From Congress to Your Lab

How Federal Funding Affects Your Science

Moderator: Dr. Anne Young
Chair, SfN’s Government and Public Affairs Committee
Do You Know Who Your Elected Officials Are?

- In the U.S., look them up at SfN.org/ActionCenter
Representative Chaka Fattah

- Rep. Fattah is the U.S. representative for the 2nd District of Pennsylvania
- He is the Ranking Democrat on the appropriations subcommittee that funds NSF (Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee)

Follow him @chakafattah
http://fattah.house.gov
Overview of Talk

Outline

• Lyle Dennis, SfN Legislative Advisor
  – The State of Research Funding
  – The Federal Budget Process
  – You Can Make a Difference

• Allen Segal, SfN Director of Policy and Advocacy
  – Take Action
The State of Research Funding
Which of these numbers is closest to the yearly NIH Budget?

A. $1 Billion
B. $15 Billion
C. $30 Billion
D. $50 Billion
E. $100 Billion
The State of Research Funding

National Institutes of Health Budget History

- Actual Dollars
- Adjusted for Biomedical Inflation (2003 Dollars)

Fiscal Year


Sequestration

NIH Budget in Billions
The State of Research Funding

National Science Foundation Budget History

- Actual Dollars
- Adjusted for Inflation (2003 Dollars)

Fiscal Year: FY2003 to FY2013

Sequestration
The State of Research Funding

NIH and NSF Research grants: Competing applications and awards

NIH Awards

NSF Awards

Graphs do not include stimulus funds
The State of Research Funding

The Bottom Line

• The agencies and institutes have some flexibility in determining how they spend their budget.
• However, the size of the budget is determined by Congress.

The best way to increase the grant success rate is to increase the NIH and NSF budgets.
The Federal Budget Process

Opportunities for Advocates

Lyle Dennis
What percent of the annual federal budget is automatically spent without input from Congress?

A. 0%
B. 14%
C. 43%
D. 67%
The Federal Budget Process

The Federal Budget

Mandatory Spending 67%
- Medicare,
- Medicaid,
- Social Security,
- National Debt

Discretionary Spending 33%
- Defense
- Non-defense

(All Research)

$3.8 T
The Federal Budget Process

Discretionary

- Defense
  - A single specific purpose
  - Perceived as critical
  - Well-funded contractor community

- Non-Defense
  - Amorphous
  - Perceived as “wasteful bureaucrats”
  - Advocacy community is diverse – and poor!
The Federal Budget Process

Non-Defense Discretionary

- Health (Includes NIH), 2%
- General Science, Space, and Technology (Includes NSF), 1%
- Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services, 3%
- Transportation, 3%
- Income Security, 2%
- Veteran's Benefits, 2%
- Administration of Justice, 1%
- International Affairs, 1%
- Other, 3%
The Federal Budget Process

March
House Budget & Full House
- Allocate the maximum amount of money toward the top line budget

April
House Appropriations
- Allocate the maximum amount to the NIH & NSF subcommittees.

May-July
- Labor-HHS (NIH)
- CJS (NSF)
- 10 Others

June-September
- House Appropriations & Full House
- Support (or don’t support) the appropriations bill.

September
- Full House
- Conference
- Differences reconciled, final numbers reached

President's Budget Request
- President's Budget Request

Conference

Senate Budget & Full Senate
- Senate Appropriations

President Signs
The Federal Budget Process

- **March**
  - President’s Budget Request
  - House Budget & Full House
    - Allocate the maximum amount of money toward the top line budget
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  - House Appropriations & Full House
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  - Full Senate
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The Federal Budget Process

Roadblocks to Passing a Budget

• Congress’ dysfunctional/partisan nature
• Lack of “Regular Order”
  – Especially the use of the continuing resolution (CR)—essentially re-using last year’s numbers
Impact of Using CRs Year After Year

• Fewer new and competing grants awarded
  – Leading to lower paylines/success rates
  – Leading to higher age of first R01
  – Leading to a damaged, if not lost, generation of young researchers

…and then there is sequestration.
Sequestration

• Budget Control Act of 2011
• Across-the-board cuts of all discretionary spending
  – Took ~$1.5 billion from NIH this year
  – Took ~$300 million from NSF
• Only a “grand bargain” can resolve this!
You Can Make a Difference

Lyle Dennis
Common Excuses

• “My legislator already supports research”
  – It is critical to thank your supporters.
  – There is always more to do.

