AAAS Protests More Cuts for NSF Science Education

Rumors of a further cut of $40 million in science education funds for the National Science Foundation on top of the $47 million reduction already scheduled has brought protests from the scientific community including a telegram to President Reagan from AAAS president D. Allan Bromley.

The new reductions would bring the total cuts proposed to $87 million and leave only about $25 million of science education funds in the budget. NSF staff have been instructed not to comment on proposed budget cuts, but sources on Capitol Hill confirm that the new $40 million chop is in the Administration's agenda for action.

"I remind you that science education programs already have received disproportionate reductions," Bromley's wire said. "To expect scientific and technological progress while abandoning efforts at improving science and engineering teaching in our schools is illogical and a disservice to the Nation's interests. The United States already lags dramatically behind the Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc, Japan, and Germany in science and mathematics education. Industrial and military requirements must draw upon adequately educated manpower. I urge you in the strongest terms to recognize the strategic priority of science education in your budget. . . ."

Reagan in public statements has been saying he will work for enactment of his proposed cuts as a package.—***John Walsh***

First Course for Genetic Engineering Technicians

A first-of-its-kind program to train biochemical engineers for the burgeoning recombinant DNA industry will be established this fall at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). The certificate program in applied molecular biology will be a supplement to an undergraduate major in biology and will probably be upgraded to a master's program as soon as permission can be obtained from the Maryland State Board of Higher Education. The program is being established in cooperation with Genex Corporation and Bethesda Research Laboratories, Inc. (BRL), two genetic engineering companies located near the UMBC campus.

The genesis of the new program, says its head, Richard Wolf, was the realization that most of the techniques for recombinant DNA research are already in place, so that specific projects can be carried out by technicians. The heart of the new program will be a four-afternoon-per-week laboratory to give the students "hands-on" experience with genetic engineering techniques. BRL will provide most of the reagents used in the laboratory, while Genex will help design the experiments and help solve any scientific problems that arise. Both companies will provide scholarships and seminar series to support the program, and several scientists from both companies will have adjunct appointments at the university. If the program does become one leading to a master's degree, internships at one of the two companies may take the place of a conventional thesis, but there is no requirement that graduates of the course accept employment at either company or that the companies offer employment. —***Thomas H. Maugh II***

NSF Moving to Found Math Institute × 2

Since 1976, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has been considering the idea of establishing a mathematics institute—a place where eminent senior mathematicians, younger faculty members, and postdoctoral fellows could go to concentrate on research for periods of several months to perhaps 1½ years. It now seems extremely likely that the mathematics section of the NSF will ask the National Science Board to approve funds for not one but two mathematics institutes—one at the University of Minnesota and one at the University of California at Berkeley.

The idea of an institute has its supporters, but it also has drawn vociferous criticism from many members of the mathematics community who claim it would be elitist and would draw from the very limited funds now used to support mathematics research in universities (*Science*, 3 August 1979).

The mathematics section of the NSF has nonetheless decided to forge ahead with the institute proposals. The University of Minnesota institute, which will be directed by University of Minnesota mathematicians Hans Weinberger and George Sell, will emphasize applied mathematics. "Our proposal is to feed applications to pure mathematicians," says Weinberger. Six to ten mathematicians in pure and applied areas would work together in offices on a floor of the mathematics building at the university. The cost would be about $800,000 for the first year. Says Weinberger, "If the National Science Board approves—and that's a big if—then Minnesota has an institute."

The second institute is likely to be at the University of California at Berkeley, where it will be directed by Shiing S. Chern and Calvin Moore. The Berkeley institute will be larger than the one at Minnesota—costing about $1.5 million the first year and including nearly 50 scholars. According to Moore, the NSF said it was favorably impressed by Berkeley's plans to cover broad areas of mathematics, including applied mathematics. Berkeley, however, has a space problem. It is trying to find a facility close to the campus to house the institute. "If we can get the facility, then we have been told that the mathematics section [of the NSF] will go to the Science Board with our proposal," says Moore.

Alvin Thaler, acting program director for special projects at the NSF, will confirm only that "some institute proposals are being very seriously considered."—***Gina Bari Kolata***

Hard Times, Hard Choices for Michigan Universities

Public higher education in Michigan is bracing for bigger trouble financially. Budgets are already squeezed in a state whose economy depends on the ailing auto industry. Now state universities and colleges must look ahead to sharing the impact of expected reductions in federal funds going to the state. With contingency planning in progress, university officials are con-

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sidering major cuts in programs and personnel; this would include tenured faculty.

Michigan State University's (MSU) trustees last month declared a state of financial emergency which clears the way administratively for cutbacks. University of Michigan officials earlier indicated that a "reduction in force" of 520 of its 14,800 employees appeared necessary.

