

refrain about recombinant DNA, often heard from exceedingly competent researchers, goes something like this: Even *I* cannot understand this terribly sophisticated, complicated work, so how can you expect the public to understand it? The answer, of course, is that the scientists *can* understand it, even though they may lack the technical competence to carry out certain experiments themselves, and that the public can make sense out of it too.

During the course of the 2½-day conference a number of examples of ways in which the public can, or does, participate in science policy-making were brought up—put on the record, so to speak, but not scrutinized. Government regulation, legislation, and litigation were all laid before the group as examples of the least ideal but most common forms of public involvement. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, which several months ago issued guidelines on fetal experimentation, was discussed as a successful example of the “commission approach” to getting public input, which seems to be particularly popular these days. And the existent practice of having lay persons on federal advisory bodies was cited as a concept that could be pushed further. A notably enthusiastic advocate of public participation in this forum was Bertram Brown, director of the National Institute of Mental Health, who described how nonscientists were functioning usefully on *initial* grant review committees at his institute. His comments sent shivers through a few conservative spines.

Agenda for Responsive Science

One of the more imaginative notions mentioned at the conference came from Nobel laureate David Baltimore of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Baltimore, defending on the one hand the idea that the best new ideas come from researchers left to their own thoughts, suggested on the other that one outcome of the meeting could be encouragement of the writing of an “agenda for responsive science.” One would gather a group of nonscientists—members of labor unions, citizens groups, welfare recipients, and the like—and ask them to try to identify problems that researchers should be working on. It is possible, Baltimore speculated, that the public might have some good ideas, although he also guessed that most of what they would want is already being studied.

Baltimore’s suggestion follows rather closely along the lines of a proposition that has come out of the labor unions.

For example, in January, Leonard Woodcock, on behalf of several unions, testified before the President’s Biomedical Research Panel. He said that the unions and other consumer groups could be helpful by “communicating to the biomedical research community areas in which research needs to be undertaken, or the results of previous research applied. . . .”

Not surprisingly, the most likely outcome of the Airlie House conference on biomedical research and the public will be another conference, or, perhaps, a working group to try to turn the dialogue that was begun into something useful. Conference organizer Gaylin contends that if you have 50 people in a group it is too much to hope for more than a dialogue, but that a task force of a dozen individuals could follow up productively. Robbins of Case Western Reserve agrees that a small group might be useful but only, he says, if it is created with a clear mandate to report to Congress or the Administration, not just to itself and a few interested friends.

—BARBARA J. CULLITON

APPOINTMENTS

F. Sheldon Hackney, former provost, Princeton University, to president, Tulane University. . . . **William A. Butts**, professor of history, Mississippi Valley State University, to president, Kentucky State University. . . . **Robert K. Dellenbach**, vice president of development, Alaska Methodist University, to president of the university. . . . **John E. Cantlon**, provost, Michigan State University, to vice president for research and graduate studies at the university. . . . **Charles A. Leone**, vice provost, Bowling Green State University, to vice president for academic affairs, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. . . . **Joab L. Thomas**, vice president of student affairs, University of Alabama, to chancellor, North Carolina State University. . . . **William E. Kerstetter**, president, DePauw University, to chancellor at the university. . . . **Allen W. Mathies, Jr.**, interim dean, School of Medicine, University of Southern California, to dean of the school. . . . **Robert T. Wagner**, professor of physics, Northern Michigan University, to dean of science and mathematics, University of Southern Colorado. . . . **Gresham Riley**, provost, New College, to dean of arts and sciences, University of Richmond. . . . **Charles Derrickson**, acting dean, School of Applied Sciences and

Technology, Morehead State University, to dean of the school. . . . **William J. Johnson**, professor of landscape architecture, University of Michigan, to dean, School of Natural Resources at the university. . . . **Robert M. Lewis**, director, division of laboratory animal sciences, School of Medicine, Tufts University, to chairman, veterinary pathology department, New York State College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University. . . . **John J. DeCosta**, associate professor of biology, West Virginia University, to chairman, biology department at the university. . . . **Eugene C. Gritton**, acting head, physical sciences department, The Rand Corporation, to head of the department. . . . **Jerome A. Eyer**, director of geologic research, Continental Oil Company, to chairman of geology and geophysics, University of Missouri, Rolla. . . . **John F. Bergner, Jr.**, dean, School of Health Sciences and Services, Western Carolina University, to chairman, allied health sciences department, Florida Technological University. . . . **John A. Schilling**, professor of surgery, University of Washington, to chairman of surgery at the university. . . . **Donald Campbell**, associate professor of education, Dartmouth College, to chairman of education, Bloomfield College.

RECENT DEATHS

Lewis K. Dahl, 60; professor of medicine, Health Sciences Center, State University of New York, Stony Brook; 26 November.

B. Baldwin Dansby, 96; president emeritus, Jackson State University; 20 November.

William W. Frye, 72; university professor, Texas Tech University; 3 December.

Robert W. Harrington, Jr., 64; ichthyologist, Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory; 14 November.

Daniel L. Harris, 60; professor of molecular biology, University of Texas, Dallas; 2 August.

Alton C. Murphy, 66; former associate professor of educational psychology, University of Texas, Austin; 30 November.

Lester W. Paul, 75; former chairman of radiology, University of Wisconsin, Madison; 30 November.

Ermine L. Potter, 91; former chairman of agriculture, Oregon State University; 19 November.

Louis Reed, 93; former professor of economics, University of Texas, Austin; 6 December.