because they aren't admitted to the University of California. "Should we really be giving those kids free tuition when their families can pay?" Heller asked. Further, he said, why not just offer two years' worth of tuition at any institution? "By focusing this on just community college students, are we going to lose out on some students that could benefit by going and starting at a four-year university?"

* This is the complete news article.

ALEXANDER INTRODUCES STUDENT AID SIMPLIFICATION BILL
Inside Higher Ed, January 8, 2015

Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee was formally elected Wednesday morning to his post as chair of the Senate education committee in the new Congress. And he quickly made clear what his top higher education priority would be for the coming year: student aid simplification.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE RELEASES TWO REPORTS RELATED TO HIGHER EDUCATION
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Congressional and Governmental Affairs News, January 5, 2015

On December 16, 2014, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report titled “Higher Education: State Funding Trends and Policies on Affordability”. This report was initiated to study how state policies affect affordability of higher education look at ways states can act to make college more affordable. A podcast is available here. On December 22, 2014, the GAO released a report titled “Higher Education: Education Should Strengthen Oversight of Schools and Accreditors.” This report looks at accreditor sanctions for schools not in compliance, the likelihood accreditors will sanction schools with weaker student outcomes, and how the
Department of Education uses accreditor sanction information for oversight. The report recommends that the Department of Education look at ways “to better assess whether accreditor standards effectively address academic quality.” The Department of Education plans to address the recommendations.

* This is the complete news article.

**REDEFINING FULL-TIME ADJUNCT WORK**

As Republicans formally take control of a new Congress this week, one of the party's top priorities is pushing through a change to President Obama's health care law that many colleges are cheering but that adjunct faculty have criticized. Both the House and Senate are expected to vote, as early as Thursday, on legislation that would redefine full-time work under the Affordable Care Act as 40 hours a week, up from the current 30-hour threshold. The White House...announced Wednesday that President Obama would veto the measure if it arrived on his desk.

**MEASURING SUBSTANCE**

Lawmakers will continue to look for ways to measure the value of a college degree. Acknowledging this, a group of three higher education associations say they want to help that conversation be more informed and comprehensive. The groups, which represent the various sectors of public higher education, on Thursday released a draft discussion guide for how to track what happens to students after college.

**IMMIGRATION**

**RFI ON WAYS TO IMPROVE U.S. IMMIGRATION SYSTEM**
*AAAS Policy Alert*, January 8, 2015

On December 30, 2014, the Departments of State and Homeland Security issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking public comments and recommendations for ways to streamline and improve the U.S. immigration system. The RFI includes a series of questions and seeks specific recommendations for ways "to reduce burdens on employers and workers engaging in the H-1B petition process." In addition, it asks, "What are the most important policy and operational changes that would attract the world’s most talented researchers to U.S. universities, national laboratories, and other research institutions?" The deadline for responding is January 29, 2015.

* This is the complete news article.
THE REPUBLICAN'S OPENING ACT ON IMMIGRATION
By Lauren French, Politico Huddle, January 8, 2015

Seung Min writes, "House leadership plans to move as early as next week on legislation to override Obama's actions that could protect millions of undocumented immigrants from deportations. That move is likely to be paired with spending for the Department of Homeland Security, which got only short-term funding from an agreement in December. The GOP strategy -- emerging just one day after Republicans officially took over both chambers of Congress -- follows through on the party's promise last year to strike back at Obama on immigration. Republicans chose to defer that fight to early this year, when the GOP would be in complete power."

* This is the complete news article.

INNOVATION

U.S. PATENT OFFICE FLOATS NEW BIOTECH-FRIENDLY GUIDELINES
By Kelly Servick, ScienceInsider, December 19, 2014

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is taking another crack at how it evaluates inventions derived from nature. The agency has been forced to tighten its eligibility rules in light of recent Supreme Court decisions—including a 2013 ruling that struck down patents on human genes—but its first pass at new guidelines for examiners raised a stink. University groups and industry representatives feared the rules would chill investment by rendering potential new therapies and diagnostics unpatentable. A new guidance, released this week, goes a long way to quell those fears, though many are still uncertain how it will be implemented.

