tal in St. Louis told the AAMC panel that "The medical school curriculum has degenerated into a four-year 'peepshow.' " Moreover, the quality of teaching is not enhanced by the low status it holds in academic medicine where research, the education of graduate students, and the generation of income all confer higher prestige.

The relationship of faculty to students—or lack of relationship—that is often missing in the basic medical sciences is also inadequate on the clinical side, the AAMC said, making such seemingly obvious recommendations on the subject as this: "Those responsible for the clinical education of medical students should have adequate preparation and the necessary time to guide and supervise medical students during their clinical clerkships." Urging a return to the days when a mentor relationship was common, the panel declared that "The practice of having a large number of faculty members, each of whom spends a relatively short period of time with medical students, should be examined critically and probably abandoned."

The AAMC represents all 127 U.S. medical schools as well as 327 teaching hospitals and its policy councils carry considerable weight. The panel's statement that it does not "choose to invoke the hysterical hyperbole of crisis," is not entirely consistent with the tone of its report. Anyone reading "Physicians for the Twenty-First Century" could reasonably say that medical education is, indeed, in a state of crisis and that the likelihood of producing physicians who both are technically competent *and* compassionate is slim.

But historical perspective provides some reassurance. Although the issues being raised are valid—and serious—they are not new. Medical educators, it seems, have deplored the state of medical education for decades. Fear that students are being taught too many facts at the expense of understanding has been the focus of concern right along. One of the best examples comes from the AAMC itself which published a study in 1932 that sounds remarkably like this year's report.

An AAMC summary of its 1932 study shows the extent to which "Physicians for the Twenty-First Century" is an echo of the past. A plea that medical students be taught to think rather than memorize is made with a call that medical education be freed from its "present rigidity and uniformity." It criticized the emphasis that was placed on teaching students with an eye to passing multiple-choice examinations and observed that good doctors should have a broad liberal arts education in college, not one narrowly confined to premed science courses. The 1932 study deplored "cookbook" methods of teaching and opined that students are required to spend too many hours in courses where they are stuffed with "too many details, often of temporary, miscellaneous, and inconsequential value. . . . "

Going back a little further, these same issues were cogently presented in 1927 in an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*† by Francis Weld Peabody, one of the stellar Harvard physicians of the era. Said Peabody, whose article was drawn from a lecture he gave every year to medical students, "The most common criticism made at present by older practitioners is that younger graduates have been taught a great deal about the mechanisms of disease, but very little about the practice of medicine—or, to put it more bluntly, they are too 'scientific' and do not know how to take care of patients."

Peabody raised a telling point when he said, "One is, of course, somewhat tempted to question how completely fitted for his life work the practitioner of the older generation was when he first entered on it, and how much the haze of time has led him to confuse what he learned in the school of medicine with what he acquired in the harder school of experience." Although everyone wants humane and caring physicians, no one wants them uninformed, so medical school is for learning medicine. "To begin with," Peabody declared, "the fact must be accepted that one cannot expect to become a skillful practitioner of medicine in the 4 or 5 years alloted to the medical curriculum. Medicine is not a trade to be learned but a profession to be entered."

Where then does that leave us? Perhaps with nothing as much as the observation that the problems are inherent to the very nature of medical education and just as worth worrying about now as they were half a century ago.

Peabody himself predicted the pattern of reexamination that is now taking place and called it "fortunate" that systems of education are "constantly under the fire of general criticism" from one source or another. If criticism is not coming from the outside, "the medical profession itself may be counted on to stir-up the stagnant pool and cleanse it of its sedimentary deposit." Just so.

—**Barbara J. Culliton**

†*JAMA*, 19 March 1927. Reprinted in *Connecticut Medicine*, January 1968, vol. 32 (No. 1).

Big Boost for AID Population Budget

Congress has passed an emergency spending bill that includes $290 million for overseas population assistance in the next fiscal year. This is the largest single increase the Agency for International Development has had for its population program—$50 million over last year, and $40 million over the presidential request.

So far, it appears that a crisis in U.S. support of population programs, threatened by the Administration's tough new antiabortion stance, has been avoided. (Government lawyers are still puzzling over the meaning of the new policy.) Continuing American support for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities has been assured by an earmarking provision, and the accompanying resolution asserts that "no funds shall be denied" to nongovernmental organizations whose activities are conducted in accordance with U.S. laws. In other words, there is no prohibition on funds to organizations that sponsor family planning programs that include abortion services.

Legislators who oppose abortion have apparently been satisfied by formal reiterations of existing U.S. policy—that is, no U.S. money will go for abortion services, and the policy will be enforced by ensuring that American contributions to international agencies are kept in separate accounts.—**Constance Holden**

Ohio State Offers to Buy Back Its Telescope

In an effort to prevent its radio telescope from being dismantled to make way for a golf course, Ohio State University has offered $54,000 to buy the land on which the instrument stands. The offer is the latest move in a struggle to save the telescope that began in late 1982, when Ohio State's neighboring seat of higher learning, Ohio Wesleyan University, abruptly sold the land to a country club as part of a large real estate deal. Ohio Wesleyan owned the land and operated the instrument jointly with Ohio State.

