About this update

This is the first in a series of monthly updates about recent federal activities that may be of interest to you and others on campus. Information in this update has been compiled from multiple sources including AAU, APLU and UCOP. If you have suggestions about the content and/or format of future updates, please share them with me as I’d like to make these updates as useful as possible. In addition, if I can assist you in connecting with senior federal agency officials or with Congressional offices, please let me know.

FY11 appropriations update

While the upcoming federal budget year (FY11) promises to be very tough given the general public’s increasing concerns about federal spending and the size of our nation’s deficit, university research and education are faring relatively well thus far in the appropriations process. The higher education community is heartened at the strong start and will continue its work to sustain these important federal investments. Most observers speculate that final FY11 appropriation bills will most likely be enacted after the November election, meaning that the new federal fiscal year will likely begin with funding provided under a Continuing Resolution (CR).

One House appropriations subcommittee has approved $32 billion for the National Institutes of Health in FY11, which includes the $1 billion increase requested by the Administration. Although most student aid programs would be held largely at their current levels, the Pell Grant program would be fully funded, including $5.7 billion to cover the program shortfall.

Both the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees propose to fund the National Science Foundation at between $7.35 (Senate) to $7.42 billion (House), which is slightly below the Administration’s request but more than $427 million over FY10 funding. The subcommittees also propose that NASA receive an appropriation of $19 billion, which includes robust funding of nearly $5 billion for NASA’s science and education programs.

One area of disappointment is funding for energy research. The Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittees approved a budget of $4.9 billion in the House and $5 billion in the Senate for the Department of Energy Office of Science, $110 to $220 million less the Administration’s request. The Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy would receive $200 million, $80 million less than the Administration’s request.

The House Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee approved spending bill provides $170 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and $170 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), $5 million more than the FY10 enacted levels for each agency.

NASA reauthorization bill clears Senate Commerce Committee

On July 15, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee unanimously approved a $58.4 billion, three-year authorization bill for NASA and its programs. For the past several months, the Administration and
members of Congress have been in a heated battle over the future direction of NASA and its human space flight operations. According to members of the committee, this bill represents a bipartisan compromise that incorporates much of the plan for space that President Obama outlined in the FY11 budget request for NASA. A section-by-section summary of the bill is available: http://commerce.senate.gov/public/?a=Files.Serve&File_id=eac64ab6-aa9f-4798-b3ac-c1b7436e45ef.

COMPETES reauthorization bill passes Senate Commerce Committee, now awaits Senate floor action

On July 22, the Senate Commerce Committee approved the America COMPETES reauthorization bill (S. 3605) as well as several amendments to that bill. The bill continues sustained increases for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for 2011 through 2013; these increases match the House-passed COMPETES levels for the next three fiscal years. The bill also contains several STEM and innovation programs and an acknowledgment of NASA’s and NOAA’s contributions to our nation’s innovation and competitiveness.

DOE Office of Science and most NSF education programs were not included in the Senate Commerce Committee bill due to jurisdictional committee issues, but are expected to be added to the bill on the floor. Given the Senate’s extremely full schedule before the upcoming August recess, it is unclear whether the bill will make it to the Senate floor soon.

The Senate Committee passed bill acknowledges the critical role universities play in innovation and creating new technologies; the Senate’s draft would give universities, among others, eligibility to compete directly for innovation programs that would help advance the innovation cycle from inception to market. The bill also authorizes a Regional Innovation Program, within the Department of Commerce, designed to encourage development of regional innovation strategies. In addition, it authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to provide financial assistance through competitive awards for the development of science and research parks. UC has expressed strong support for the COMPETES reauthorization, noting only one concern about financial matching requirements for some of the authorized programs.

As a reminder, on May 28 the House passed its version of the COMPETES reauthorization bill (HR 5116). The five-year, $84 billion House bill authorizes significant funding increases for NSF, the DOE Office of Science, and NIST. It also reauthorizes the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy and increases support for undergraduate and graduate education programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

As we briefly discussed at an earlier CODVC meeting, the research university community has been deeply concerned about an amendment added to the House bill, offered by House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA). The amendment would link public universities’ compliance with labor union information requests to their receipt of facilities and administrative cost reimbursements for federal research grants. The research university community hopes that the provision can be eliminated in the final COMPETES bill; the provision is not contained in the Senate Committee bill. In addition, Mr. Miller recently requested that the General Accounting Office (GAO) conduct an audit of how higher education institutions, particularly the University of California, expend their facilities and administrative cost reimbursements.

New National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship announced

As part of the Obama Administration’s efforts to promote innovation and commercialization of federally funded research, on July 13, U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke announced members of a new group, the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The group, which includes university leaders, corporate CEOs, investors, and leaders of nonprofit organizations, will “advise the President on ways to foster entrepreneurship and transform laboratory ideas into new jobs and businesses.” Among the university members of the panel are Mary Sue Coleman, president of the University of Michigan, and Bud Peterson, president of Georgia Tech. A complete list of
NIH conflict of interest rules

On June 14, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved an amendment to the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) draft conflict of interest rules concerning transferring institutional sanctions when a sanctioned researcher moves to another institution.

