Baltimore to Succeed Lederberg?

Nobel laureate Joshua Lederberg (1958) is set to retire as president of Rockefeller University in January. Nobel laureate David Baltimore (1975) is a prime candidate for the job.

But a potent combination of academic and national politics threatens the succession.

As word of Baltimore's likely appointment spread through the academic world last week, the faculty at Rockefeller began voicing objections on two counts: first, that their own faculty search committee had not been fully consulted by the university trustees, with whom the presidential decision ultimately rests. In fact, members of the faculty committee themselves learned from the rumor mill that the trustees were planning to select Baltimore for the job.

The faculty's second concern is that Baltimore's much publicized run-in with Congressman John Dingell (D–MI) over allegations of fraud in research make him a potential liability to Rockefeller even though the allegations have yet to be proved.

Rockefeller trustees, headed by William O. Baker, retired chairman of the board of Bell labs, are well aware of the publicity Baltimore has received as a result of charges that data in a paper he coauthored do not support the paper's conclusions. (Baltimore, himself, has not been accused of misconduct but, as the paper's most prominent author, he has taken it upon himself to defend the research.) In a telephone interview with *Science*, Baker declined to comment on Baltimore as a candidate for the Rockefeller presidency, but he did say that he and other trustees firmly believe that it is wrong to disqualify any person who has had a long and distinguished career just because of one messy incident.

The search for a successor to Lederberg, who faces mandatory retirement as he reaches his 65th birthday, has been conducted by the trustees and by a faculty search committee headed by Nobel laureate Torsten Wiesel (1981). Members of each group privately confirm that the two have not worked together as collaboratively as some would have liked, leaving the small Rockefeller faculty feeling underrepresented.

Things might not have grown so tense had the man who apparently was at the top of the list said "Yes." But Nobel laureate Joseph Goldstein (1985), who is still very active in the lab at the University of Texas at Dallas, was not ready to give up his work on the molecular genetics of blood lipids.

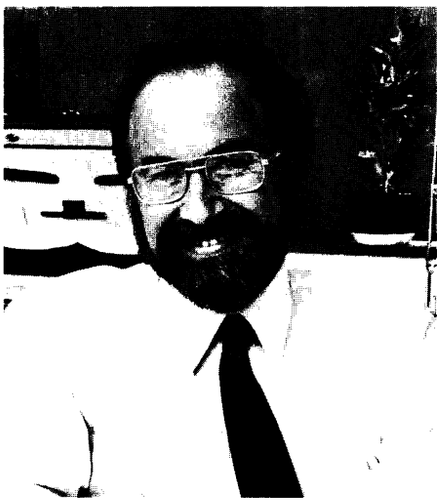
Baltimore, director of the Whitehead Institute at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, shared the Nobel with Howard M. Temin for his discovery of the enzyme reverse transcriptase, a vital chemical in the biotechnology revolution. His scientific stature is enhanced by his demonstrated ability to build a strong research institution. The Whitehead, which began in 1984 with $100 million from entrepreneur Edwin C. (Jack) Whitehead, is now one of the country's leading centers for molecular biology.

But Baltimore's credentials are inevitably colored by his encounter with Congress. And the fact that the case remains unresolved nearly 4 years after allegations were first raised doesn't make things any better.

Thus far, the charges, which involve possible data mishandling by Thereza Imanishi-Kari of Tufts University, have been looked into by two faculty committees, an NIH panel, Dingell's staff, and, at Dingell's request, the U.S. Secret Service (*Science*, 12 May, p. 643).

At congressional hearings before Dingell last spring, James B. Wyngaarden, then director of the National Institutes of Health, promised that the NIH, having conducted one investigation of the paper Baltimore coauthored with Imanishi-Kari, would conduct a second, definitive "full audit" of every piece of data NIH and Dingell committee investigators can get their hands on.

