



SUNY Federal Relations Update Monday, June 23, 2008

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On the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act:

House and Senate education committee staff negotiations on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act are ongoing. Congress had hoped to complete the measure before Memorial Day, but it is clear that there is work to be done before members can reach a final agreement on a bill. House-Senate conference negotiations now continue under the leadership of Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and the negotiations still remain primarily at the staff level.

On FY 2008 "Supplemental" Appropriations:

The Senate intends to vote this week on the FY 2008 "Supplemental", bringing to a close weeks of intense negotiations in both chambers on the legislation. House leaders and the White House reached a deal last week that met President Bush's demands, but not all of the Senate's. With the military running short of money, Senate Democrats reluctantly endorsed the deal that House Democrats struck with the White House and GOP leadership, potentially ending the back-and-forth amending of the bill.

The House approved supplemental appropriations bill (H.R. 2642) for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan also includes a total of \$400 million for science agencies, including \$150 million for NIH, and \$62.5 million each for NSF, the DOE Office of Science, and NASA. Additionally, this supplemental appropriations package includes provisions to delay until April 1, 2009, a controversial Medicaid GME proposed rule; Medicaid final rule regarding cost limit/units of government (the "IGT rule"); and four other Medicaid regulations that have been of concern to teaching hospitals.

On FY 2009 Earmarks:

We are beginning to hear early news about earmarks in some of the appropriations bills that have been marked-up. More details are forthcoming.

Note that CQ reported last week that the total amount of funding for earmarks in fiscal 2009 appropriations measures will be held to FY2008 levels, according to the House and Senate Appropriations chairmen. The fiscal 2008 spending bills contained \$18.3 billion worth of earmarks, which was a 23 percent drop from the amount spent in fiscal 2005, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense, a group that tracks the process. It used fiscal 2005 as the benchmark because it was the last year all bills contained earmarks. Any increases in spending will go toward other programs.

On FY 2009 Appropriations:

This week, we anticipate that the House Appropriations Committee will mark up, in full committee, seven of its 12 fiscal 2009 spending bills. House Subcommittee action has provided positive news for many of the programs important to higher education:

- 3.9% increase for the National Institutes of Health.
- Increase in the maximum Pell Grant.
- The Department of Homeland Security would receive \$886 million for science and technology programs.
- The National Science Foundation (NSF) would receive \$6.9 billion which is \$150 million over the Administration's request.
- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) would receive \$17.8 billion which is approximately \$155 million over the Administration's request.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) would receive \$4.3 billion which is \$180 million over the Administration's request.
- The House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee added \$140 million to the President's FY09 request for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science.

The Senate has also begun to mark-up some appropriations bills and more details will be provided in future updates.

Please remember that despite the fact that the FY09 appropriations process has begun in earnest, we do not anticipate a conclusion to this year's process until a new administration takes office next January.

Defense Department Releases BAA On Minerva Research Initiative:

The Department of Defense (DOD) has issued a Broad Area Announcement ([BAA](#)) for the Minerva Research Initiative, the university-based social science research program that the Department has developed in consultation with AAU.

The Initiative seeks to improve the Defense Department's ability to address future international challenges through a better understanding of the sources of conflict, such as ethnic strife, disease, poverty, climate change, and failed and failing states. As described in the BAA, "Minerva will bring together universities, research institutions, and individual scholars and support multidisciplinary and cross-institutional projects addressing specific topic areas determined by the Department." The announcement adds that all research and debate "will be open and transparent" and that research results "will be unclassified and open for publication."

The Chronicle of Higher Education reports that Defense Department officials expect to coordinate closely with the National Science Foundation in setting up merit review panels for evaluating the proposals. A memorandum of understanding between the two agencies could be signed by the end of June.

White paper proposals are due on July 25, 2008, with full proposals due on October 3, 2008. The Department anticipates awarding grants in December. The program expects to distribute about \$50 million over five years, with "typical" grants funded at between \$1 million and \$1.5 million each year.

The FY09 competition will focus on research in five general topic areas, but the BAA states that these detailed descriptions "are not meant to be restrictive. Innovative proposals related to these research topics are highly encouraged." The five topic areas are:

1. Chinese Military and Technology Research and Archive Programs
2. Studies of the Strategic Impact of Religious and Cultural Changes within the Islamic World
3. Iraqi Perspectives Project
4. Studies of Terrorist Organization and Ideologies
5. New Approaches to Understanding Dimensions of National Security, Conflict, and Cooperation

SUNY Washington Office Hosts Summer Intern:

Please join me in welcoming Michael J. Myers II to the SUNY Washington Office as our summer intern. Michael is a graduate participant in the SUNY Brockport Washington Program. A Buffalo native, he is currently an MPA candidate at Binghamton University and he is a 2007 graduate of Buffalo State College. Michael will be here in the office full-time through August 8, 2008. He is available at michael.myers@suny.edu.

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