The amendment extends the July 20 deadline for public comments on the proposed new rules until August 19. The amendment was added amid news reports that a researcher sanctioned by Emory University was hired by the University of Miami and was told by a senior NIH official that the Emory sanctions would not apply to him in his new position and he would be fully eligible for new NIH grants.

The proposed rules generally are intended to modify existing regulations to expand and add transparency to investigators’ disclosures of significant financial interests; improve regulatory compliance, institutional oversight, and management of investigators’ financial conflicts of interests; and improve NIH’s compliance oversight.

Federal research funding areas to watch and explore

- As previously noted, the House Appropriations Subcommittee proposed a $1 billion or 3.2 percent increase in NIH funding, consistent with the President’s request. We are hopeful the Senate will provide the same level. The House Subcommittee proposal also permits NIH to use up to $50 million to launch the Cures Acceleration Network (CAN). This program, which seeks to cut the time between discovery and the development of drugs and therapies through new grant-making mechanisms at NIH, was authorized in the health care reform bill. In commenting on NIH funding, House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-WI) stated, “Within limited resources, this year’s bill puts the emphasis on translating basic research results into practical and available cures and treatments.”
- The NSF Directorate of Education and Human Resources is slated to receive a $20 million (Senate version) or $86 million (House version) increase in funding. Much of the proposed $86 million House increase comes through a reprioritization of NSF funding, directing funding to the Education Directorate and away from various research related directorates.
- The Senate appropriations subcommittee proposed funding for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) includes $70 million for the Technology Innovation Program (TIP).
- The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) is USDA’s primary competitive grant program for agricultural research. The AFRI program is slated to receive a $50 million increase in both the House and Senate agricultural spending bills. UC Davis receives more competitive research grant funding from USDA than any other college or university in the nation, on average about 10 percent of all such competitive awards. Thus, the $50 million increase in AFRI funding will likely result in at least $5 million in new agriculture research funding at UC Davis.
- At this time, we have not yet seen House or Senate proposed funding levels for Defense research programs.

FY12 federal science and technology priorities

On July 21, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) jointly issued policy guidance to federal agencies outlining the Administration’s FY12 science and technology priorities. The Administration’s six identified priorities include:

- Promoting sustainable economic growth and job creation;
• Defeating the most dangerous diseases and achieving better health outcomes for all while reducing health care costs;
• Moving toward a clean energy future to reduce dependence on energy imports while curing greenhouse gas emissions;
• Understanding, adapting to, and mitigating the impacts of global climate change;
• Managing the competing demands on land, fresh water, and the oceans for the production of food, fiber, biofuels, and ecosystem services based on sustainability and biodiversity; and
• Developing the technologies to protect our troops, citizens, and national interests.

ARRA research funding update

As of July 13, UC Davis had received more than $113 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) or federal stimulus funding for research activities. The largest ARRA grant was $14.2 million for construction of the new Respiratory Diseases Center to be built at the campus’s California National Primate Research Center. With few exceptions, all ARRA funds must be expended by recipients by no later than September 30, 2011.

UC Davis faculty and leadership in Washington, DC

• On July 15, UC Davis Physics Professor Bob Svoboda joined colleagues from UC Berkeley to advocate the importance of constructing the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Lab or DUSEL (a NSF project being lead by UC Berkeley) as well as funding for conducting the DOE Long Baseline Neutrino Experiment (lead by UC Davis) at the new DUSEL facility.
• On July 18, Chancellor Katehi participated in an invitation only dinner hosted by Department of Energy Undersecretary Kristina Johnson to discuss the Undersecretary’s initiative to increase the number of women pursuing STEM studies and entering STEM careers. The dinner included about 30 women leaders from government, industry, academia, as well as the female energy ministers from several other nations.
• On July 28, Dean Van Alfen and DeeDee Kitterman from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences will be meeting with regional Congressional members to thank them for their support of agriculture research funding (see AFRI funding information above).

Federal officials on campus

• On July 7, the campus hosted Congressman Mike Thompson (D) and members of the Administration for a listening session on America’s Great Outdoors, an initiative of President Obama. The listening session was attended by approximately 250 individuals from throughout northern California.
• On July 8, Congresswoman Matsui (D) visited the UC Davis Sacramento campus and spoke at the kickoff event for the UC Davis “Partnerships for Innovation” held at the Medical Technology Commercialization Clinic.
• On July 10, Congresswoman Matsui also participated in the grand opening of the new UC Davis Emergency Services Pavilion at the Medical Center in Sacramento.
• On August 25, Congressman Dan Lungren (R) will be visiting the main campus. His schedule will likely include a presentation by the Congressman to one of our political science classes concerning recent Congressional activities as well as a briefing by us to the Congressman on our campus’ One Health Institute.

Questions or need assistance

If you have questions, need additional information about any of the above items, or would like assistance in connecting with senior federal officials, please let me know. I can be reached at kmengelbach@ucdavis.edu or at 530-752-9795.