

ing to Tien, it's not true. To be able to automatically practice in the British Commonwealth, a school must be recognized by the British General Medical Council. He told *Science* that AUC cannot even apply for that accreditation until they are physically established on Montserrat.

It turns out, moreover, that AUC graduates will not even be able to automatically practice medicine on Montserrat, unless they are natives of the West Indies. The Chief Minister's office is setting up a regulatory board to keep the medical marketplace from being swamped with U.S. physicians.

Another point of confusion with some of the AUC students is the topic of hospitals. Of 16 students who spoke with *Science*, some believed that U.S. hospitals had already contracted with AUC for clinical studies, which are the last 2 years of a medical education. One student said that a friend was already doing his clinical through AUC, but he would not say where lest "the establishment medical community" find out and pressure the hospital to cut ties with AUC. To Tien, however, the hospital issue seemed quite clear. At Montserrat, he told *Science*, there are arrangements for 50 students, and on the neighboring island of Antigua some more students are expected to be able to do clinical studies. He said, however, that he did not have "finalized contracts" with hospitals for clinical studies in the United States. "We are still planning everything on the clinicals," he said. "We still have three semesters to go." In 2 years, when AUC's eight classes are full, Tien will have to come up with clinical slots for some 400 students.

The way Tien tells it, his one-man medical school came into being because his 23-year-old son, Yife, couldn't get into a U.S. school. In 1976, Yife graduated from the U of C with a 3.2 grade point average, and, after applying "to more than 40" medical schools, found the doors to all of them closed. "Our family was very depressed," Tien told *Science*, "because we all knew how badly he wanted to become a doctor." Tien, who came to the United States from Taiwan, looked into schools there. But after the family went for a visit, Yife decided it was too far from home. They also looked into Mexican schools, but Yife did not want to serve the mandatory year of service in a rural clinic. The final choice was the Universidad Central Del Este in the Dominican Republic. After a crash course in Spanish, Yife enrolled.

It was a bust. "Conditions were very bad," Tien said. "The school had no

standards." And Yife learned that students often had to bribe instructors to get a passing grade. Tien went to visit the school and to see for himself what was going on. "I asked the American students why they chose this school. Their answer was always the same: 'We have no choice. We are desperate.'"

"I was determined right then to start a very, very, high-quality foreign medical school with instruction in English. I am an educator, and my goal is to serve people."

While remaining the full-time president of Belmont Technical College, Tien put his dream down on paper, writing a seven-page "Proposal for the establishment of a private medical school," a document on file at the Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas in Cincinnati, Ohio. In it, Tien noted that "due to the tremendous demand for medical education . . . the potential for success of this Medical School is virtually unlimited." On a tri-semester system, he went on, "a maximum capacity of 1800 students should be reached within 3 years." Simple arithmetic reveals that on tuition alone, Tien could expect at that point to bring in \$13.5 million each year, although enrollment thus far has fallen considerably short. In September, however, when asked by a reporter about all the cash he was taking in, Tien said: "Money means nothing to me. This is my life, to have a challenge, to make a contribution. . . . I know how to make it work. The school will be very, very, very successful."

After a search through the Caribbean, Tien hit upon the island of Montserrat, a self-governing British colony in the British West Indies, about 1100 miles from Miami. It is touted in a four-color brochure that AUC now hands out to prospective students as "The Holiday Isle with the Old-Fashion Style." It has a population of about 12,300.

On 30 January 1978 Tien agreed on a "package of concessions" with the Chief Minister's office in Montserrat, according to court documents. They included duty-free importation of all materials, a 15-year tax holiday for the school, and the use of an old hospital for temporary classrooms. In February 1978, according to court documents, "I [Tien] contacted personal friends in Taiwan and in various islands of the British West Indies whom I knew to be sympathetic with my proposal to create a new Medical School." Tien said that between \$3 and \$4 million in "written, enforceable pledges" were received to help finance construction.

On 7 March 1978, Tien wrote the Chief Minister's office in Montserrat and asked

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## U.S. Entry Getting Tougher for Foreign Doctors

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A newly organized government board has just denied its first appeal—the plea of Boston University Medical School for permission to take on a South African anesthesiologist who flunked the exam required of foreign M.D.'s who want to come to the United States for graduate training.

The Substantial Disruption Waiver Appeal Board, as it is called, is a group made up of State Department, immigration, and federal health officials, which was set up as a 2-year transitional mechanism to provide exemptions, where deemed necessary, to new regulations designed to reduce the number of foreign medical graduates (FMG's) coming to the United States. The board decided that Boston University's not getting its anesthesiologist would not cause a substantial enough disruption of its services to warrant waiving the exam.

The new policy on FMG's was laid down in 1976 when Congress passed its comprehensive medical manpower bill, the Health Professions Educational Assistance Act. The law declares that this country no longer suffers a shortage of physicians and that therefore foreign medical personnel should get no more preference under immigration law. Ensuing regulations require that foreign doctors take the same test American medical graduates have to pass as well as an English proficiency exam. They also make it very difficult for someone on a temporary training visa to switch to permanent immigrant status. The aim of the policy is to reduce the influx of FMG's by 60 percent, from about 7500 to 2500 a year.