Just how tight funding will be is uncertain. The state legislature is likely to vote higher education appropriations for next year that would just about keep pace with inflation. However, there is widespread skepticism that these increases will survive. Sagging tax revenues and rising costs of state aid programs resulting from the travails of the auto industry could put unprojected pressures on the state budget. And Reagan Administration economies are expected to reduce federal money flowing to the states. Michigan Governor William G. Milliken would then have the task of trimming expenditures to fit the funds available. Inevitably, this would translate into reduced funding for higher education.

Midcourse budget corrections are not new to higher education in Michigan. State funds for the current year were not voted until well after the academic year began, and then universities had to adapt to a budget about 5 percent below that of the preceding year's.

Retrenchment, in fact, has become a way of life for Michigan higher education since the early 1970's. An MSU official says his university has not had an increase in state funds above inflation for a decade.

Prompted by financial hard times, the state's three biggest universities—Michigan, MSU, and Wayne State—are all at varying stages of institutional reviews. MSU, a Big Ten behemoth with 46,000 students, is facing a $30-million shortfall in its $450-million operating budget. These reviews are aimed not simply at making ends meet, but at "downsizing" the universities—an auto industry term meaning to cut size while retaining quality—to meet the economic and demographic realities of the times. Meanwhile, the universities are keeping one eye on Washington and waiting, so to speak, for the other ax to drop.

—John Walsh

Denver Attorney Nominated to Head EPA

President Reagan has nominated Anne Gorsuch, a corporate attorney and former Colorado state legislator, to be administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Gorsuch, 38, now works for Mountain Bell, the Denver telephone company, and specializes in equipment leasing, antitrust research, and labor disputes.

Her only previous contact with environmental issues came as a member of energy, transportation, and state affairs committees in the Colorado legislature, where she served from 1976 to 1980. There, she was frequently at odds with environmentalists. In particular, she was instrumental in stopping state participation in EPA's hazardous waste program.

The Colorado Open Space Council gave her successive vote ratings of poor, poor, good, and average. Heidi Schmidt, the group's executive director, says "Gorsuch does not have the depth of experience needed." Dan Luecke, director of the Environmental Defense Fund's Denver office, called Gorsuch "an unfortunate choice. She fails to see a legitimate role for the government in environmental protection." Neither group plans to testify against the nomination, primarily because the chance of blocking approval is slim. An aide to Senator Robert Stafford (R–Vt.), chairman of the committee that will review the nomination, says that Stafford believes she is "bright enough to overcome her lack of administrative experience."

A self-described conservative, Gorsuch's nomination was reportedly urged by James Watt, Senator William Armstrong (R–Colo.), and brewer Joseph Coors. She is said to have won out over several competitors largely by keeping a low profile.

Gorsuch graduated from law school at the University of Colorado at age 22, and became a Fulbright scholar in India. She first worked for a bank and then in the Denver district attorney's office, where she supervised a staff of nine. She also served as a hearing officer for the local real estate commission and state boards of cosmetology, optometric examiners, professional nursing, and veterinary medicine.

The nominee for deputy administrator at EPA is John Hernandez, an engineering professor at New Mexico State University.***—R. Jeffrey Smith***

Reagan May Transfer CEQ out of White House

The Reagan Administration is considering dismantling the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and transferring its functions to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under a plan still being debated as *Science* went to press.

A final decision is expected before 10 March, when the White House must transmit the CEQ budget to Capitol Hill. White House aides are saying that something less than the current $3.2 million appropriation will be sought.

The White House cannot kill the council outright, but it can transfer its functions to EPA or to the Interior Department unless Congress objects.

The immediate reason for the transfer is apparently that CEQ, as an advisory and coordinating body with imperfectly defined responsibilities, does not fit neatly into the expected blueprint for White House decision-making, a view also shared by President Carter at the beginning of his Administration. One CEQ staffer notes that "We're a thorn in the side of the people trying to make a perfectly ordered White House structure work." An additional reason might be the antipathy of some Reagan advisers to the environmental viewpoint at CEQ, no doubt enhanced by the use of the council as a forum for attacking Reagan in the waning days of the presidential campaign. CEQ, under Carter, was considered a source of significant support for policies on nuclear proliferation, nuclear waste, and solar power—policies that Reagan has already disavowed.

Environmental groups can safely be expected to fight the transfer if Reagan goes ahead. Former CEQ chairman Gus Speth, now with the Conservation Foundation, says that "the real importance of that institution is its place in the executive office. Any transfer will precipitate a costly battle for the Administration."

—R. Jeffrey Smith