

1 MR. CASTEEN: Now Raymond Bye.

2 MR. BYE: It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to  
3 discuss this topic with an audience like this today and with the  
4 distinguished group of panelists as we have had on both panels  
5 today.

6 I have probably been asked to share some thoughts with  
7 you today because I have spent much of my professional career at  
8 the National Science Foundation working with the Congress on the  
9 NSF budget. Part of that time was devoted to defending that  
10 budget from earmarks and set-asides.

11 For several years after leaving NSF, I brought that  
12 culture with me to the position of the Vice President for  
13 Research at a major state university that is located in the state  
14 of the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Having  
15 come from the Garden of Eden, NSF, I now find myself periodically  
16 tempted to sin and take a bite out of the apple of earmarking.  
17 But more on that later.

18 Working with the Congress on the NSF budget for those  
19 many years, I now conclude that Member requests, as they called  
20 on Capitol Hill, or earmarks, as we are discussing today, is the  
21 grease that keeps the process moving forward.

22 Whether contained in Member requests loose-leafs or in  
23 computer databases, clerks on appropriations subcommittees know  
24 which members have asked for what, when, and how the Chair  
25 responded to that request.

26 A favorable response to a Member's request for a  
27 project is often considered one vote when the bill reaches the  
28 floor of the House or the Senate. And in an environment,  
29 particularly like in the House where majorities are very narrow,  
30 and where budgets are tight and allocations are constrained, it  
31 is a very important legislative tool.

32 Appropriation bills contain funds for multiple agencies  
33 and diverse departmental programs; each has its advocates as well  
34 as competitors, for limited resources. There is also a growing  
35 proliferation of interest groups, ranging from "Blue Dog  
36 Democrats" to House GOP conservatives. In this environment, a  
37 majority vote is often assured only by commitments garnered by  
38 providing the funds for a Member's request. And these earmarks

1 go far beyond science.

2 In addition to earmarks, the earmarks also provide the  
3 grease for securing campaign funding, as well. Thus, Members and  
4 Chairs see earmarks as a very practical outcome done for very  
5 practical reasons.

6 Is there a single view on the subject of earmarks?  
7 Historically, a single position has been lacking. In light of  
8 this divergence of views, meetings like this which are focused on  
9 this topic often resemble the two cultures described by C.P. Snow  
10 in his 1950's work that highlighted the communications breakdown  
11 between the sciences and the humanities as a major hindrance to  
12 solving problems. While participants may have differing views on  
13 this subject today, I hope we can begin to bridge that gap in  
14 that communications divide.

15 Within my university, we agree that earmarking is  
16 definitely and clearly a two-edged sword. For an institution  
17 that is concerned about its national reputation relative to high  
18 quality faculty and growing competition among academic  
19 institutions for funding, earmarking may be viewed by some as not  
20 particularly desirable. Yet a blanket disavowal did not seem  
21 appropriate for us at Florida State University either.

22 I would like to share with you some criteria that we  
23 employ prior to making decisions on what we call targeted  
24 projects that we discuss with our congressional delegation.

25 The first one: avoid earmarking in agencies that have  
26 strong and established peer- or merit-reviewed programs or  
27 activities. NSF and NIH are clearly the most obvious examples.  
28 I would call your attention to a 1999 GAO report requested by  
29 then House Science Chairman Sensenbrenner, which looked at peer  
30 review activities in twelve federal agencies; and in all but two,  
31 the report found the process and the quality of peer review  
32 widely divergent.

33 Secondly, avoid focusing on basic research projects.  
34 This may be redundant with criteria A to some extent as NSF and  
35 NIH both focus heavily on basic research. Most of our projects  
36 are applied research, or even get into some development  
37 activities.

38 Thirdly, focus on a university strength or priority.

1 Here the focus is on an area that already has strength in its  
2 faculty, within teams of faculty, or with strong infrastructure  
3 or instrumentation availability. These can even be multi-  
4 institutional in nature. New or inexperienced faculty members  
5 are not normally involved in these projects. Our intention is to  
6 expand and build upon existing and possibly unique strengths we  
7 have in both human and technical areas.

8 And I should say that to date we had not received any  
9 of this funding of this sort for buildings or that type of  
10 infrastructure.

11 Fourthly, projects that may be branching into new  
12 funding areas. Maybe an example or two here would be  
13 appropriate.

14 Agencies, like other bureaucracies, are not completely  
15 open to change. Let's say we have faculty who have expertise in  
16 developing climate models, successfully funded for years by the  
17 science agencies, but we have recognized the need to make these  
18 results coming out of these models available, let's say, to  
19 farmers to prevent major losses or enhance crop yields.

20 Have you recently tried to get these new approaches in  
21 climate models utilized by and funded through the USDA? Many at  
22 USDA don't understand the idea of climate models.

23 So what we have tried to do is go take some of this  
24 aversion to change in these out-dated, and yet traditional ways  
25 of doing businesses -- and I think in many of our organizations  
26 we call this looking at a problem in a stovepipe fashion - and we  
27 try to use this process to help break that down.

28 A second example: in a university, for instance, with a  
29 national reputation for leadership in developing education at a  
30 distance and related strengths in developing educational systems,  
31 and then assume that this university wants to transport this  
32 expertise into a foreign country to change education. Have you  
33 tried USAID's merit review program lately as a vehicle to get  
34 funding for an activity like this?

35 I could go on and give you several other examples, but  
36 I think a congressional earmark often focuses enough attention on  
37 a capacity, that the agency will consider the new capacity as  
38 part of their portfolio.

1 Fifth, a concept paper or a proposal has been developed  
2 and has already been shared with the agency during congressional  
3 discussions. This requires faculty to review the program  
4 requirements and interest of that agency, often discussing a  
5 particular activity with agency program staff. This step usually  
6 eliminates frivolous or impetuous efforts.

7 And finally, what I say basically is, two years to  
8 mature. Faculty involved in these kinds of activities know that  
9 it is their responsibility to develop strong working  
10 relationships with the outcome that both parties involved at the  
11 university and within that agency get the benefits from the  
12 activity within a short time line.

13 The agency must feel that the work is worthy of  
14 continuation without continuous, long-term plus-ups. Only a  
15 limited number of such efforts can be undertaken each year, so as  
16 other priorities come forward, maturing projects must continue on  
17 their own momentum.

18 The criteria and the comments about each have hopefully  
19 suggested a somewhat balanced approach to looking at earmarking.

20 I would hope to be considered a responsible user in the context  
21 of this congressional process. I do feel that Member requests,  
22 or earmarking, is a process that, if used thoughtfully,  
23 carefully, and selectively, can be a valuable device to broaden  
24 the utilization of differing approaches to problem solving among  
25 different agencies and it may provide useful applications to  
26 different agencies from talented faculty and graduate students.

27 In conclusion, the funding of specific projects for  
28 Members in a wide array of federal programs in appropriations  
29 bills or reports, are a necessary arrow in the legislative  
30 quiver.

31 Earmarks are often critical for coalescing Member  
32 support for multi-agency and multi-faceted appropriations bills.

33 If public funds are wasted on poor or inferior  
34 activities, then earmarking is less than optimum. However, I do  
35 not concur with the blanket statement that all such activities  
36 are wasteful, unproductive and unduly constrain budgets.

37 The challenge to the executive branch and to those of  
38 us in universities is not to advocate eliminating a necessary

1 tool for legislative action, but to develop some agreement on  
2 what is a reasonable, responsible, and balanced approach to this  
3 complex and controversial issue.

4 Thank you.

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