

Briefings

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Anxiety in Academe Over DOD Cuts

As the defense budget starts to shrink, higher education organizations are worried about possible cuts in academic research funded by the Department of Defense (DOD).

The DOD spends only a tiny fraction of its R&D budget on basic research, but it contributes a surprising amount to research at colleges and universities. A recent analysis by the National Science Foundation shows that DOD contributions to the agency's 50 top university recipients have grown steadily in the 1980s, equal to 80% of NSF research support. In the case of the next 100 schools, DOD's support actually exceeds total NSF funding.

There is particular concern about the impact of possible cuts on schools of engineering. While DOD supplies only 8% of total university research funds, it provides 32% of all R&D revenues for engineering on campuses. At some schools, such as Stanford University and the California Institute of Technology, the figure is closer to 50%.

Congress and Animal Rights

The issue of animal rights seems to be heating up in Congress, to judge from the rate at which caucuses are being formed.

Motivated by increasing activism directed against food producers, congressional agriculture supporters have formed the Animal Welfare Caucus to defend the use of animals in agriculture as well as in medical research.

The caucus was created last year by Representative Vin Weber (R-MN), who sits on the appropriations committees

for both agriculture and health. His co-founders are Joseph Early (D-MA), Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Joe Skeen (R-NM), and Charles Stenholm (D-TX).

Stenholm recently introduced legislation establishing criminal penalties for break-ins at livestock facilities as well as research labs. His bill is a House version of a Senate measure, passed on 20 November, making it a federal crime to break into research facilities.

Forces on the other side are also getting mobilized: a caucus called Congressional Friends of Animals—chaired by Representatives Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Bob Smith (R-NH)—was recently formed. And there's even talk about a possible "animal rights plank" in the 1990 farm bill.

Deutch Bows Out

John M. Deutch, provost of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who until recently was a leading candidate to replace Paul Gray as its next president, informed his colleagues, on 22 January that he is no longer a contender.

A terse statement from MIT's press office said Deutch will resign as provost on 30 June to allow the next president to choose his own provost. Deutch intends to return to teaching and research and will work on public policy issues.

The news caught most faculty members and students by surprise, and followed by a few weeks Deutch's decision to withdraw from consideration

for another presidency—that of Johns Hopkins University.

Deutch was out of the country and unavailable for comment, but some senior faculty members have speculated that he had been told by MIT's presidential selection committee that he was no longer being seriously considered.

There was considerable faculty and student opposition to Deutch because of his abrasive management style (*Science*, 5 January, p. 25). Nonetheless, he had the support of Gray, who becomes chairman of the MIT Corporation on 1 July. MIT is expected to announce Gray's successor in early March.

Japan Reaches for the Moon

The moon belongs to everyone, but only the Americans and the Soviets have sent spacecraft there—until now. On 24 January, the Japanese launched a compact, 200-kilogram spacecraft known as Muses-A aboard a Nissan M3S-2 booster of their own design.

The spacecraft is currently resting in a highly elliptical Earth orbit while it waits for the moon to move into position for a close encounter on 18 March. The spacecraft will then split into two parts: a little 36-centimeter polyhedron that will go into lunar orbit and a larger drum-shaped spacecraft that will continue in Earth orbit for further lunar swingbys.

Neither craft carries any scientific instruments. The exercise is primarily intended as an engineering practice session for Japan's Geotail mission, part of an international project involving an armada of spacecraft that will probe Earth's magnetosphere starting in 1992.

But the Japanese want to launch future lunar probes with instrumentation and they may be harboring larger ambitions. Shimizu Corporation, the world's largest construction company, has assigned 25 engineers to develop concepts for a human-occupied lunar base.

Uptown Goes Down

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. has canceled plans to target a new brand of cigarettes at black smokers after being roundly scolded by the secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis Sullivan.

The cigarette, called Uptown, is mentholated to cater to the tastes of black smokers (75% of whom prefer menthol, compared to 23% of whites). Packaged in black and gold, it was to be test-marketed in Philadelphia starting in early February.

But then Sullivan jumped on Reynolds in a speech to a group of medical students at the University of Pennsylvania. Although federal health officials are always preaching about smoking, Sullivan may be the first to attack a company or brand by name.

He excoriated Reynolds for a "slick and sinister advertising" campaign he said was "cynically and deliberately targeted toward black Americans." He also wrote the company urging it to cancel the campaign.

Reynolds did so the following day. "We regret that a small coalition of antismoking zealots apparently believes that black smokers are somehow different from others who choose to smoke,"

said a Reynolds executive, calling it "a loss of choice for black smokers and a further erosion of the free enterprise system."

Blacks smoke more than whites and are more heavily afflicted by smoking-related disease. Black males are the country's heaviest smokers (39% compared with 29% for the general population), and their lung cancer rate is 55% higher than that of white males.