THE PATENT LANDSCAPE HAS CHANGED, BUT TARGETED REFORMS STILL
By David Kappos, Roll Call, January 5, 2015

The 114th Congress will soon begin and the newest members of Congress will take their seats. While the 113th Congress was hampered by partisan gridlock, there’s optimism among many that the 114th could be defined by tangible compromise on critical issues facing our nation. Many expect that patent reform will be one of the top bipartisan issues for the new Congress.

MEANWHILE, PATENT PUSH PROMPTS PILE-ON
By Tony Romm, Politico’s Morning Tech, January 7, 2015

Sure, lawmakers still support legislation to club the so-called patent trolls, and the GOP wants to move swiftly with potential reform. But as supporters make the case for legislative fixes, both in the Beltway and here at CES, corporate interests are starting to salivate. Erin Mershon reports:
"Associations representing universities, technology companies, biotech and pharmaceutical firms are all looking to tweak various rules that govern the patent system. The rapidly accumulating wish lists could complicate what many see as improving chances for patent reform in the new Congress."

* This is the complete news article.

**BACK IN D.C.: ISSA’S READY TO MOVE ON PATENTS**  

Rep. Darrell Issa, who now heads the House's top intellectual property panel, told MT this week that patents will be the subject of one of his panel’s very first meetings this year. He and full Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte plan to reintroduce the Innovation Act 'sooner rather than later,' he said -- and while he's interested in adding a little to the measure, he expects it'll probably look a lot like the one that the House passed in late 2013. "The chairman has kindly said that although we can look at merging [our bills], that he sees that the Innovation Act will be substantially similar, and I agreed with him," he said. Still, Issa added that "the question of whether some portion of [my bill] fits into the Innovation Act is still to be decided." (Issa's bill, remember, expanded a CBM review program, much like a measure from Sen. Chuck Schumer.) And speaking of Schumer's bill: Look for it to come back, in some form or another. The senator told MT this week that he's definitely going to introduce a patent quality provision during the upcoming debate. Whether he goes with the same CBM expansion or takes a different route, though, he declined to say.

* This is the complete news article.

**AMERICAN INNOVATION IS IN TROUBLE**  

The world is impressed with the United States these days. On recent trips to Europe and Asia, I kept hearing praise of the country’s innovation and entrepreneurship. But a set of new studies suggests that the glittering examples of Facebook, Snapchat and Uber are deceptive. American innovation is in trouble. Federal funding for basic research and technology should be utterly uncontroversial. It has been one of the greatest investments in human history. And yet it has fallen to its lowest level as a percentage of GDP in four decades.

**INTERNET POLICY**

**THE WAIT IS NEARLY OVER: NET NEUTRALITY RULES COMING IN FEBRUARY**  

[Federal Communications Commission] FCC boss Tom Wheeler will circulate new net neutrality
rules in February, as well as a vote -- ending months of speculation over how the commission will protect the open Internet. Obama called on the commission to regulate broadband like a utility late last year, and Wheeler's been moving in that direction since. FCC spokeswoman Kim Hart confirmed the timing to Brooks but declined to characterize Wheeler's latest thinking.

* This is the complete news article.

**FCC’S TOM WHEELER IN STEP WITH BARACK OBAMA ON NET NEUTRALITY**
By Tony Romm, Politico, January 7, 2015

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler offered his strongest endorsement to date of tough net neutrality rules, aligning himself with President Barack Obama’s vision for an open Internet. Speaking here at the 2015 International CES tech trade show, Wheeler repeatedly hinted he favors reclassification of broadband as a public utility, which would subject Internet providers to some of the same rules that govern old phone companies. The approach is already drawing heavy fire from Republicans and telecom giants who warn it will lead to burdensome regulation.

