

Teaching assistant associations are nothing new in the student political movements of the past decade. The first TAA, at Berkeley, went on strike in 1964 in support of the Free Speech Movement. Two years ago an association of teaching and research assistants at the University of Minnesota unsuccessfully sought to bargain with the university for better working conditions.

Besides low pay and long hours at present, teaching assistants in the humanities and hard sciences face a highly congested job market for full-time teachers and researchers. This puts them in a double bind, because to get ahead they need the recommendation of the faculty members who, many TA's feel, are "exploiting" them. At Madison, many TA's turned to unionism to combat the resulting feelings of powerlessness and alienation.

The Madison TAA was founded in the spring of 1966, according to present members, by TA's concerned about the possibility that the grades they gave would affect the draft status of students. The organization did not become broadly representative, however, until the Wisconsin legislature's threat to increase tuition for TA's in 1969 gave it a "bread and butter" issue around which to organize as a labor union. TAA's leaders sent cards to all 1900 Wisconsin TA's proposing that their organization be authorized to act as the exclusive bargaining agent for teaching assistants. They got approximately 1100 affirmative returns.

At first, Chancellor Young rejected collective bargaining with the TAA. He argued that, under state law, "unclassified" state employees, such as teaching assistants, were not specifically entitled to engage in collective bargaining. He suggested that the TAA seek an amendment to state law that would give them that right. But the TAA held firm, insisting that state law presented no obstacle to a grant of representative status to the TAA by the university. Under the implied threat of a strike, with the possibility that the university might become vulnerable to attack by the Wisconsin labor movement for ignoring documented TAA claims, Young agreed to recognize the TAA as an agent for bargaining with the university and its departments, provided its claim to representative status was confirmed by a Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission (WERC) election. The tentative recognition was signed on 26 April 1969, as part of a "structure agreement" defining broad areas for negoti-

Kennedy Asks More for NSF

Last week Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate subcommittee which oversees National Science Foundation (NSF) affairs, introduced an authorization bill providing \$50 million more than the \$500 million requested for NSF by the Administration for the coming year. Since, in Congress, the House and Senate appropriations committees have the last word on the NSF budget, Kennedy's action could be less significant in affecting NSF's budget than in symbolizing his emergence as the leading congressional advocate of scientific research.

The announced retirement of Representative Emilio Q. Daddario (D-Conn.) to run for the governorship of his home state will remove from Congress its most active explicator and proponent of science. Kennedy in the past has interested himself in the problems of the science agencies and last year led an effort to increase NSF appropriations, which ultimately were cut below Administration requests. But until questions about legislative jurisdiction over NSF in the Senate were cleared up last year and Kennedy was assured of chairmanship of the National Science Foundation subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Kennedy's role was in doubt.

Kennedy's action in introducing the bill represented an unusual initiative since his subcommittee has not yet begun authorization hearings.

In a statement accompanying introduction of the bill, Kennedy noted that the House Science and Astronautics Committee had added \$27.6 million to the Administration request, but the Massachusetts senator questioned whether this was "sufficient." He said he recognized the need for belt-tightening in a time of inflation, but went on to say that "even in a period of inflation, a responsible government must choose its priorities wisely; it cannot blindly slash every federal program. And it is my belief that no government with a proper set of priorities can, at this moment in history, seriously consider reducing its commitment to scientific research."

A Good Word for Basic Research

Kennedy stressed the potential of science for helping the country to achieve "a more balanced transportation system, to overcome our housing shortage, to develop a more comprehensive health delivery system, to design more effective teaching methods, to fight crime and protect the environment." But in addition to his call for support of applied research, Kennedy made a strong plea in behalf of basic research. "I have been emphasizing the role which science and the National Science Foundation must play in solving pressing national problems," he said. "But I wish to make clear that scientific research cannot just focus on problems which are in the public eye. It must prepare to solve problems which most of us have not begun to foresee. Therefore, we must train experts to gather knowledge in every area of science. Only then can we have any hope of meeting the dangers which the future holds in store."

A major portion of the increase called for in Kennedy's bill would be aimed at academic science, for reasons which Kennedy discusses in the following excerpt from his statement.

Another area where it appears that the House Committee did not authorize a sufficient increase is support of academic projects which are being dropped by DOD, NASA, and other federal agencies. The Committee itself estimated the total of such dropped projects at about \$60 million and this is probably a conservative estimate. Furthermore, the Committee conceded that the projects were of high quality. Yet it authorized only \$20 million to compensate for the drop outs, \$10 million more than did the Administration. This means that the NSF will be forced to choose between funding the high-level projects dropped by other agencies—some of which are led by Nobel Prize winners—or funding other worthy projects, many of which are led by young scientists at our smaller universities. I think that we should relieve the NSF of at least part of this dilemma by authorizing \$30 million more than the President did for support of academic science projects.

—J. W.