How to Win Buildings and Influence Congress

A lobbying firm raises university construction funds and a storm of criticism through pork barrel politics

For the past 6 months, the Washington lobbying firm of Schlossberg-Cassidy and Associates has been at the center of a storm. In May, it pulled off a coup by securing funds for research facilities at Catholic and Columbia universities through an amendment first proposed on the floor of the House of Representatives. The move immediately brought a gush of criticism because it was pure pork barrel politics that bypassed all the peer review processes that are supposed to guide the funding of scientific projects. More recently, it has prompted a clutch of high-minded resolutions from academic organizations urging that such unorthodox funding mechanisms not be used.

The adverse publicity has not been bad for business, however. Schlossberg-Cassidy has signed up almost a dozen universities as clients, and several more have inquired about its services.* Academic work now accounts for about half the firm's business.

Moreover, Schlossberg-Cassidy, undaunted, has since masterminded two other attempts to win funding for its clients by similar end runs around the usual departmental and congressional review processes. The first secured a $7.5-million grant for Boston College for a new library and the second narrowly missed getting $15 million for Boston University for an engineering facility. Both projects first appeared in amendments proposed on the floor of the Senate, which approved them without debate. The House went along with the Boston College amendment, but in an unusual display of budgetary scruples, refused to support the Boston University funds.

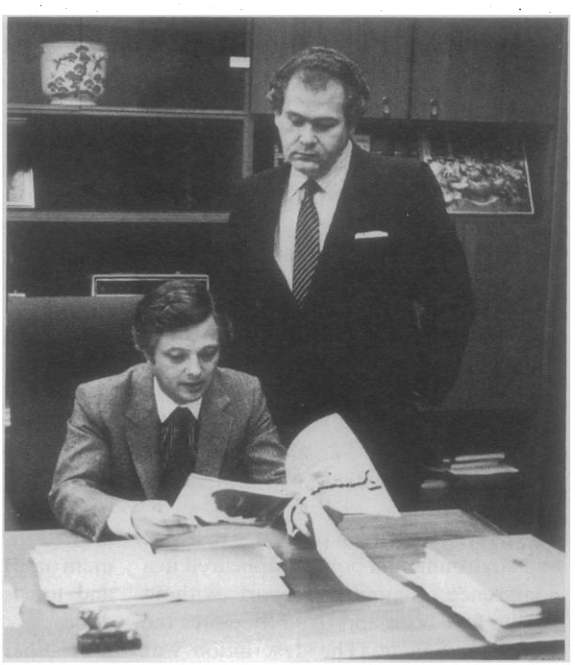
It is not just Schlossberg-Cassidy's clients that have secured academic facilities recently through pork barrel politics. The amendment providing the Boston College grant also channeled $20.4 million to Oregon Health Sciences University for an information center and $15 million to the University of New Hampshire for a space and marine science building. And the Boston University amendment also contained $20 million for the University of New Mexico for an engineering center. Although these schools were not represented by Schlossberg-Cassidy, they were part of political coalitions that the firm helped put together to benefit its clients.

Pork barrel politics is no stranger in the world of academic science, but this rash of episodes was more than the scientific and academic establishment could stomach. In the past few weeks, the National Academy of Sciences, the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges have all approved resolutions urging the universities and Congress not to bypass peer review in parceling out funds for scientific projects and facilities. The American Physical Society has written to every member of Congress asking for an end to sweetheart deals for specific universities. The Council of Scientific Society Presidents is thinking of doing the same thing, and the AAAS plans to take up the issue as well.

One outcome of all this brouhaha is that political attention is finally being focused on the problems universities face in raising funds for facilities. Federal programs to finance university construction, which were launched in the post-Sputnik panic, all dried up at least a decade ago. And private financing is not easy for less well-endowed institutions to raise.

"It ill behooves those who are rich in research resources to tell others, who are not, that they should not pursue the only legal, ethical route open to them to meet their pressing needs," says Kenneth Schlossberg. His associate, Gerald S. J. Cassidy, adds that given the shortage of funds for academic facilities, their distribution is bound to be political. "I don't believe members of Congress are going to sit by and watch that need be unfulfilled [in their districts] because of some ideal people have regarding this. It is not a research question at all; it is an economic question," he contends.

Although they have only recently gained notoriety for their efforts, Schlossberg and Cassidy have long been working the Washington scene for university clients. Schlossberg, a former journalist, and Cassidy, a lawyer, were, respectively, the staff director and chief counsel of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs from 1969 to 1975 when they set up shop.



Schlossberg (seated) and Cassidy: hired guns for a dozen universities.

*Schlossberg-Cassidy's academic clients include Tufts University, Columbia University, Boston University, Boston College, Indiana University, Northwestern University, Atlanta University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Catholic University, the Oceanic Institute, and the Pratt Institute.

They were joined by James Fabiani, who had been on the Republican staff of the House Appropriations Committee. (Two more professional staff members have since been added.)