**DEM DUO TO REVIVE RECENT BILL**
By Tony Romm, Politico’s Morning Tech, January 7, 2015

Sen. Patrick Leahy, who leads his party on the chamber's Judiciary Committee, is teaming back up California Rep. Doris Matsui to resurrect their late-2014 open Internet proposal. The legislation would give the FCC new authority to ban paid prioritization -- the kind of pay-for-play deals that Wheeler also intends to block in rules due next month -- though the pols' proposal obviously faces the steepest of odds in the hands of a GOP-controlled Congress. **STILL, IS A COMPROMISE IN THE CARDS?:** The top dogs on the Senate Commerce Committee appear to be contemplating a legislative solution to the net neutrality morass, but they're hardly ready to announce anything serious just yet. New panel Chairman John Thune and top Dem, Sen. Bill Nelson, have "talked extensively" for "several weeks," according to Nelson, who chatted with Kate and Erin back in the Capitol yesterday. And he explicitly cautioned: "We don't have any resolution." (Hill sources tell us, by the way, that Senate players at least are talking to their House counterparts as the process unfolds.) **AND OTHERS WANT TO STRIKE WHILE THEY CAN:** Rep. Darrell Issa is about to take over the House Judiciary Committee's intellectual property-focused panel. And after a brief stint here in Vegas for CES, he told your guest MT-er he still believes the nation's antitrust laws are best suited for ensuring an open Internet. "I believe the FCC is exceeding its legislative mandate," he said of the agency's forthcoming rules, which are expected to treat broadband as a utility. "I will be pushing hard against that."

* This is the complete news article.
For the White House, a major win on net neutrality might come at a cost — scuttling everything else on Washington’s tech and telecom agenda next year. The FCC is racing to write rules that require Internet service providers to treat all Web traffic equally, and many expect the agency will follow President Barack Obama’s call to treat broadband service like a utility. Telecom giants and Republican lawmakers say that will create burdensome new regulation — and the issue has already incited a lobbying frenzy, raised the specter of lawsuits and ignited new partisan fires on Capitol Hill.

REID TO MCCONNELL AND THUNE: DON’T USE THE COMM ACT TO WEAKEN NET NEUTRALITY
By Erin Mershon, Politico’s Morning Tech, December 22, 2014

Senate Democrats - led by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Sen. Maria Cantwell - sent a letter late Friday to warn Republican leaders against using an upcoming overhaul of telecommunications law to weaken net neutrality rules. The eleven Dems who signed on, including Sens. Al Franken, Richard Blumenthal, Patrick Leahy and Patty Murray, said they 'wholeheartedly agree' with Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune's push to update the Communications Act, but warned that they 'would forcefully oppose any reforms that would undermine the FCC's authority to act to adopt meaningful net neutrality rules to protect consumers.' In their letter, the signatories also laid out their requirements for the new net neutrality rules. 'They must prohibit fast lanes, prevent discrimination against and blocking of lawful content, prohibit throttling, and increase transparency,' the lawmakers wrote. 'We hope the FCC will adopt such rules without delay.' Read the whole thing, here: http://1.usa.gov/1x9FTmh

* This is the complete news article.

NEW CONGRESS & THE WHITE HOUSE

5 THINGS COLLEGES CAN EXPECT FROM CONGRESS IN 2015

When the 114th Congress convenes, on Tuesday, Republicans will control the Senate for the first time in eight years. In the House of Representatives, they’ll have their largest majority since 1928. What does that mean for higher education? In the spirit of the New Year, here are five predictions for 2015.

