

RESEARCH UPDATES

8/13/2014

Below please find current Sponsored programs / Research updates on the following:

- **USDA's New Foundation to Promote Innovative Partnerships**
- **Administration Releases Science Funding Priorities for FY 16**
- **White House Advances Workforce Development Agenda**
- **NSF Deputy Director Cora Marrett Resigns**
- **AASCU Reports on Higher Education Act Re-Authorization**

- **USDA's New Foundation to Promote Innovative Partnerships**

As a part of the 2014 Farm Bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the [Foundation for Food and Agricultural Research \(FFAR\)](#) to support advancing scientific and technological research, innovation, and partnerships in agriculture. Congress has authorized an endowment of \$200 million, which is required to be matched by non-federal funds as grants are made. The foundation will support research addressing plant and animal health, food safety, nutrition and health, renewable energy, natural resources, and environment, agricultural and food security, and agriculture systems and technology. The composition of the foundation's board of directors is indicative of the intention to use FFAR to promote public-private partnerships. Membership includes five ex-officio agency representatives, eight from academia, and seven from industry.

The work of the new foundation is expected to complement, not replace, other USDA research support. Representatives from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture will be at the [GRC Funding Competitiveness Conference](#), August 18-20, 2014 to discuss a wide range of funding opportunities at USDA for institutions of higher education.

- **Administration Releases Science Funding Priorities for FY 16**

As Congress debates the FY 15 budget, the White House is already hard at work on its FY 16 request, having recently released [four memos](#) detailing funding priorities for the FY 16 budget. Among these is the annual joint release from the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Science and Technology Policy detailing the administration's science and technology budget priorities for all federal agencies. Priorities for FY 16 include: advanced manufacturing and

industries of the future; clean energy; earth observations data; global climate change; information technology and high-performance computing; innovation in life sciences, biology, and neuroscience; national and homeland security; and research and development for informed policy-making and management. As the American Association for the Advancement of Science [notes](#), priorities that show up in the initial budget priority documents do not necessarily show up in the White House's final budget request. Still, they are a good indicator of what areas the administration considers most important as it puts together its funding wish list.

- **White House Advances Workforce Development Agenda**

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) into law. This reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act will operate in conjunction with Vice President Biden's new [Ready to Work](#) plan—the culmination of Biden's review of federal employment and training programs—to make training programs more job-driven. The [plan](#) includes highlights of particularly successful job-driven training programs, and presents strategies for replicating their successes. These strategies include a checklist of criteria that all federal agencies will be using in the evaluation of job training grant applications, beginning October 1, 2014. A total of approximately \$1.4 billion will be given out by means of 25 competitive grant programs next year to address industry/academia partnerships for workforce training. All of these grants will require attention to the checklist in order for applications to be considered competitive.

Source: [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) (subscription)

- **NSF Deputy Director Cora Marrett Resigns**

Effective August 24, 2014, National Science Foundation (NSF) Deputy Director Cora Marrett will [resign](#) her position with the agency. NSF Director France Córdova praised Marrett's longstanding service to NSF, saying that Marrett "has served NSF and the nation with distinction. Under her leadership, the foundation strengthened its merit review process and increased its efforts to broaden and increase the next generation STEM workforce. Cora's unwavering support of NSF's mission and her stewardship in challenging times are widely appreciated." John Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, stated that "the foundation, the science and engineering communities, and the nation are in her debt." Marrett delivered opening remarks on

undergraduate education during the GRC and Council on Undergraduate Research joint reception event held at the National Press Club in February 2013.

- **AASCU Reports on Higher Education Act Re-Authorization**

AASCU Federal Relations released the [latest edition](#) of its [Federal Policy Update](#), which includes information on recent Congressional actions involving the Higher Education Act, IRA charitable rollovers, and net neutrality.