plant genes. The big research loser would be the Special Research Grants programs for land-grant universities; it would drop from $72.9 million to $29.7 million. But don't count it out yet: Congress traditionally rides to the program's rescue.

EPA. The Environmental Protection Agency's beleaguered Office of Research and Development (ORD), the agency's main research arm, is scheduled to get a booster shot: a 13% increase, to $382.7 million. And EPA Administrator Carol Browner is hoping to ease the burden on staff scientists by filling 250 new slots with "the best available people." The scientific windfall reflects EPA's favored status. It is in line for an 8% increase, to $7.2 billion. "We hit a home run for the environment," beams Browner.

Commerce. The Advanced Technology Program (ATP)—the Clinton Administration's favorite tool for shifting U.S. industry from a military to a civilian technology base—would get an increase of 150%, to $451 million, after tripling in size in 1994. ATP, which funds joint projects with industry, fuels nearly half of the 18% increase for the entire $4.2 billion department. Its growth reflects the "strategic shift in thinking" about how the federal government spends its research dollars, says Arati Prabhakar, director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which runs ATP.

The next step. Whether or not your research falls in one of the areas favored by the Administration, remember that this budget is just the first shot in a fiscal battle that will occupy Congress for months. The president's proposals will be divided among 13 appropriations subcommittees, each with a fixed amount of money to spend, and the final numbers won't emerge until fall, around the time the 1995 fiscal year begins on 1 October.

–Jeffrey Mervis

With reporting by Christopher Anderson, Eliot Marshall, Lisa Seachrist, and Richard Stone.

FOUNDATIONS

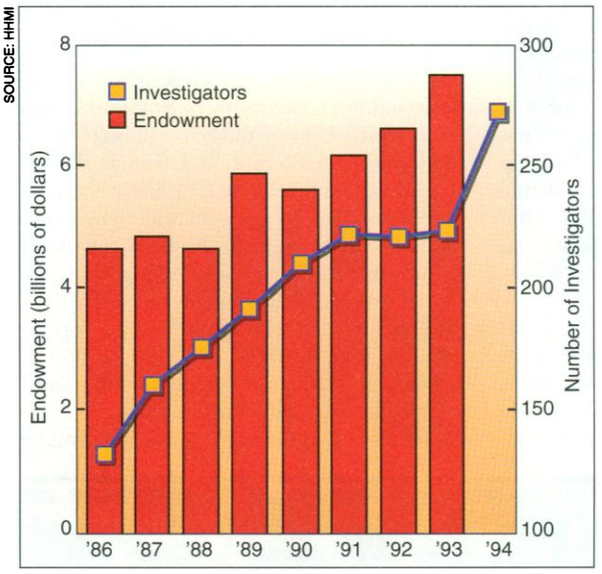
Hughes to Add 49 New Investigators

Even for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI)—the nation's largest private philanthropy, one accustomed to big numbers—1993 was more than just a good year. The institute moved into sumptuous new quarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland, saw its endowment grow by $780 million, and watched its assets climb to a total of $7.8 billion. According to HHMI president Purnell Choppin, this good fortune is now going to be shared with the biomedical community: Choppin announced this week that the institute intends to add 49 investigators to its burgeoning ranks of 225 scientists. It will be HHMI's biggest expansion since it was formally established in 1953.

The new appointees—to include 20 women and six minority scientists—have already been chosen. Their names will be released in the next few weeks as the investigators pin down the often-complex arrangements with their home institutions. HHMI investigators become full-time employees of the institute, receiving a salary and some laboratory support for 3, 5, or 7 years, depending on rank. They continue to run their labs at their home campuses, however, where they hold an academic post.

Some expansion was inevitable given Hughes' record-setting financial performance. Under an agreement with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), HHMI must spend 3.5% of its endowment each year. But Choppin says that HHMI's spending has routinely exceeded this minimum level, and the expansion goes further than IRS requires. This year, the recruitment of new staff includes replacements to fill in for a higher-than-usual turnover in the scientific faculty. A few investigators left after receiving poor reviews—evaluations come at the end of the fixed appointment period—and others departed when they were asked to take on new duties at their home institutions. Choppin points out that HHMI requires investigators to spend 75% of their time on research and to avoid significant paperwork chores given to department chairs and deans. So when investigators get academic promotions, as some did last year, they often give up HHMI funding.

In looking for new investigators, Choppin explains, the institute followed its policy of seeking "highly creative scientists" who are engaged in full-time research—people "who are going to make original contributions in one of our major areas of emphasis." These five areas—intended to embrace most of biomedicine—are cell biology and regulation, genetics, immunology, neuroscience, and structural biology. This year, new appointments are being made in all five categories; Choppin anticipates no shift in overall emphasis. The institute, which also runs a program of grants and fellowships to support young scientists and college biology programs, will be expanding this part of its portfolio, though not as dramatically.



Boom times. The recruitment of 49 new investigators was made possible by a sharp rise in Hughes' endowment.

The recruitment of new investigators began early in 1993, says Choppin. Even before HHMI knew just how good a year it would be, it had decided to make a modest expansion by recruiting five new investigators. Soon, HHMI realized that it could afford to bring in a much larger cadre in 1994 in "one fell swoop" and launched a sort of academic sweepstakes to fill another 44 positions, inviting 200 research institutions to submit two nominees apiece. After receiving 285 entries, HHMI narrowed the semifinalists to 110, then made a final selection of 49. The recruits will join the 2000-strong HHMI staff (including postdocs, technicians, and support staff), which already includes five Nobel laureates and 41 members of the National Academy of Sciences.

The beauty of HHMI funding, says 10-year veteran Randall Reed, a Johns Hopkins University researcher on olfaction, is that "you have great freedom... to move in exciting new directions" without a lot of new paperwork at each turn in the path. Choppin adds that, unlike the government, HHMI does not follow research fads or political mandates. For example, nowhere in the Hughes literature is there any mention of "economic competitiveness" or the need for industrial relevance.

The Hughes program differs from the government's in another way: It is expanding rapidly while the budget of the National Institutes of Health is slated to grow by only 4.7% next year (see page 745). "We are delighted that, at a time when so many exciting opportunities are available, we are able to expand our efforts to pursue basic research," says Choppin, putting the emphasis on "basic."

–Eliot Marshall