

News of the Profession

Reports

COSSA: Four Years of Achievement

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COSSA

In July of 1981, the Consortium of Social Science Associations' (COSSA) Washington office had been established for two months, and a major battle loomed over an amendment proposed by Representative Larry Winn (R-KS) to reduce the appropriation for the National Science Foundation (NSF) by \$70 million. At COSSA's direction political and other social scientists were being urged to call their representatives, and COSSA's newly registered lobbyists were making direct personal appeals on Capitol Hill. This effort allowed the new organization to claim a significant role in the defeat of the Winn Amendment. Later that year it convinced NSF Director John Slaughter to restore \$11 million for social and behavioral science research to the NSF budget. In a few short months, the new organization made Congress, the *New York Times* and the *London Times* take notice that henceforth social science would have an effective voice arguing its cause concerning research funding. COSSA had mobilized a previously uninvolved academic community, vulnerable to attack and without demonstrated political strength, to concern itself with issues of research funding and support.

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Earlier in 1981 when President Reagan announced his plans to cut the social and behavioral science budgets at NSF by 75 percent, a group of executive officers of the social and behavioral science associations, including the APSA, decided that informal meetings among themselves to discuss governance questions (something that had been occurring since the mid-1970s), were no longer adequate to deal with the clear direct assault upon research support for their disciplines. Thus, they hired Roberta Balstad Miller from the Social Science Research Council's Washington office to direct a social science response to the challenge of the Reagan administration's assault. The group expected the lobbying effort to be short-term.

However, not only did the response succeed in reducing the budget cuts, but also, more importantly, it mobilized the social science community to recognize the need for a presence in Washington, similar to other academic discipline-based lobbying groups like the engineers, biologists, chemists, *et al.* The ten disciplinary associations—anthropology, economics, geography, history, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology, statistics, and the law schools—were soon joined by other associations and universities who were willing to affiliate and contribute to an organization that would lobby for social and behavioral science research. By the middle of 1982 COSSA incorporated and became an established part of the academic lobbying scene in Washington.

In the ensuing years, under the direction of Miller and now David Jenness, who replaced Miller in September 1984, COSSA has continued to lobby for bigger research budgets and, in this era of budget deficits, to avoid cuts, for social and behavioral science programs at the

National Science Foundation. Its major goal has been to restore that funding to pre-Reagan figures. In terms of current dollars that battle has succeeded. The current hurdle is to restore those budgets in terms of constant dollars, and then move on to real growth. Today, the authorization and appropriation committees overseeing NSF recognize COSSA as the organization that speaks for research funding in the social sciences. It has testified on the NSF budget for the past four years. In addition, derogatory remarks about "silly research" in the social sciences during congressional debates on NSF funding have diminished considerably due to COSSA's educational efforts.

The National Science Foundation has recognized COSSA as a legitimate force and ally in its budget battles with Congress. However, it also recognizes that in the rank ordering of programs within NSF, COSSA will fight for the social and behavioral science research programs. In November 1984, Erich Bloch, the newly appointed director of NSF, addressed COSSA's annual meeting and has been quite willing to discuss with COSSA subsequent problems that have arisen since then. The FY 1986 budget that emerged from the Foundation was quite generous to the social sciences, asking for a 19 percent increase in research funds.

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As COSSA established itself, its focus expanded. NSF continues to be the major focus since the foundation supports research across the ten major disciplines, and in many cases like political science, provides the bulk of all federal support. However, in the past few years COSSA has, in essence, moved beyond NSF and beyond budgets.

COSSA has joined with other groups to restore funding for other research agency budgets that were endangered by administration budget cuts such as: the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the National Institute of Education (NIE), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the National Archives and Records Service (NARS). It now monitors almost all the agencies where federal funds are allocated to support externally generated research projects in the social and behavioral sciences. COSSA's concern is not just with budgets, but also with the way research is managed by these agencies.

The techniques that COSSA uses are no different from those of most academic lobbying groups. Not blessed (cursed?) with a political action committee (PAC), COSSA must use the results of our research and teaching efforts to promote the cause of social science on the Hill and in the agencies. From the beginning a major activity has been a series of congressional seminars that brings those results to the decision-makers. In addition, the publication of a biweekly newsletter, the *COSSA Washington Update*, sent to over 1,000 subscribers in the social science community, the press, federal agencies and congressional offices, functions as a communications forum for the issues that concern COSSA's constituency. Stories in the *Update* have been cited by larger communications media, such as the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, particularly the budget analysis issue done every February, which analyzes the president's proposed budget for social and behavioral science research in all the agencies.

Testimony before committees is another time-honored lobbying technique. COSSA uses social science researchers as witnesses to provide Congress with practitioners to speak for the cause. Political scientists Philip E. Converse, Herbert Jacob, Elinor Ostrom and Paul Peterson have all served as witnesses for COSSA.