That was in May. There was a sense of urgency about it. But now, 5 months later, the best information *Science* can get from



Baltimore: *Left in limbo by NIH.*

NIH's "fraud" office is that no one is sure when the audit, which has not begun, will be complete. The original NIH review was conducted by a three-member panel of expert immunologists. Will those three participate in the NIH's full audit? "As far as I know," said an NIH official. After Wyngaarden's May commitment to Dingell to do a full audit, there was talk of naming a couple more people to the NIH panel. Have they been named? NIH is still "working on it."

Meanwhile, the case remains in limbo.

A Whitehead Institute spokesman says only that "Dr. Baltimore has been approached by Rockefeller and other institutions, but nothing has been decided."

As *Science* goes to press, the trustees have not formally offered the Rockefeller presidency to anyone.

■ BARBARA J. CULLITON

Deficit Woes Cloud Research Funding

With no appropriations bills approved, and the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings fiscal chainsaw bearing down, federal research agencies are entering the new fiscal year in a state of budgetary uncertainty. Fiscal year 1990 officially begins on 1 October, but as *Science* went to press, not a single spending bill had been signed into law. Worse yet, unless Congress can find a way to cover a projected $16-billion budget overrun, automatic, across-the-board cuts will have to be imposed. University researchers and government scientists who have been counting on increased federal funding therefore may have to put their plans on ice for a while.

Budgets for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are still grinding their way through Congress. The only appropriations bill to emerge so far is the one covering DOE; it is currently awaiting the President's signature. Here is a rundown of congressional action so far on key agency budgets.

■ Appropriations bills approved separately by the House and Senate would boost NIH's budget for competitive, extramural research project grants (excluding AIDS) to $4 billion, up from $3.8 billion in 1989. But outlays for new competitive research grants may decline slightly from $995 million to $973 million. The AIDS research program would get the lion's share of NIH's overall budget increase, climbing from $604 million to $750 million. These figures could be affected slightly when differences in the House appropriation of $7.680 billion for the total NIH budget is reconciled with the Senate appropriation of $7.713 billion.

■ The House has approved a budget bill for NSF, and a companion measure is wending its way through the Senate. NSF's overall budget is expected to come in at about

$2.08 billion compared to a 1989 allocation of $1.88 billion. The agency's $1.58-billion research spending account would rise by 6 to 8% in 1990, depending on how differences in House and Senate bills are resolved. This is about half of the 14% increase requested by the Administration. In contrast, Congress is again set to put more money into NSF's science education programs than the Administration proposed. The total is expected to be between $200 million and $210 million; $190 million was requested.

■ NASA's budget is likely to jump to about $12.3 billion, compared to $10.9 billion in 1989. The House Appropriations Committee provided $12.26 billion, while its Senate counterpart approved spending of $12.34 billion. In addition, the Senate bill would transfer $217 million from the Department of Defense to finance shuttle flights required by the Air Force. It appears that the Senate bill would funnel most of these funds to the Space Station, which would receive $2.05 billion, $200 million more than the House approved.

■ Under the bill now on President Bush's desk, the budget for DOE's Office of Energy Research would climb to $2.44 billion from $2.17 billion. A good portion of this increase, $125 million, goes to the Superconducting Super Collider (total project funding is $225 million).

At this time, however, no one knows if any of these budget numbers for research will stick. Because Congress has been unable to adopt a final budget by 1 October, it is expected to pass a short-term spending bill, which will allow government agencies to operate at 1989 levels until Congress acts on appropriations bills.

The fate of research budgets will hinge on how Congress deals with Gramm-Rudman, which limits the federal budget deficit for 1990 to $100 billion. The Administration estimates that the deficit will be $16 billion over the mark, but the law provides a $10-billion margin of error. So Congress must somehow shave the deficit by $6 billion, and if it fails to do so by 15 October, "sequestration" is triggered. Under this process, across-the-board cuts would be imposed on all federal programs to bring the projected deficit down to $100 million.

