

U.S. S&T Strategies under the New President

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Abstract

The next US Administration to be decided on November 4, 2008, whether Democrat or Republican, is likely to adjust course on a number of issues in science and technology (S&T) policy. The Presidential candidates bring different political philosophies than the incumbent administration and the fiscal strain of the war in Iraq and the financial bail out of Wall Street are likely to be more keenly felt.

Some argue that in the big picture, the US Federal Government's enterprise in science and technology has not changed substantially in several decades, showing slow but steady growth. However, the size of the canvas is only defined after a push and pull with Congress, with Congress often taking the lead in recent years. Importantly, the painting on that canvas and its integrity can shift dramatically, as many feel it did in the past Administration. The new Administration is likely to change that picture in a number of ways related to the approach to governance and budget priorities.

Some of the issues facing a new Administration that will be addressed in this discussion include the following.

- Position of S&T in policy making
 - o Will the priority of S&T in policy making change and how will a change in priority be reflected?
- Budget and priorities
 - o Will the overall Federal budget for research and development shift? In what areas will support for S&T be strongest? In which might it be less strong? What new signature S&T initiatives might emerge for the next Administration?
- Politics in S&T
 - o Interaction and intrusion of politics and science
 - o Science and the setting of regulations
 - o Science and religion, including stem cells and creationism
- Strategy for innovation
 - o Given the tough economic situation in the US, will the strategy toward science and technology for economic innovation change?
 - o How will innovation across the economy be stimulated?
 - o What will be the mixture of emphases in approaches – market stimulus, technology generation, market pull.
- Science and technology in global affairs
 - o How might S&T be reflected in a new emphasis on greater global engagement in foreign policy?