The impact of this change is yet to be fully assessed, although there have been some cries of alarm from big city hospitals where FMG's tend to be concentrated. According to government statistics, most FMG's in the Northeast and Midwest and they occupy, on average, 30 percent of the positions in nine disciplines: anesthesiology, child psychiatry, general practice, nuclear medicine, occupational medicine, pathology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, psychiatry, and therapeutic radiology.

A spokesman at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare says worries over our transition to minimal foreign participation in the health delivery system may be overstated in view of the fact that only one case has come before the appeals board. But Boston University anesthesiology head Frederick Hehre, who is still trying to figure out how to get the South African on board (she is now in this country on her husband's visa), says the ultimate result may be pressure to devote more teaching time in medical schools to fields where FMG's are heavily represented. Anesthesiology, he says, is a specialty chosen by only 2 percent of this country's medical school graduates, and that is not nearly enough to meet the country's needs.

## Conservatives Troubled About Course of OTA

For a little office (\$11 million annual budget) with no vested decision-making authority, the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) has seen a lot of trouble. It has been around for almost 7 years now and it seems the shake-down cruise is not yet over.

A year ago Russell Peterson took the helm of a shaky outfit that was reeling from accusations that it had been politicized by board chairman Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and whose sense of identity was vague under its first director Emilio Q. Daddario.

Concern has been expressed about cost overruns on various OTA projects and Peterson's expansionist tendencies in the way of renting new office space and procuring new personnel in a time of budgetary austerity. There has also been grumbling about the world-encompassing "priorities list" first issued by OTA last September, about which some board members feel they were not properly consulted and whose content they feel strays from pressing legislative concerns.

Outward signs of discontent have been a letter from board member Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.) asking Peterson for detailed answers to a list of

questions relating mostly to OTA's handling of its money. Then on 31 January, the day of the first board meeting of the year, board member Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) issued a sharp press release (which was not sent to Peterson) complaining about cost overruns and "a disturbing pattern of ignoring congressional oversight and service."

The money matters seem to be on the way to being sorted out (the cost overruns, it appears, were for projects started before Peterson came, and he is now trying to clear the table of projects that have been running over their allotted spans). But according to several congressional staffers there is still some disgruntlement with the Peterson modus operandi and his priorities list, which they fear is going to take precedence over the needs of the committees OTA is supposed to be serving. The conservatives on the board tend to think OTA's focus should be on specific, technical issues and they are not swept away by Peterson's rhetoric about the need to take global "holistic" approaches to everything. "The list does not reflect current legislative needs," says one aide curtly. "The priorities list offended a lot of people," says another, who opined that Peterson seemed to be trying to "create a sort of Brookings Institution in the Congress."

Peterson himself says OTA is in great shape. He admits some people may be "teed off" at him—"as you probably know I've cleaned out a few people over the last year"—and acknowledges his style is quite a change from Daddario's. "I'm taking a strong, positive position on this priority list. They haven't seen that before. I am not a member of the board but I'm behaving like a member of the board." He says the priorities list has been received with great enthusiasm by the board and dismisses fears that committee requests may be short-changed—"We don't get many requests from committees and we haven't turned any down." He attributes the actions of Hollings and Hatch to an unsigned letter sent to some board members by a disgruntled OTA staffer that described allegedly irresponsible handling of money and took potshots at the "imperial splendor" of Peterson's lifestyle at OTA.

Most observers would probably say that OTA is in better condition than it

ever has been. But given its conflict-riddled history, it is doubtful that the future is entirely serene.

## Bioethical Reference

The *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, the first of its kind, has recently been published by Georgetown University, the culmination of a 6-year project at the Joseph and Rose Kennedy Institute for the Study of Reproduction and Bioethics.

The four-volume work, covering everything "from abortion to zygote banking," was masterminded and edited by Warren Reich, professor of bioethics at the university's medical school.

The encyclopedia takes a broad approach to bioethics, attempting to put the subject in the context of history as well as other disciplines. There are general articles on ethics and on the ethical structures of eight religions. In addition to discussions of all the burning bioethical issues of the day, there are articles on food policy, environmental ethics, and population ethics.

The encyclopedia is evidently filling a gap that even its creators did not anticipate. The publisher projected a sale of 8300 copies in the first 5 years, but the first printing of 5600 was sold out before publication and another printing of 6000 is now in the works. The set sells for \$200.

Although the encyclopedia has a few philosophical-sounding headings—such as "obligation and supererogation"—Reich says the content is basically aimed at the sophomore level college student, which is about the level of knowledge most professionals possess outside their specialty.

Reich says enormous interest in the encyclopedia has been expressed by public libraries and, the biggest surprise, high schools, where students are using it as a reference in many areas of current affairs. "High schools have needed this for years," he says.

Reich is already working on a supplement to update and expand some areas; by and large he feels the focus of the encyclopedia has been kept to fundamental issues that have little likelihood of going out of date.

Constance Holden