The Impact of Federally Funded Behavioral and Social Science Research at a Public University

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My Background

• Experimental Psychologist → Behavioral Neuroscientist
• Post-doctoral training
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What is the current state of Social and Behavioral Sciences in Higher Education?

• Remain popular undergraduate and graduate majors
• About 1/3 faculty in College are social or behavioral science researchers
• Undergraduate research interests are at all time high
Trends in BSSR at Public Institutions of Higher Education

- Growing number of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary efforts underway
- Decline in funding for BSSR
- Increased participation of behavioral and social scientist in life science research
Consequences of Decline in Funding of BSSR

• Consequence of tenure
• Finding support to keep investigators going
• Disappearance of important areas of study?
• Decrease in intellectual variety and diversity in the academy
• Decision making concerning where to invest faculty development funds?
What should Universities do?

• Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary developments
• Encourage departments and programs to innovate and continue to develop
• Prepare undergraduate and graduate students
• Seed innovative research approaches
• Build “group-based” university infrastructure
• Make sure technology transfer offices represent BSSR
What should funding agencies and professional organization do?

• Recognize that social and behavioral science include topics not related to biomedicine
• Provide more funding and avenues for career change and career “retooling”
• Continue to fund undergraduate programs
• Teach faculty how to deal with media and get the message out; continue intense lobbying efforts
• Prioritize funding for interdisciplinary training
• Work with university administrators who make budgetary decisions.
Thanks!

Future Behavioral and Social Scientist?