

Tension between politics and science soothed—for now

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Over the past two years, politicians have questioned the value of dozens of projects funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), many of which focus on social sciences and climate change. But a new agreement on transparency has led to an apparent truce between Congress and the agency, according to *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society. How stable that truce is, however, remains to be seen.

Andrea Widener, associate editor at C&EN, notes that the recent dustup between [politicians](#) and the NSF, which is overseen by Congress, is nothing new. The two uneasy partners have had a rocky relationship since the agency's founding in 1950. This time around tensions flared when Lamar Smith, a Republican Congressman from Texas and head of the House Committee on Science, Space & Technology, took steps to increase oversight over the agency's grant review process—and the agency pushed back.

The two have now come to terms. The NSF has agreed to new transparency rules, including writing project titles and summaries in plain language. Agency Director France Córdova also said that Smith's request that all grants be in the "national interest" is in line with the NSF's mission. However, some observers have expressed concern that the new terms could end up limiting submissions and, therefore, scientific progress.

More information: Peer Review Reconciliation,

cen.acs.org/articles/93/i13/Tension-between-politics-and-science-soothed-for-now/abstract.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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