One of their early clients was Tufts University, whose president, former Harvard nutritionist Jean Mayer, got to know Schlossberg when he worked for the select committee. Schlossberg says Mayer called him up out of the blue and asked whether he could do anything for Tufts.

The first thing Schlossberg-Cassidy did for Tufts was to secure a $32-million contract to set up a center at the university for research on nutrition and aging. Schlossberg, using old contacts at the Department of Agriculture, floated a proposal for the center which the department—in large measure because of Mayer's reputation and expertise in the area—included as a line item in its budget request to Congress. The budget request specifically named Tufts as the location of the center, and Congress gave the venture its blessing.

Schlossberg-Cassidy has since helped steer $10 million in federal funds to Tufts to establish a veterinary school and $7.5 million for an intercultural center. And, thanks in part to initial work by Schlossberg-Cassidy, Tufts is about to get a $2-million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a center on toxic waste research. In each case, Tufts was the beneficiary of bills or amendments in Congress that channeled funds to the university by name, or spelled out criteria that virtually no other university could meet.

Most of the firm's work for universities consists of advising on the establishment of government relations programs, keeping clients informed of legislative and regulatory developments that may affect them, shepherding administrators and researchers around Washington, planning fund-raising drives, and sniffing out areas likely to produce funds. The Tufts toxic waste center, for example, had its roots in advice from Schlossberg-Cassidy a few years ago that funds for research on toxics would probably be a growth area. The university put together a proposal and sold the idea itself to key members of the House Appropriations Committee. A directive to EPA to establish a center at "a university with schools of biomedical sciences, engineering, nutrition, and veterinary medicine as well as proven programs in urban and environmental policy" appeared in a conference committee report without having first been approved by either the House or Senate. The description was tailored for Tufts, and no other institution has submitted a proposal.

Schlossberg and Cassidy might have gone on quietly working deals for their clients without raising much of a fuss were it not for the Catholic and Columbia amendments. Catholic won a $5-million grant for the first installment on a $14-million vitreous state laboratory, and Columbia secured a $5-million downpayment on a $20-million National Chemical Research Center. Both amendments were greased with some slick lobbying and easily slid through. In the case of the Catholic proposal, for example, several bishops on Catholic's board of trustees called their members of Congress, and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill's support was enlisted through an approach by Humberto Cardinal Medeiros of Boston. But what really rankled was that the funds were taken directly from somebody else's pocket.

"They risk undermining the whole basis of decision-making in research funding."

Both amendments were applied to a budget bill for the Department of Energy (DOE). In Catholic's case, the amendment diverted funds already approved by the House Committee on Science and Technology for the National Center for Advanced Materials (NCAM) at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. Columbia's $5 million was cobbled together from a variety of sources, including construction funds for accelerator projects at Yale and the University of Washington, and support for instrumentation in high-energy physics. Not surprisingly, those who were cut complained loudly.

Schlossberg and Cassidy plead innocent to the charge of robbing others for their clients. They claim that although their firm helped plan the political strategy and conduct the lobbying, it did not draft the amendments. "We did not understand what had happened until we read the [*Congressional*] *Record* the next day, and we were very distressed by it," says Schlossberg. He blames staff members of the science and technology committee who, he believes, deliberately drafted the amendments to create maximum uproar, calling it a "shortsighted and unwisely vindictive thing to have done."

Whether by design or not, the moves drew instant opprobrium. In contrast, Schlossberg-Cassidy's later forays into the budget process on behalf of Boston College and Boston University initially attracted little attention. One reason is that nobody else got hurt in the process.

The Boston College deal illustrates the old Washington lobbying tactic of aligning your client's interests with those of more powerful political constituencies. Schlossberg and Cassidy say they were aware that Oregon was interested in obtaining funds for a regional medical library and information complex, and that the University of New Hampshire had been talking with Senator Warren Rudman (R–N.H.) about its needs for a new science building. A combined amendment was cooked up providing funds from the Department of Education for all three institutions. The Senate approved it without debate, and the House eventually followed suit.

The coalition had several powerful features: the amendment had the backing of Senator Mark Hatfield (R–Ore.), the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Speaker O'Neill could be counted on to lend his support when it went into a conference committee with the House. O'Neill is a graduate of Boston College.

In attempting to get funds for Boston University, a coalition was formed between Senator Edward Kennedy (D–Mass.) and Senator Pete Domenici (R–N.M.), the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, who was interested in channeling funds to the University of New Mexico for a new engineering center. According to an aide to Domenici, the Senator was persuaded to support a pork barrel amendment because a recent study had concluded that if Albuquerque is to compete effectively with other cities for high-technology industry, the University of New Mexico's engineering school needs to be beefed up.

An amendment providing funds for the two schools sailed easily through the Senate but failed to win acceptance by a House-Senate conference committee. The committee did, however, recommend that the universities submit grant proposals to the Department of Education and directed the department to give them a high priority. There is thus a good chance that they will get funds next year.

