



WASTE REPORT for February 8, 2016

Government Waste: A Love Affair



This Sunday is Valentine's Day, when old soldiers of the love wars will be buying flowers and going to dinner celebrating their affinity for each other. **Perhaps for you Valentine's Day is an opportunity to find new love; and if you're nervous and unsure about talking to a love interest, not to worry, Uncle Sam has some tips for you... and you paid for them.**

That's right!!! The National Science Foundation (NSF) helped fund a 2013 Stanford University study, *Making the Connection: Social Bonding in Courtship Situations*. **According to one of the researchers, "We wanted to see if there is anything about the interaction that matters or is it really just what I look like, what I do, what my motivation is."**¹

Considering online dating is a \$2 billion industry, it seems like Uncle Sam should leave this subject to experts like eHarmony.² And, maybe they meant to. **The study cites three NSF grants, which contributed to this project, totaled a whopping \$2.5 million.**³ As absurd as it is for tax dollars to go to finance a study of how to "click" with someone of the opposite sex, we do not even know how much of this money found its way to romance research, but it certainly does not seem to have been the intended use of your tax dollars.

None of NSF's grant synopses make any mention of romance or dating. One grant was aimed at discovering how, **"ideas are created and propagate through scientific communities**, how these communities are formed and change over time, and how multidisciplinary networks spanning these communities shape scientific innovation."⁴ **Apparently there must have been some confusion about what "chemistry" means.**

This highlights a problem we identified in last week's [The Waste Report](#) about a Department of Defense funded study on how long it takes people to open an e-mail. In both cases, **once money went out the door, and for other purposes, the government had trouble keeping track of it downstream, allowing money to be shaved off for frivolous, unintended research.**

So, since you paid for it, what did we learn? **Well, according to the study, which used speed-dating as its point of reference, women are pickier than men when choosing a mate.** Both sides are more interested if conversation focuses on the lady, but women do not like answering lots of question. Guys don't like it when ladies use words like "kinda, sorta, and probably," but they are attracted a gal that mixes it up by speaking quickly and with inflection.⁵

Oh, and guys, hold the door for the lady and pay for dinner. That's FREE advice from the FSO Subcommittee.

¹ Brooke, Donald; *New Stanford research on speed dating examines what makes couples 'click' in four minutes*; Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA; May 2013

² Wells, George; *eHarmony Founder Talks Matchmaking in the Age of Tinder*; Wall Street Journal, New York, NY; March 2015

³ NSF Awards: 0835614, 0624134, and 1159679

⁴ Cherniavsky, John; *CDI-Type II: What drives the dynamic creation of science?*; Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA; Sep. 2008 Award # 0835614

⁵ Triffin, Molly; *7 Secrets for an Amazing First Date*; Women's Health; Emmaus, PA; June 2013