REPUBLICANS SAY THEY’LL ACT FAST TO PUSH AGENDA

In taking control of Congress on Tuesday, Republicans say they will quickly advance energy and health care legislation that stalled in the Democratic-controlled Senate as they try to make good on claims, and address doubts, that they can govern effectively.
OBAMA DIALS UP EXECUTIVE POWER
By David Nather, Politico, January 5, 2015

What do you do when you don’t have Congress? Keep the regulations coming. The Obama administration is preparing another active year of executive action in 2015, pumping out new rules and enforcing others for the first time — setting tougher standards on everything from air pollution to overtime pay to net neutrality, food safety, commercial drones, a college ratings plan and a crackdown on for-profit colleges that don’t prepare their students for well-paying jobs.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING

PRESIDENT OBAMA ANNOUNCES NEW MANUFACTURING INNOVATION HUB IN KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE
White House Fact Sheet, January 9, 2015

Today, the President is announcing the latest in a series of partnerships aimed at boosting advanced manufacturing, fostering American innovation, and attracting well-paying jobs that will strengthen the middle class...The Department of Energy and a consortium of 122 companies, nonprofits, and universities led by the University of Tennessee-Knoxville will invest more than $250 million -- $70 million in federal funds and more than $180 million in non-federal funds – to launch a Manufacturing Innovation Institute for Advanced Composites.

SECRETARY MONIZ ANNOUNCES $125 MILLION OPEN SOLICITATION FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL ENERGY PROJECTS

U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz announced today at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars that the Department of Energy's Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy is issuing its third open funding opportunity announcement, OPEN 2015, for up to $125 million. OPEN 2015 will support energy research and development projects from America's top innovators for disruptive new technologies in transportation and stationary applications.

LEARN FROM TOP RESEARCHERS AS A #NATIONALLABSINTERN
DOE News Release, January 8, 2015

Students can gain research experience in areas ranging from chemistry, physics, engineering, biology, nuclear medicine, applied mathematics and high and low-energy physics. Internships and fellowships not only develop marketable skills that can pay dividends in school and on the job hunt; they also present an opportunity to build relationships with mentors whose advice
and support can be valuable long after an internship ends. If you or someone you know is a student interested in science, technology, engineering or math, explore the opportunities at the National Labs today.

**NIST GRANTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ANNOUNCED**
*National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Tech Beat, January 7, 2015*

NIST is accepting applications for its annual NIST Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program. Applications are made on behalf of the students by their academic institutions. Applications must be received by February 13, 2015. Full details of the program, rules and the application process are available at grants.gov under funding opportunity 2015-NIST-SURF-01, or visit www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=270408.

**PAY DIRT: TURNING DEADLY CHEMICAL AGENTS INTO HARMLESS SOIL**
*Armed With Science, December 26, 2014*

Current methods of eradication, such as incineration or hydrolysis, create toxic waste that requires further processing. However, the logistics required to transport large stockpiles from storage to a disposal site can be risky and expensive. Additionally, different types of chemicals require different methods to make them safe, so each agent requires a specific neutralization procedure – one size doesn’t fit all. To address these challenges, [the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] DARPA has announced the **Agnostic Compact Demilitarization of Chemical Agents** program and issued a **Broad Agency Announcement** solicitation.

**ZOOM IN, ZOOM OUT**
*Armed With Science, January 6, 2015*

Military teams patrolling dangerous urban environments overseas and rescue teams responding to disasters such as earthquakes or floods currently rely on remotely piloted unmanned aerial vehicles to provide a bird’s-eye view of the situation and spot threats that can’t be seen from the ground. To address these challenges, DARPA issued a Broad Agency Announcement solicitation today for the Fast Lightweight Autonomy (FLA) program. FLA focuses on creating a new class of algorithms to enable small, unmanned aerial vehicles to quickly navigate a labyrinth of rooms, stairways and corridors or other obstacle-filled environments without a remote pilot. The solicitation is available here.

**RESEARCH POLICY**

**UPDATE ON NSF GRANT PRACTICES**
There was considerable discussion this year about the National Science Foundation’s grant practices. There were three developments in December of note.