The Academy and the AAU have reacted to all this by passing resolutions noting that funding for scientific projects and facilities in the United States has traditionally been based on peer review by the scientific community and that this system has served U.S. science well. Both statements called on universities

and Congress not to undermine the system through pork barrel politics.

Others worry that, by participating in pork barrel politics, universities could undermine efforts to head off further political control over research decisions—such as legislation proposed by Representative Henry Waxman (D–Calif.) to increase Congress's influence over the National Institutes of Health (NIH). "It bothered me when AAU institutions started doing this—institutions that have benefited enormously from the peer review system," says Albert Bowker, dean of the school of public affairs at the University of Maryland.

Schlossberg and Cassidy respond by pointing out that decisions on funding for science have never been free of politics, citing in particular the recent scrap between a coalition of southern universities and the Argonne National Laboratory over the siting of an accelerator (*Science*, 27 May, p. 929), and the Administration's decision to seek funds for NCAM without first bothering to consult the research community on the need for such a facility. Moreover, they note that many universities already maintain large government relations staffs to influence political decisions.

Schlossberg also says he believes there is some "confusion" about what his firm has been doing, pointing out that it has been helping universities acquire funding for buildings, not for research grants or major facilities that should be put through a peer review process. The distinction between buildings and research is not always clear, however. The Catholic and Columbia buildings, for example, will require another $24 million before they are completed, and the funds presumably will have to come from DOE's research budget. The Tufts toxic waste center, which could eventually be a $10-million-a-year operation, will also take a bite out of EPA's research budget. The Tufts funds "will not be part of a competitive peer-reviewed process, and in my view that sets a poor example," says Courtney Riordan, EPA's research chief.

Finally, Schlossberg and Cassidy argue that the AAU, which represents 50 of the largest research universities in the country, reflects the views of those that are already comparatively well off. "It is somewhat hypocritical for universities like Stanford, Harvard, and Yale, to be advising the rest of the university community . . . not to seek support where they can find it, including from the U.S. Congress," says Schlossberg.

One reason why so many universities have sought special interest amendments in Congress is that the approach evidently works. But a deeper reason is that there are no longer any programs to which they can apply for building funds. The Department of Education and the National Science Foundation both ran out of funds for facilities in the early 1970's, and an NIH program for construction of biomedical facilities expired in the late 1960's.

The AAU earlier this year drafted a bill that would provide funds for construction, equipment, and graduate fellowships. It was introduced into the Senate by John Danforth (R–Mo.) and Thomas Eagleton (D–Mo.) but did not get very far. The AAU intends to push it harder next year.

Schlossberg, however, accuses the AAU of "standing still or being very ineffective in whatever efforts they have made to increase funding for facilities." He adds: "If the AAU would like to hire my firm's resources and use our professional expertise to obtain general funding [for facilities] we would be absolutely delighted." Robert Rosenzweig, AAU's president, responds that "we would welcome their help on that, but we don't welcome their shooting for individual universities. . . . They risk undermining the whole basis of decision-making in research funding."—**COLIN NORMAN**

The Pentagon's Ambitious Computer Plan

It wants to spend $600 million on artificial intelligence for smarter weapons systems

The Defense Department's main agency for basic research is proposing to embark on an ambitious $600-million program to develop artificial intelligence systems and computer technology. If successful, it could fundamentally change the way in which battles are planned and fought. The long-term proposal would create a whole new generation of computers with capabilities including vision, comprehension of speech, and reasoning, and diverse applications including the development of unmanned armored tanks for reconnaissance, an automated copilot that could understand a human voice, and an elaborate computer system to assist in strategic planning.

In a report called "Strategic Computing," which was made available to *Science*, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) describes the plan and says that the new technology "will have unprecedented capabilities." It adds, however, that the development of these new computers will "severely challenge the [current] technology and the technical community."

The report, completed in late October, comes none too soon for many members of industry and academia, who have been pressing for more money in artificial intelligence research. The United States presently is the world leader in this type of computer research, but the Japanese government in 1982 launched a $500-million 10-year program to develop "fifth-generation computers," which would incorporate artificial intelligence. Japanese industry has apparently committed a matching sum, bringing the national effort to a total of $1 billion, according to Michael Dertouzos, head of the Laboratory for Computer Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. DARPA's plan covers a 10-year period in which $600 million would be spent during the first 5 years, starting in fiscal year 1984. DARPA has already succeeded in securing from Congress $50 million for its FY 1984 appropriations.

According to an agency official, the $600 million represents support for current DARPA computer research and a request for new money as well. The exact figures on "old" and new money are unclear, but the official said that the plan would at least double DARPA's present expenditures in artificial intelligence research. Dertouzos estimates that industry, universities, and the federal government now spend about $150 million to $200 million a year on long-range research in computer science, including artificial intelligence.

The U.S. military already widely uses computers in guided missiles, munitions, aviation, and command-control-communications intelligence. But DARPA envi-