Fuels Corporation. The corporation also partially funded similar IGCC technology—the Dow Syngas Project, which is in operation at Plaquemine, Lousiana.

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Postdocs at Stanford

Recently, a letter from three postdoctoral fellows at the Stanford University School of Medicine, Clint Makino, Jeffrey Karpen, and Markus Meister (8 June, p. 1176) criticized the Stanford University School of Medicine's policy of classifying postdoctoral fellows as students. I shall not comment on the wisdom of federal policies that tax tuition grants, but I sympathize with the fellows' frustration and concern upon learning that routine waivers of tuition are now to be treated as taxable income.

Stanford University's decision 15 years ago to classify postdoctoral fellows as students, rather than employees, was made after thoughtful deliberation and was intended to ensure equitable and fair treatment of fellows, who are a valued and numerically substantial component of our medical center's community of scholars. In many medical schools, fellows' status and benefits depend totally on their sources of stipendiary support; and being neither faculty, nor students, nor staff, they represent for all practical purposes a largely disenfranchised group of migrant workers. For example, while fellows paid through sponsored research grants might enjoy health benefits comparable to the coverage offered regular employees, others with individual fellowships, whether from American or foreign funding sources, most often are "on their own" in financing health insurance for themselves and their families. Such disparity in access to fundamental benefits is, in our judgment, inequitable and poses substantial potential risk to the affected individuals.

Stanford's decision was made to treat all fellows alike, and I believe they have benefited from the policy in significant ways. There may be some disadvantages to this policy, including fellows' disdain for the very idea of being designated "students"; but on the margin, I believe the benefits significantly outweigh the disadvantages and they should not be dismissed summarily.

My colleagues and I are distressed by the current situation, and we are actively studying the options that might be available for ameliorating the financial burdens on our postdoctoral fellows. As we proceed with this inquiry, we shall be sure to communicate our findings and our conclusions to the involved faculty and fellows.

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Erratum: In the Perspective "The human genome and other initiatives" by Bernard D. Davis and colleagues (27 July, p. 342), several sentences and a number were incorrectly printed. The first two sentences in the third from the last paragraph on page 343 should have read, "Although all the goals of the HGP, except for the complete sequencing of the human genome, are clearly worthwhile, there is concern over its competition with other research for funds at a time of financial stringency, and doubt that its scientific benefits justify its rapid expansion and its organization in the pattern of big science. The broadness of the dissatisfaction is illustrated by the virtual unanimity of the departmental faculty that is endorsing this statement." In the next paragraph, the second sentence should have read, "However, it is not obvious that these activities justify support for the HGP at a level equivalent to over 5% of all other biomedical research."

Erratum: The map accompanying the article "Amazon biodiversity" (News & Comment, 15 June, p. 1305) should have been credited to Conservation International.