

Dated: October 14, 2005.

Anthony M. Coelho, Jr.,

Acting Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.

[FR Doc. 05-21131 Filed 10-21-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; Notice of Closed Meeting

Pursuant to section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2), notice is hereby given of the following meeting.

The meeting will be closed to the public in accordance with the provisions set forth in sections 552b(c)(4) and 552b(c)(6), Title 5 U.S.C., as amended. The grant applications and the discussions could disclose confidential trade secrets or commercial property such as patentable material, and personal information concerning individuals associated with the grant applications, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Special Emphasis Panel Review of Institutional National Research Service Award (T32) and NRSA Short-Term Research Training (T35)

Date: November 15, 2005

Time: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: Nat. Inst. of Environmental Health Sciences, Building 101, Rodbell Auditorium, 111 T. W. Alexander Drive, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, (Telephone Conference Call).

Contact Person: Leroy Worth, PhD, Scientific Review Administrator, Scientific Review Branch, Division of Extramural Research and Training, Nat. Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, P.O. Box 12233, MD EC-30/Room 3171, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, 919/541-0670, worth@niehs.nih.gov.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 90.115, Biometry and Risk Estimation-Health Risks from Environmental Exposures; 93.142, NIEHS Hazardous Waste Worker Health and Safety Training; 93.143, NIEHS Superfund Hazardous Substances-Basic Research and Education; 93.894, Resources and Manpower Development in the Environmental Health Sciences; 93.113, Biological Response in Environmental Health Hazards; 93.114, Applied Toxicological Research and Testing; National Institutes of Health, HHS)

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Institutes of Health Town Hall Meeting on Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Tuition, Fees and Health Insurance Policies

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to announce that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will hold a Town Hall meeting to hear comments and insights concerning possible revisions to certain fiscal policies that govern the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA), which comprise institutional training grants (T32 and T34s) and individual fellowships (F30, F31, F32, F33). The meeting which is open to the public will focus primarily on the funding of educational costs such as tuition, fees and health insurance provided through institutional training grants. The meeting will be held November 30, 2005 in the Natcher Conference Center, Room E1/E2 on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland.

Background: NRSA programs currently support over 17,000 predoctoral and postdoctoral research training positions mostly in the nation's academic laboratories. While the budget for the NRSA programs grew smartly during the five years in which the overall appropriation for the NIH was doubled, since fiscal 2003, the last of the growth years, the appropriation for NRSA training programs has grown rather modestly. Given this reality, the NIH must re-examine aspects of its NRSA policies that may not be sustainable in a period of limited budget expansion.

The largest of the NRSA programs funds institutional training grants that use the T32 mechanism to support both pre- and post-doctoral research training. Currently, the direct cost funding of these programs is segmented into four categories: stipend, tuition/fees/health insurance (referred to collectively as tuition), travel, and training related expenses. The funding levels for three of these (stipend, travel, and training related expenses) are stipulated and controlled by NIH, although each can be adjusted as fiscal circumstances and

program needs evolve. The funding for tuition, on the other hand, is not fully controlled by NIH; the funding for tuition is governed by a formula tied to the amount each institution requests for this expense. The formula provides for each T32 trainee the sum of \$3,000 plus sixty percent of the requested tuition in excess of \$3,000. This formula is used to determine the tuition level provided via each competing grant; that level, once established for a given competing grant, is used for the subsequent non-competing renewal awards during the project period. This formula has been employed since fiscal 1996 and has been modified once.

During the five year growth period, the increased funding devoted to NRSA activities was used for meaningful, and long overdue, trainee stipend increases and for covering some of the escalating requests in the tuition category of training grants. However, in fiscal 2004 and 2005, when there was limited NRSA budget growth, the requests and outlays for tuition continued to rise substantially. Barring other adjustments, the continuation of this trend in tuition growth will result in a significant annual decrease in the number of NRSA trainee positions, and to fewer programs supported by T32 training grants. Since these outcomes could have a substantial disruptive effect on biomedical research training, NIH has frozen the tuition expenses on competing renewals of T32 awards in fiscal 2006. (See <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-05-059.html>) Moreover, NIH training officials have decided to study various options for handling the funding of trainee tuition in the future. The goal of this effort is to find an approach that equips the agency both to adjust to budgetary challenges and to continue to provide appropriate support to institutions to help defray the educational costs of NRSA trainees. This town hall meeting is being held to gather the views of the training community on this issue.

Among the options that will be studied are the following:

1. The current tuition formula could be applied in conjunction with a ceiling; the funds provided would be the amount dictated by the currently-used formula or the amount dictated by the ceiling, whichever is less. The magnitude of the ceiling would be based on the fiscal resources available as well as on applicable data. For the sake of discussion, those offering comments may assume the ceiling could be in the range of \$16,000 to \$18,000.

2. A fixed allowance could be provided for tuition; the same allowance per trainee would be provided to each

grantee institution. This approach is employed by the National Science Foundation for its graduate research fellowship program. For the sake of discussion, those offering comments may assume the allowance could be in the range of \$16,000 to \$18,000. The allowance could be adjusted periodically by the NIH as fiscal circumstances warranted.

