



Society of Historical Archaeology

Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski, Chairwoman

Hearing on “Driving Innovation Through Federal Investments”

April 24, 2014

Introduction

The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) respectfully requests that the Committee appropriate a budget of \$7.5 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF) for FY2015, which is less than the inflation-adjusted FY 2010 level. The SHA supports the budget request made by the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), which also requests \$7.5B for NSF for FY2015.

About the SHA and its Members

With more than 2,300 members, the Society for Historical Archaeology is the largest organization in the world dedicated to the archaeological study of the modern world and the third largest anthropological organization in the United States. Members come from a dozen countries, and most are professional archaeologists who teach, work in museums or consulting firms, or have government posts. Through SHA’s close relationship with the Advisory Council for Underwater Archaeology, our members also include many of the world’s underwater archaeologists. The SHA and its members strongly support the protection of cultural and historical resources and sites around the nation.

NSF Positively Impacts Science Research and Education

NSF is the only federal agency that supports research and education across all fields of social science, science, engineering and mathematics and at all educational levels. Research and education programs supported by NSF push the frontiers of knowledge; contribute to the development of the future workforce; underpin new fields of inquiry; and promote interdisciplinary research and education, all of which facilitate inquiry and innovation.

Even under tight budget constraints, it is important for NSF to have steady budget levels that demonstrate real growth. Dependable funding levels will enable the Foundation and scientific communities and industries that rely on the work of our nation’s scientific communities to plan and develop infrastructure, maintain a steady pipeline of graduate and

postdoctoral students who will become our country's future scientists and entrepreneurs, and support new discoveries to benefit American business, industry and society as whole.

NSF Provides Critical Support for Archaeology and the Social Sciences

The NSF awards federal grants for a wide variety of social science research, including archaeology, anthropology and history. According the NSF's FY2015 Budget Request to Congress, the agency provides 55% of the total federal support for academic research in the social sciences (see <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2014/nsf14041/nsf14041.pdf>, page 2).

The Foundation provides critical funding support for archaeological science, education and research. NSF programs such as Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), for example, provide field research opportunities for students who might otherwise never be exposed to scientific research with scholarly mentors. In 2004-2006 and 2008-2011, an REU project at New Philadelphia archaeologically examined a racially integrated 19th century rural Illinois community. In 2011, an REU project in New York City's Central Park examined a 19th century African-American and Irish community known as Seneca Village. REU programs like these focus on training students from groups that are under-represented in the sciences, such as students of African-American and Native American heritage.

The recently introduced FIRST Act (H.R. 4186) proposes drastic cuts to NSF, particularly social science research. The SHA is deeply concerned about these proposed reductions, which go against the long tradition of American support of scientific innovation and ingenuity. The Committee's passage of a \$7.5B NSF budget would send a strong signal that America still invests in scientific research that educates and inspires the next generation.

Conclusion

We ask the Committee to appropriate \$7.5 billion to the NSF for FY2015. Real growth investments in NSF, a cornerstone of America's research enterprise, are absolutely critical to the nation's economic health and global competitiveness.

Thank you for considering this request.

Dr. Charles Ewen, Ph.D.
President, Society for Historical Archaeology
EWENC@ecu.edu

SHA Headquarters:
13017 Wisteria Drive, #395
Germantown, MD 20874
Telephone: (301) 972-9684