

While the budget request does forecast a decline for space science in fiscal years 1996 and 1997, NASA is just now developing specific numbers that will lead to the fiscal year 1996 budget request. In this context, NASA administrator Daniel Goldin has already testified before the House and the Senate authorization subcommittees that NASA recognizes it still has to find between \$200 million and \$300 million in the outyears for a few, modest-sized, new starts in space science.

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National Protein and Nucleic Acid Databases

Protein and nucleic acid databases are vital resources for the biomedical community. As these databases grow and become more widely used, close communication among the scientific communities that contribute to and use them, the government agencies that fund and oversee them, and the database staffs that develop and maintain them becomes increasingly important.

Many of our members contribute to and rely heavily on these databases and we wish to increase our involvement in their operation. As a first step, we will sponsor a meeting from 13 to 14 June to consider how to ensure that the future development of protein and nucleic acid databases serves the needs of the scientific community.

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Smallpox Virus: Better to Store?

Pathogenic properties that appear to be unique to the smallpox virus have made it, and not vaccinia or other viruses, the most deadly virus to have affected mankind. Because of its marked virulence, one cannot rule out the possible benefits that study of the smallpox virus may provide at some future date (Policy Forums, 19 Nov., pp. 1223 and 1225; Letters, 18 Feb., p. 903). At this time, perhaps existing stocks should be subject neither to research nor to extinction, but should remain in storage until future scientists deem what further research may be necessary.

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