

American Mathematical Society
Committee on Science Policy Meeting
April 12-13, 2016
Washington, DC

Summary Report

The Committee on Science Policy (CSP) met over two days with a focus on Capitol Hill meetings between Congressional representatives and meeting attendees to promote mathematics and to urge increased federal funding for the National Science Foundation, specifically an \$8 billion budget level for FY2017. In total, the group met with 26 offices. The first day of the meeting was devoted to preparation for Hill meetings. Wednesday was spent making Hill visits.

Michael Vogelius

Director, Division of Mathematical Sciences (DMS)

Directorate of Mathematical & Physical Sciences (MPS), National Science Foundation (NSF)

Michael Vogelius began his presentation with a look at trends in federal R&D funding by agency, as well as a history of NSF/MPS divisional budgets and MPS-DMS funding rates. He observed the difficulty of recouping losses experienced from sequestration in FY2013, but felt that DMS funding rates were now relatively steady with incremental increases each of the last few years since sequestration.

Vogelius reported that NSF has been working with NIH on its *Big Data to Knowledge (BD2K)* initiative, which launched in 2012. He reported that NIH reached out to NSF/MPS-DMS and NSF/CISE to ask for the involvement of mathematicians, computer scientists and statisticians in their efforts on data science. This NSF – NIH collaboration led to an innovation lab held last summer from which ten \$100K planning grants were jointly awarded. In follow up, there will be another workshop to be held June 15-19, 2016 in Lake Arrowhead, CA to further efforts in biomedical big data and mobile health. NSF is also working in other areas of big data, including privacy and security and is also working on the National Strategic Computing Initiative (NSCI).

Vogelius mentioned that the NSF made a change in how the allocations were determined for Graduate Research Fellowships (GRF). Prior to this year, the number of proposals submitted was the determining factor in how many GRFs were awarded in given disciplines, but although proposal pressure is still part of the formula and encouraging proposals in the mathematical sciences is still important, it does not carry as much weight any longer. This change in the formula has actually increased the number of GRFs awarded in the mathematical sciences by about 30% this year or about 15 fellowships.

Mark Mozena

Policy Advisor, Office of Rep. Mike Honda (CA-17)

Mozena began his presentation by talking about his background and how he came to work on Capitol Hill. He explained a little about how Congress works and about the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate. The appropriations process was explained and attendees were encouraged to make the case in their meetings tomorrow for an increased, sustained level of federal support for basic scientific research as it's an opportune time to affect the FY2017 budget process.

Mozena also encouraged attendees to establish relationships with their Representatives' offices and to offer to be a resource for them. He suggested that their Representatives be invited to events at their universities to foster such relationships.

Presentation on Conducting Meetings with Members of Congress

Sam Rankin, Director of the AMS Washington Office, and Tony Macula, Office of Rep. Jim McDermott and AMS 2015-16 Congressional Fellow, presented an orientation for Congressional meetings developed by the AMS Washington Office. Basic information about how to conduct congressional office meetings, the federal budget process, the structure of a Congressional office and insights into Members of Congress and their staffs were presented.

The AMS Washington Office developed the “Ask,” which is a statement of the request of the Member of Congress that was left at each visit, along with other materials. The FY2017 “Ask” was for an \$8 billion budget for the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Constituent Meetings

On Wednesday, April 13 the group went to Capitol Hill to hold meetings in congressional offices. The AMS Washington Office scheduled meetings for all participants with their respective Congressional representatives. These constituent meetings were conducted in four 2-3 person teams.

Date of Next Meeting

The 2017 Committee on Science Policy meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 4 and Wednesday, April 5, 2017 in Washington, DC.

Submitted by Anita Benjamin
American Mathematical Society
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