

“Better Ballot Design” Showcased



Martha Kropf (University of North Carolina, Charlotte) and Representative David Price (D-NC4) discuss “Better Ballot Design” at the 19th Annual Coalition for National Science Funding Exhibition and Reception on Capitol Hill. (Photo credit: Scavone Photography)

On Tuesday, May 7, 2013, APSA participated in the 19th Annual Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) Exhibition and Reception

on Capitol Hill, showcasing the National Science Foundation funded research of Professors Martha Kropf (University of North Carolina, Charlotte) and David Kimball (University of Missouri, St. Louis) on “Better Ballot Design.”

This research exemplifies the significance and pertinence of political science scholarship for enhancing the democratic process, an area of research specifically removed from NSF funding by the Coburn Amendment (SA 65) to H.R. 933 (Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013). Kropf and Kimball ask whether the format of election ballots—for example, where the instructions are placed on the ballot and whether they are typed in all capital letters, and how much excess information there is around candidate names—influence voting. They find that there are “good” and “bad” ballot features that affect how voters make their choices in the voting booth. These

findings are invaluable to local election officials who might use them to make informed decisions about how to improve ballots for their citizens.

“Better Ballot Design” was met with great interest by several members of Congress, including Representatives Price [D-NC 4], Honda [D-CA 17], and Foster [D-IL 11]; NSF Acting Director Cora Marrett; and several staffers from both chambers, some of whom work on election reform bills and came specifically to meet Kropf for her expertise on these issues.

In addition to presenting her research, Kropf met with staff in the offices of Representatives Hudson, Hagan, Watt, and Pittenger and Senator Burr from North Carolina.

Additional information and photos from this event can be found at PoliSciNow.com. ■

Report Offers Recommendations for Leadership the Sciences

A new report from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences offers recommendations for academia, government agencies, and the private sector to help maintain America’s leadership in science, technology, and medicine.

The report, *ARISE II: Unleashing America’s Research & Innovation Enterprise*, highlights the need for greater synergy between government, university, and industry research. It advocates for greater integration of theories, concepts, and applications from multiple scientific disciplines to solve the complex problems of the 21st century.

“Scientific and technological innovation has been vital to the economic prosperity and security of the United States,” said Leslie Berlowitz, president of the American Academy, “yet there is growing concern that the nation risks losing its position of global technological leadership. ARISE II examines the factors

affecting America’s productivity in science and technology and suggests steps to encourage transdisciplinary and trans-sector research collaborations.”

ARISE II committee member Richard Scheller, Executive Vice President for Research and Early Development at Genentech, Inc., stressed the importance of this objective, saying, “The ARISE II report outlines a path forward to fully achieve the potential for interdisciplinary research. The report also presents a road map to optimize cooperation between academia, government, and industry. The recommendations should be implemented so our society can take full advantage of the scientific potential at hand.”

Key recommendations include:

- Shift from interdisciplinary to transdisciplinary: develop and foster a massive “knowledge network”

to focus disparate expertise and approaches on problems of common interest;

- Promote cooperative, synergistic interactions among academia, government and the private sector throughout the discovery and development process;
- Set new priorities for the technology transfer function between academia and industry with the explicit goal of maximizing exchanges of knowledge, resources, and people;
- Enhance permeability between industry and academia at all career stages; and
- Develop and implement new models for research alliances between academia and industry

ARISE II is available for download at www.amacad.org/arise2.pdf. ■