Constant day-to-day contact with key congressional and agency staff people is another method used by COSSA. The COSSA Executive Committee and lobby-

ing staff have met with the directors of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the National Institute of Aging (NIA), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the National Institute of Education (NIE), and the President's Science Adviser and his deputy.

In the four short years of COSSA's existence, there have been success stories in many areas of social science research funding and management. Today, selling the value of research in the "soft sciences" to skeptical decision-makers is more difficult than in the years when positive responses to requests for increases in education funding were more likely. Although the climate has certainly changed, the battles are still being fought. The following examples, arranged by policy area, describe issues, in addition to NSF funding, where COSSA was actively involved, where we succeeded and where we sometimes simply heightened awareness of the needs of social and behavioral science research and researchers.

Criminal Justice

A major success story concerned the reauthorization of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), a two-year struggle that ended during the hectic last week of the 98th Congress in October 1984. COSSA's goal was to protect the independence and integrity of these two research agencies within the Justice Department from the administration's plan to return to the days of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) when research and statistics got mixed up with short-run policy initiatives. With the help of key people in Congress, notably Representative William Hughes (D-NJ) and Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), and a mobilized criminal justice research community that included political scientists, sociologists, and law school deans, who testified, wrote letters, and made phone calls, the Congress maintained the structure and grant-making power of the directors of NIJ and BJS.

Another COSSA initiative succeeded in convincing Congress to require the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to employ competition and peer review in the awarding of research grants and contracts. Reacting angrily to OJJDP's awarding of certain non-competitive grants, Congress adopted provisions advocated by COSSA during the reauthorization process in 1984. In May 1985 OJJDP published the proposed regulations implementing these competition and peer review processes. COSSA commented on these regulations suggesting improvements to make them better comply with the law and certain standard peer review practices.

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A congressional seminar in August 1984 on "Career Criminals and Criminal Careers," enhanced the lobbying efforts on these two issues.

Health Policy

COSSA has made major efforts to improve the climate for the social and behavioral sciences at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). An investigative piece in the *Update* revealing the paucity of social and behavioral scientists on the NIH advisory councils became an effective lobbying tool for urging Congress to add people from these disciplines to the councils in the NIH reauthorization bill in 1984. Because the president vetoed this bill, that battle continues.

A COSSA congressional seminar on "Health and Human Behavior" in May 1982 focused attention on an important area of research in which social and behavioral scientists should have an increasing role. A number of reports by scientific agencies had advocated that more attention be paid to the linkages between

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disease prevention and human behavior traits. The Congress has responded by inserting language into reports accompanying appropriations bills urging NIH to carry out a health and behavior research initiative. COSSA has continued to prod NIH to make that initiative more visible and significant and presented congressional testimony on this issue this year.

COSSA has lobbied hard on behalf of increased funding for research and training at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). In 1982 COSSA's efforts led the House Appropriations Committee to insert report language into its bill that stressed the importance of NIMH projects coming from all disciplines and that encouraged the Institute to support social research in the field of mental health.

Research at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has been an important issue for COSSA. Since many of our affiliate organizations are concerned with child welfare, COSSA has sponsored two congressional seminars in this area: "Our Nation's Children: The Invisible Constituency," and "Youth and Unemployment."

Welfare Policy

In 1983 COSSA challenged research management practices at the Office of Human Development Services (OHDS) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Working with the House Subcommittee on Human Resources and friends in the press, COSSA helped expose the agency director's neglect of the peer review process. A General Accounting Office investigation castigated Administrator Dorcas Hardy for her actions.

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COSSA has testified concerning budget reductions and attempts to abolish the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). This office conducts the long-range policy analyses for HHS. The Grace Commission has recommended disbursing ASPE's mission to the operating agencies within HHS, a policy COSSA opposes because it will lead to short-term, politics-driven research.

Labor Policy

COSSA has testified and fought, albeit unsuccessfully so far, for the continued existence of a significant research office at the Department of Labor. Under the Donovan regime, the office was downgraded and most of the research focused on the implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Although COSSA played an important role in securing adoption of the research and evaluation portion of JTPA in 1982 that would "utilize the methods, techniques, and knowledge of the behavioral and social sciences, . . ." it believes there are other needs for the research agenda at DOL.

In 1984 COSSA played a vital role in the continuation of the National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience (NLS) which the administration threatened with extinction. The NLS has been a gold mine of data for social science analysis collected from cohort surveys during the past 20 years. COSSA's lobbying efforts in this case provided important guidance to the directors and users of the surveys.

In 1983 COSSA succeeded in reversing a decision by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to delete descriptions of five social science occupations, including "Political Scientist," from the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. This book is an important reference used by guidance counselors and removal of these social science occupations could lead to adverse enrollment impact in courses.

A number of congressional seminars have been held in this area. In 1983 "Unemployment and Stress" was discussed. In 1982 "Work and Retirement in the Middle and Later Years" and

"Black Youth Unemployment" were discussed by social science researchers.