• “My legislator would never support research”
  – You might be surprised.
  – Even a shift from opposed to neutral helps the cause.

The bottom line: in this fiscal environment, members of Congress must choose between programs they support.
If your Member/Senator has not already arrived at a firm decision on an issue, how much influence might the following advocacy strategies directed to the Washington office have on his/her decision?

- **In-Person Issue Visits from Constituents**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 46%
  - Some Influence: 51%

- **Contact from a Constituent Who Represents Other Constituents**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 36%
  - Some Influence: 60%

- **Individualized Email Messages**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 19%
  - Some Influence: 69%

- **Phone Calls**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 14%
  - Some Influence: 72%

- **Comments During a Telephone Town Hall**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 17%
  - Some Influence: 68%

- **Visit from a Lobbyist**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 8%
  - Some Influence: 74%

- **News Editorial Endorsement of an Issue**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 10%
  - Some Influence: 65%

- **Form Email Messages**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 1%
  - Some Influence: 50%

- **Comments on Social Media Sites**
  - A Lot of Positive Influence: 1%
  - Some Influence: 41%
Take Action

How Scientists Can Advocate Effectively

Allen Segal
Take Action

Which of these activities have you done in support of research?

A. Participated in a Hill Day or other in-person meeting
B. Hosted a lab tour
C. Written about science funding in the media
D. Sent a letter or email to a legislator
E. Interacted with a lawmaker on social media
In-Person Opportunities

Face-to-face meetings with legislators make the issues more memorable.

• Meetings
  – In-district meetings
  – Hill Days
  – One-on-one DC meetings

• Town Halls

• Lab Tours
Take Action

Advocacy Action Center

• Use SfN.org/ActionCenter to generate email messages to your representatives in the U.S. Congress.
Take Action

Other Activities

• Letter to the editor or OpEd
  – Email advocacy@sfn.org for a template.

• Call your legislator

• Communicate with your legislator through social media.
  – Look them up:
    • http://govsm.com/w/Senate
    • http://govsm.com/w/House
  – Or use sites like: SoundOffAtCongress.org
Take Action

Educate Yourself

• Join the Advocacy Network
• Visit SfN.org/Advocacy
  – Watch our recorded webinars.
  – Check out the provided resources.
• Follow SfN on social media
  – @SfNtweets
  – Facebook.com/SocietyforNeuroscience
• Visit us at the SfN booth at AM 2013
Take Action

Spread the Word

• Incorporate “advocacy slide” into your scientific talk.
• Discuss federal funding for science in your undergraduate or graduate courses.

Become a Scientist-Advocate

• The Facts:
  – NIH’s funding is 20% lower today than in 2003, taking into account biomedical research inflation.
  – Paylines for research grants are at an all-time low.
  – Sequestration cuts $1.6 billion from the NIH in FY2013 alone and is set to be in effect for 10 years.

  The Bottom Line: Scientists need to speak up for research

• What You Can Do:
  – Stay informed
  – Communicate with Congress
  – Spread the word to fellow scientists
  – Public outreach

For more information: http://www.sfn.org/advocacy or email advocacy@sfn.org
Take Action

Spread the Word

• Encourage advocacy at your institution or SfN chapter
  – [Chapter grants](#) are available to fund advocacy-related activities.
  – Join a science policy group—or start one!
  – Submit a Theme H poster on your advocacy activity.
Questions?

SfN.org/Advocacy