Federal Budget Allocates Spending for Student Aid, Science and Technology

Legislative Update

By Ellen S. Smith

At both the State and Federal level, budget and regulatory activities are on the agenda. Senior leaders in Albany were unable to reach an agreement on the available funding for the fiscal year 2003 budget (4/1/02-3/31/03), thus, an on-time budget is not possible. Rather, the final budget agreement could be delayed until sometime between late April and June. At the Federal level, the House of Representatives passed a blueprint or non-binding budget resolution and the Senate Budget Committee voted along party lines on their budget resolution. It is uncertain that the Senate will pass a final budget resolution. This has happened in past years and annual funding committees proceed even without one.

Federal Budget Resolutions

The Senate budget resolution is non-binding and does not require Presidential signature. In most years the Senate and House meet to work out their differences and then vote on the final bill. Both the House and Senate budget resolutions allocated $392.7 billion to defense spending ($6 billion above the President's budget submission). For General Space, Science and Technology (including, among other programs, NSF and NASA), the allocation in the Senate was $22.8 billion, $22.6 billion in the House, and the President's request was $22.5 billion. The Senate Budget resolution included $3.6 billion for Energy, while both the House and the President recommend $3.3 billion. For Education, Training, Employment and Social Services (the function including student aid), the Senate Budget committee recommends $74.1 billion, the House recommends $72.1 billion and the President recommends $72.2 billion. For the Health care components of the budget the Senate recommends $50.9 billion while the House and the President recommend $48.8 billion.

Other Federal Actions

The State Department sent Congress a set of revisions to the International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR) that included an exemption for U.S. institutions of higher education from obtaining licenses for the export of space-related articles fabricated for fundamental research purposes. These changes will be published in the Federal Register.

Venkatesh Named Director of CURP

Columbia Sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh, whose "American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto" (Harvard, 2000) received national acclaim, has been named director of the Center for Urban Research and Policy (CURP). CURP, part of the School of International and Public Affairs, was previously directed by Ester Fuchs, a professor at Barnard College and Columbia, who joined the administration of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg as special advisor for governance and strategic planning. Fuchs, who has taken public service leave from the University, founded CURP in 1993. American Project won an Association of American Publishers award as the best book of 2000 in the fields of sociology and anthropology. As a graduate student at the University of Chicago, Venkatesh spent 10 years studying the Robert Taylor Homes, researching its history and living with its residents. The book provides an in-depth account of public housing in urban America.

Venkatesh’s other honors include the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award, which was given in 2001. The $240,000 award is NSF’s most prestigious honor for junior faculty members. Venkatesh begins his three-year term as director of CURP in July 2002. Since Fuchs’ departure in January, CURP has been under the leadership of Professor Peter Bearman, chair of the sociology department and director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, CURP’s parent organization.

1950 Columbia Scholastic Press Association Convention—Founded in 1924 to train young editors through seminars, lectures, critical evaluations and annual national competitions, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA) is the nation’s largest school press organization and the only such organization sponsored by a major private university. The annual three-day conference, the largest gathering of its kind in the world and the most noteworthy event of the year in the field of high school journalism, has been held on the Columbia campus since its inception. Pictured above are student journalists from around the United States who attended the 26th annual convention from March 9-11, 1950. The CSPA recently held its 78th annual convention at Columbia from March 27-29.

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