

AUBER

ASSOCIATION FOR UNIVERSITY BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

June 2015 Newsletter

**LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT**

2015 AUBER CONFERENCE

HOTEL AND TRAVEL

COPAFS



If you would like to contribute an article to the AUBER newsletter, or have any suggestions, please contact Shannon Furniss at the AUBER Secretary/Treasurer's Office, Shannon.Furniss@business.umt.edu.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Lorena Akioka

What would we do without data? We collect it, mine it, store, distribute, analyze, market, and discuss it in some way every day. In short, data are essential to what we do in AUBER centers, and we always assume that it will be there to use whenever we need it. But what if it weren't? Federal budget cuts annually threaten the output from the Census Bureau, the BLS, and the BEA; and on AUBER's behalf, recently I've co-signed letters to support these agencies' efforts to counter the



threats.

AUBER's membership in COPAFS-the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics-keeps us linked to the government entities that collect the data upon which we rely. Bill Shobe, our colleague at the University of Virginia, has been AUBER's representative at COPAFS for many years, and his reports from the quarterly meetings in Washington, DC has kept us apprised of the many changes in data gathering and dissemination that impact our work.

Data wrangling is like herding cats. Just when we think we have the process mastered, here come the revisions, the new benchmarks, and completely new data sets to keep life interesting. But again, if we didn't have data, we'd be robbed of all those wonderful speechmaking segues: "The data show.... The survey says... The graph illustrates.... Compared to the national average...".

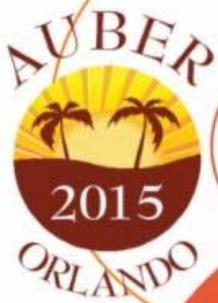
Finally, remember that AUBER collects data about its member centers, too, via the very helpful annual survey composed and analyzed by Paul Polzin at the University of Montana. The latest one will be released soon, so let's strive for a 100 percent response rate this year.



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- Conference rate: \$189/night plus taxes Book with this link: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/AUBEROct2015>
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COPAFS UPDATE

Letter from the Executive Director, COPAFS

Dear Friends of COPAFS,

Congress is in recess this week. During the 2 weeks before the Members left, there was a lot of activity on appropriations, both in the House and the Senate.

The current status of proposed appropriations for statistical agencies is available as a table [here](#).

The picture painted by the table is pretty bleak for federal statistics.

In no case did a congressionally proposed appropriation level meet the President's request for 2016.

For 4 of the 11 agencies shown, FY 2016 appropriations proposed by the Senate and/or House are below the levels appropriated in 2015. The degree of difference between 2016 congressionally proposed and 2015 actuals ranges from a 6% decrease from 2015 to the House 2016 proposal for NASS, to a 23% decrease from 2015 to the Senate 2016 proposal for BJS. NCES and ERS could experience 10% and 8% reductions, respectively.



For BLS and NCHS, the Senate proposed appropriations are less than FY 2015, while the House proposed appropriations are above FY 2015 but substantially less than the President's request.

BEA is straight-lined, although it would have to pay for its move to co-locate with the Census Bureau from 2016 program funds. EIA is straight-lined by the House while the Senate would increase its funding slightly above FY 2015.

The Census Bureau would see increases over 2015, especially in its "current programs," but the increases are well below what the agency judges it needs to implement an accurate, low-cost Decennial Census.

The magnitudes of proposed appropriations decreases (or, in the case of the Census, increases) over 2015 are not good indicators of the magnitude of impact on agency programs.

For agencies like the Census and the BLS that were substantially underfunded for their core programs in 2015, small cuts or insubstantial increases imply larger than proportional changes in their programs.

For agencies like ERS, BJS, and NCES, that are now operating without flexibility at their margins, cuts from 2015 would reflect proportionate cuts in programs.

COPAFS has written testimony and written and cosigned others' letters to Congress about the consequences of failing to adequately fund statistical programs. The decisions so far by congressional appropriations committees reflect an undervaluation of federal statistics, but are not unlike the 114th Congress' actions concerning funding of other non-defense, discretionary programs.

At this point, entreaties by individuals and firms reliant on federal statistics to individual Representatives and Senators, something that COPAFS' tax exemption status prevents it from engineering, can potentially be effective in changing eventual appropriations outcomes.

Hoping you enjoy the 4th of July break,

Kitty

Katherine R. Smith
Executive Director
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS)

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