Education Policy

COSSA has lobbied for increased funding for programs in international education, graduate education, education research, and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The administration has attempted to eliminate funding for international education and area studies programs during the past three years. Working with other higher education groups, COSSA has succeeded in convincing the Congress to restore funding for these programs. In graduate education, COSSA joined a broad coalition to support funding of the National Graduate Fellowship program, which would provide fellowships for political science graduate students, among others. The program was authorized in 1980, but not funded until 1984. Unfortunately, the administration has yet to establish procedures for awarding the fellowships. COSSA also has concerned itself with the funding and peer review practices at the National Institute of Education (NIE). This year it testified on the possible restructuring of the NIE and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

In 1984 COSSA joined a coalition of groups protesting the interpretation of the Student Rights in Research Experimental Activities and Testing (Hatch) amendment by the Department of Education. COSSA was concerned that the rules created difficult situations for teachers and researchers.

International Science Policy

Although the social science programs at the United Nations Education, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), were neither large nor well managed, the withdrawal of the United States led COSSA to monitor the alternative arrangements to UNESCO promised by the administration. In 1985 COSSA submitted testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee requesting that U.S. funds previously allocated to social science research at UNESCO be committed

to social science research at NSF or other science agencies.

The Consortium maintains contacts with similar social science organizations in Canada, France, England, China and the International Social Science Council.

Information and Statistical Policy

Working closely with the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS), COSSA has monitored and commented on information gathering and dissemination policies of the Office of Management and Budget and other statistical agencies of the government. A congressional seminar on the "Economic Crisis and the Federal Statistical System" took place in 1982. COSSA joined with other groups to oppose the President's National Security Decision Directive 84 that would have restricted research and the free flow of information.

Other Areas

A congressional seminar conducted by political scientist Raymond Wolfinger considered "Why Americans Don't Vote?" Subsequent to the seminar, Wolfinger's ideas for increasing voter registration were placed into legislation

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introduced in the House this year. The Consortium monitored and supported legislation creating the U.S. Institute of Peace and an independent National Archives and Records Administration. COSSA has been one of the few groups to be interested in research in the Department of Housing and Urban Development and has testified in favor of increased appropriations for that office. Congress is always asking social scientists how their research contributes to productivity in the United States. In 1982 COSSA tried to answer that question in a seminar entitled "Innovation and Productivity."

The Future

COSSA's plans for the future include the preparation and publication of a *Research Guide for Social Scientists* that will compile the sources of research support available from the federal government. The *Guide*, supported by a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation, should be available in Spring 1986.

In addition, COSSA is monitoring and cooperating with the major study of U.S. science policy conducted by the House Science and Technology Committee during the 99th Congress in 1985-86. Meetings with the committee staff, help in arranging for hearing witnesses, and three congressional seminars directed to the committee's agenda, should provide information on the role of the social and behavioral sciences in U.S. science.

COSSA plans to take new initiatives in reaching out to the non-academic, private social science research sector. Exploratory meetings with some of these people have led to exchanges as to possible areas of cooperation.

This year COSSA plans to examine social science research activities at the Department of Defense. Preliminary discussions indicate that this will not be a simple task. Closer monitoring of the National Endowment for the Humanities is also on the agenda.

As always, COSSA will continue to play its role as a lobbying organization providing decision-makers the justifications for increased support for the social sciences. The Consortium will monitor and react to changes in the funding environment and be ever-vigilant to protect the peer review process and to prevent politicization of research funding. It appreciates the support and guidance received from political scientists, the APSA and its staff, particularly Executive Director Thomas E. Mann, who served as the first chairman of COSSA's executive committee. As the future unfolds COSSA hopes it can continue to count on your support.



Research Opportunities Projected for Behavioral and Social Sciences

The Committee on Basic Research in the Behavioral and Social Sciences was established in 1980 to evaluate and improve the vitality of research in the behavioral and social sciences. The committee is housed in the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education of the National Research Council.

The committee's first two projects concentrated on the present dimensions and past record of the behavioral and social sciences. An initial report, *Behavioral and Social Science Research: A National Resource* (1982), developed criteria and cases to assess the present value, significance, and social utility of basic research in these subjects. A second report, now being completed, derives from a November 1983 symposium commemorating the landmark report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends (1933). This retrospective symposium was entitled, "Knowledge in Social and Behavioral Science: Some Discoveries and Trends Over Fifty Years."

The committee is now engaged in a prospective study, a ten-year outlook on research opportunities in the behavioral and social sciences, in cooperation with the Social Science Research Council and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. The ten-year outlook is designed to study scientific frontiers, leading research questions, and new resources needed over the next decade, roughly 1986-1995, for rapid progress on fundamental problems in the behavioral and social sciences.

On the basis of responses from the scientific community and its own judgment, the committee has formed 30 topical working groups to consider in detail current and prospective research opportunities. Each group is comprised of five to ten members chosen from outside the committee. For the most part, these groups are organized to reflect research problem areas rather than disciplinary or sub-disciplinary boundaries.

Each group will draft a working paper, which is to define priorities for new or ex-