3. The current tuition formula could be retained without modification. Those offering comments may assume that under this option the number of NRSA trainees and funded training grant programs will likely experience a series of year-to-year decreases as long as the current fiscal patterns prevail.

Participation: Those who wish to attend the Town Hall meeting are invited to submit a brief statement, not to exceed two pages, summarizing views and experiences relevant to the topic of the meeting. Some of those submitting statements will be asked to make brief oral presentations at the meeting. In selecting those to make presentations and in allocating time, the organizers hope to ensure that a full range of opinions is heard and that all parts of the NRSA constituency are represented. Those not asked to present will be welcome at the meeting and will be given a brief opportunity to contribute during two "open mike" sessions. Individuals should submit their statements along with their name, affiliation, and contact information to NRSATownHall@mail.nih.gov by November 4, 2005. Individuals chosen to make presentations at the Town Hall meeting will be notified on or around November 14, 2005. Those unable to attend but who wish to provide statements are welcome to do so. All statements will be considered by NIH staff. Those who do not submit statements but wish to observe the meeting will be admitted on a space-available basis. An NIH official will present background information on NRSA tuition support at the outset of the meeting.

All individuals who wish to attend the meeting should register through the Town Hall meeting's Web site at <http://pub.nigms.nih.gov/nrsameeting>, available on or about October 24, 2005. The detailed schedule for the meeting, when completed, will be posted on this Web site along with any meeting updates. Participants are responsible for their own expenses associated with participating in this meeting, such as for travel.

Inquiries: Questions concerning this notice should be directed to: Dr. Warren Jones, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of

Health, 301-594-3827,
jonesw@nigms.nih.gov.

Dated: October 13, 2005.

Norka Ruiz Bravo,

*Deputy Director for Extramural Research,
National Institutes of Health.*

[FR Doc. 05-21134 Filed 10-21-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Office of the Secretary

[Docket No. DHS-2005-0041]

Notice of Meeting of Homeland Security Science and Technology Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Office of Studies and Analysis, Science and Technology Directorate, DHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Homeland Security Science and Technology Advisory Committee (HSSTAC) will meet at 3811 N. Fairfax Drive, 6th Floor Conference Room, Arlington, Virginia 22209, in closed session on November 8, 2005, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in open session.

DATE: The meeting date is November 8, 2005.

ADDRESSES: If you wish to submit comments, you must do so by November 4, 2005. Comments must be identified by DHS-2005-0041 and may be submitted by *one* of the following methods:

- Federal Partner EDOCKET Web Site: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow instructions for submitting comments on the Web site.
- E-mail: HSSTAC@dhs.gov. Include docket number in the subject line of the message.
- Fax: (202) 254-6177.
- Mail: Ms. Brenda Leckey, Office of Studies and Analysis, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brenda Leckey, Office of Studies and Analysis, Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC 20528, HSSTAC@dhs.gov, 202-254-5041.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice of this meeting is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), Pub.

L. 92-463, as amended (5 U.S.C. App. 1 *et seq.*). The HSSTAC will meet for purposes of: (1) Reviewing Homeland Security Institute (HSI) work on risk-based strategic planning; (2) receiving subcommittee reports; (3) providing the Under Secretary with preliminary HSSTAC recommendations; (4) addressing future subcommittee activities; and (5) discussing the Annual Report to Congress and the Under Secretary. Specifically, the HSSTAC will review the results of its subcommittees' activities undertaken since the last quarterly meeting in August 2005, and discuss any proposed subcommittee recommendations to be included in the annual report to Congress. The Committee will receive a briefing from the HSI on the status of the framework under development to link DHS and S&T investments to national homeland security strategies. And lastly, the Committee will discuss areas of interest for future subcommittee activities, and dispense subcommittee assignments for the annual report to Congress due in January.

Public Attendance: Due to meeting space restrictions, the maximum number of public attendees will be 25. Members of the public will be registered to attend the public session on a first-come, first-served basis per the procedures that follow. Any member of the public who wishes to attend the public session must provide his or her name, affiliation, social security number, and date of birth no later than 5 p.m. e.s.t., Friday, November 4, 2005. Please provide the required information to Craig Wilson via e-mail at HSSTAC@dhs.gov, or via phone at (202) 254-5723. Persons with disabilities who require special assistance should indicate so in their admittance request. Photo identification will be required for entry into the public session, and everyone in attendance must be present and seated by 4 p.m. on November 8, 2005.

In accordance with section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Pub. L. 92-463, as amended (5 U.S.C. App. 1 *et seq.*) and pursuant to the authority delegated to him by the Secretary in DHS Management Directive 2300, the Under Secretary for Science and Technology has determined that this HSSTAC meeting will address matters the disclosure of which would be likely to frustrate significantly proposed agency actions. Accordingly, consistent with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), the meeting will be partially closed to the public.