Congressional aides say that sequestration may well occur for a short period, but it is likely that Congress will override the mechanism once budget problems are reconciled. Even if sequestration is avoided, budget analysts say 1990 research budgets and other federal programs could face reductions, depending on how Congress and the Administration decide to cut the deficit while at the same time providing an increase for antidrug efforts. ■ MARK CRAWFORD

The Sports Stars of UCSF

Herbert Boyer, who achieved fame and fortune as a co-developer of the technique of gene splicing, is attracting public attention of a different kind these days. He is appearing on posters all over San Francisco dressed in full hockey regalia. "He gave the world a genetic miracle," declares the caption under Boyer's photograph. "For him to play hockey, it's going to take one."

Boyer's new-found notoriety as an unlikely sports star is part of an imaginative effort to raise the public profile of the University of California at San Francisco, where Boyer is a professor of genetics.

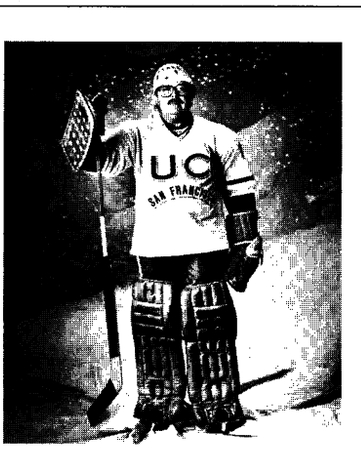
Although it has a world-class research program, UCSF has an image problem. A recent poll revealed that half the people who live in San Francisco don't even know what UCSF is. Tell a taxi driver "UCSF" and you may wind up at the University of San Francisco, a small Catholic school across the park. And when the campus does make local news, it is not always good news: Neighborhood activists who oppose UCSF's expansion have spread scary rumors about its use of toxic chemicals and radioactivity. So, to mark its 125th anniversary, UCSF has launched a program of public science and health education to improve its community relations, and an advertising blitz to raise its name recognition and stir civic pride.

In a brainstorming session with members of the San Francisco advertising agency Goodby, Berlin & Silverstein, UCSF chancellor Julius Krevans complained: "If we had a football team, then people would know about us." The campaign's theme was born. In television ads and billboards posted in bus stops, prominent UCSF researchers and clinicians pose in sports uniforms while a narrator or written text extols their accomplishments.

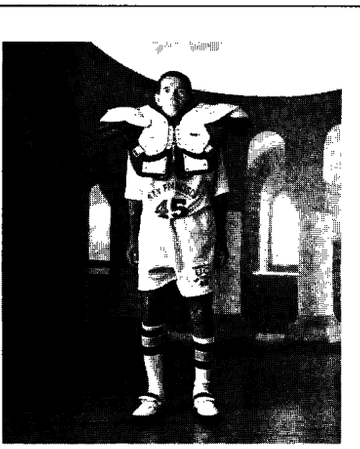
"Take Dr. Charles Wilson here—the renowned brain surgeon who discovered the drug that's used all over the world to treat most malignant brain tumors," says the text on a poster showing knobby-kneed Wilson, dwarfed by a giant set of football shoulder pads. "If we had sports teams made up of remarkable people like him, you'd probably know all about us, right? Yeah, probably not."

In one television ad, C. C. Wang poses as a wobbly hockey goalie desperately dodging pucks, while a narrator tells of his successes fighting parasitic diseases. In another, cancer nurse Carol Viele shrieks and shields her face under a barrage of tennis balls. "UC San Francisco," the ads wryly conclude: "125 years and still no sports."

Krevans hopes the humor will dispel notions that UCSF faculty are arrogant and instead portray them as real people who can laugh at themselves. And how does he respond to those who don't agree? When one clinician called the ads undignified, Krevans says, "I told him to lighten up." ■ MARCIA BARINAGA



Boyer on the ice.



Wilson suits up.