The sale apparently caught Ohio State officials by surprise and a hue and cry ensued when the new owners said they wanted the telescope dismantled and removed to expand a golf course (*Science*, 18 February 1983, p. 821). A committee, headed by local businessman George Foster, was organized to help preserve the telescope and gained a reprieve by negotiating short-term leases.

According to Larry Thompson, an assistant to Ohio State president Edward Jennings, the university decided to step in with an offer to buy the land when Foster's committee failed to reach agreement with the new owners on a more permanent solution. The university is offering to buy 24 acres—about 10 percent of the total tract sold by Ohio Wesleyan—that includes the telescope and a buffer zone around it. The university is willing to let the new owners use 14 of those acres to expand their golf course.

Thompson says he anticipates that the offer will be accepted.

—COLIN NORMAN

Leadership Suffering on Many College Campuses

"If any man wishes to be humbled and mortified, let him become President of Harvard College." The deathbed sentiment of Edward Holyoke, eleventh president of Harvard, is shared by all too many college presidents today, according to a new report directed by former University of California president Clark Kerr.

Over the past 20 years the groves of academe have turned into thickets for college and university presidents, who have to deal with increasing bureaucratization, government intrusion, faculty unionization, student participation in decision-making, and constant fund raising. Presidents no longer preside over relatively homogeneous and autonomous communities but fractionated ones where their power and prestige have sharply declined.

"Our colleges and universities are in desperate need of leadership," says the report, entitled *Presidents make a Difference*, which was sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

But the job has been getting less attractive as presidents devote ever more time to politics and money matters at the expense of substantive academic questions and long-term planning. The demands of the job put stress on family life, particularly on spouses who resist traditional presidential spouse roles. The job is a lonely one. "Many presidents are, and even must be, stoics," says the report.

The Commission on Strengthening Presidential Leadership interviewed almost 900 persons, mostly current and former presidents and spouses, for the study. Generally, the happiest with their jobs were the presidents of 4-year (as opposed to 2-year) institutions; private ones, religiously oriented ones, and ones that were academically elite.

About half were satisfied with their jobs, and one-fourth were dissatisfied—"some even in despair." Up to one-third were contemplating leaving during any given 2-year period, which matches the annual 15 percent turnover rate.

Search boards are reporting discouraging numbers of refusals of presidencies by competent people, many of whom are electing to deploy their skills in private industry. Few of the available presidential candidates are fully qualified.

The commission claims, however, that these unfortunate circumstances can be turned around, and most of the report is given over to advice to schools on procedures and organizational changes to make the job more attractive and effective. For example, it says the president should be a member of the board and should be chief academic officer in fact as well as name. The president should not have primary responsibility for functions outside his or her expertise, such as negotiating with the faculty union.

The commission warns that the practice of formal presidential reviews, which became common in the late 1960's, should be used sparingly as they may inhibit flexibility of action, be invasive, and unnecessarily catalyze political opposition.

If the report is any evidence, the treatment of presidents has gotten increasingly uncivilized. Colleges and universities "must demonstrate that they can treat their leaders humanely and respectfully," it says. It offers guidance on how to be tactful in a presidential search and supportive in the facilitation of presidential arrivals and exits.

The report also has advice for state and local governments, which have authority over half the country's campuses. It says, among other things, that they should allow the schools more control over their money by abandoning line-item budgeting, and should eliminate sunshine laws which make it difficult to get and keep good presidents.

The final chapter of the report contains some guidelines for picking a president—is this an individual, for example, "willing to live in the midst of ambiguity and conflict?" And, a "very basic rule: Individuals who believe they absolutely must be university presidents probably should not hold that position. . . ."

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Comings and Goings

Edward N. Brandt, the top health official in the Department of Health and Human Services, has resigned, effective 31 December, to become chancellor of the University of Maryland at Baltimore. As assistant secretary for health, Brandt oversees the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control.

Stanford University has a new dean of its school of medicine. He is **David Korn**, chairman of the Department of Pathology since 1968 and recently named chairman of the National Cancer Advisory Board. He succeeds Dominick Purpura, who resigned in June and subsequently became dean of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Three more vacancies on the National Science Board have been filled by the Reagan Administration. The new members are **Simon Ramo**, cofounder and director of TRW, Inc., and a veteran of numerous government advisory committees; **June Lindstedt-Siva**, manager for environmental sciences at Atlantic Richfield Company; and **Annelise G. Anderson**, an economist and senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. Both Ramo and Anderson worked on the Reagan-Bush transition team. There are five vacancies left on the board.