

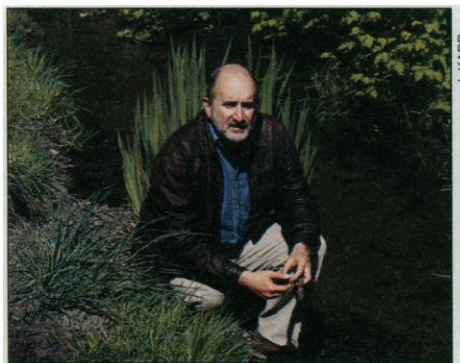
edited by RICHARD STONE

Despite Furor, School To Ax Eco Institute

A dispute over the future of an environmental institute at the University of Washington (UW) appears to be settled, but the tumult on campus continues. Rejecting the advice of a faculty panel, a UW administrator has recommended the university abolish its 23-year-old Institute for Environmental Studies (IES).

As part of a cost-cutting proposal, the UW administration announced last fall that it intended to terminate the budget of IES, a \$700,000-a-year program that enrolls about 1500 undergrads in multidisciplinary classes (*Science*, 11 November 1994, p. 959). Under UW rules, however, the administration first had to convene a faculty review.

But the panel, chaired by UW health services professor Douglas Conrad, did not rubber-stamp



Tough environment. UW has told institute Director James Karr to close up shop.

the closure. In a report last month it said IES "performs a unique and valuable role for the university." Despite personality conflicts between the current IES head—conservation biologist James Karr—and some former institute faculty, the panel said IES "should be preserved."

However, in a decision that has riled many UW professors and

students, Dale Johnson, acting dean of the graduate school, earlier this month recommended IES be terminated on 30 June. Johnson, while praising Karr and the other IES staff, told *Science* his decision was supported in part by the personality conflicts at IES. If the institute were to continue, he said, "we would be bringing all that baggage along. I think it's time we got rid of that."

Several non-IES faculty have appealed the decision to UW President William Gerberding, who will make a final decision next month. Karr doesn't expect an about-face: Gerberding was quoted in the student newspaper last week as saying IES's time "has come and gone."

ESO Agreement

Spurred by a simmering dispute over who owns the mountaintop on which it is building the world's largest telescope, the European Southern Observatory (ESO) signed an agreement with the Chilean government on 18 April reaffirming a treaty that grants ESO the land. The accord is expected to allow ESO to finish its Very Large Telescope by the year 2000 despite pending suits over who owns the Cerro Paranal site.

NASA May Deep-Six France for U.S. Navy

Given France's ambivalence toward the space station, the last thing officials at the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) want is a crisis in space-science cooperation between the two nations. But NASA is now under pressure from the U.S. Navy and aerospace contractors to abandon its oceanographic work with the French space agency CNES and cooperate with the Navy instead.

In 1992, NASA and CNES teamed up on the oceanographic satellite Topex-Poseidon. The agencies are planning a second-generation spacecraft for a 1999 launch that, like the first, would feature a French-built platform and a U.S.-sponsored launch.

Navy officials, however, have offered to reconfigure their Geosat spacecraft to conduct the research planned for the new Topex. The Navy and industry contractors claim they can make the change for as little as \$125 million—about \$20 million less than NASA would spend on its share of a U.S.-French program, according to congressional staffers.

But NASA officials are worried the real costs could climb as high as \$160 million, the upper limit of the Navy's estimated bill. And dumping CNES would endanger future collaborations with France, says a NASA official. For both reasons, he says, NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin is reluctant to go with the Navy plan.

NASA missed a 15 April deadline to tell Paris if the deal was on; it was expected to decide shortly after *Science* went to press.

A Degree of Caution For New Grads

The tight job market for new science Ph.D.s is fueling a campaign to convince students that the doctoral degree is excellent training for a variety of careers outside of academe (see p. 358). But Jules Lapidus, president of the Council of Graduate Schools, offers a politically tinged note of caution to

those who assume the profession will benefit if Ph.D.s begin filling nontraditional jobs.

"As I look around Capitol Hill, I see Dr. Gingrich, Dr. Arme, and Dr. Gramm," said Lapidus, referring, respectively, to the House Speaker, the House majority leader, and a GOP presidential contender. "We're getting more and more Ph.D.s in

Washington, but I don't know whether that's good or bad for research," said Lapidus, who tossed the barb last week at the AAAS colloquium (see p. 361).

For the record, Newt Gingrich is a former history professor in Georgia, while Richard Arme and Phil Gramm taught economics at Texas universities before being elected to Congress.

USDA Science Nominee Weak on Science?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) science division has drifted without a skipper for more than 2 years. Now the Clinton Administration is poised to fill the top research post, but the nominee, Karl Stauber, may face rough seas in Senate confirmation hearings. The reason? Even Stauber acknowledges it: As a Ph.D. in public policy, he lacks conventional science credentials.

Last fall, USDA merged two divisions—science and economics—into a \$1.78 billion division to be headed by a new undersecretary for research, education, and economics. Before the overhaul, however, the Administration had been unable to appoint a USDA science czar: Suitable candidates were scarce, and a recent nominee withdrew for health reasons (*Science*, 14 October 1994, p. 207).

Stauber, currently the acting deputy undersecretary, told *Science* he wants to create a "new culture" of synergy between USDA biologists and

social scientists. As a model, he points to USDA's integrated pest management (IPM) initiative, which aims to get farmers to minimize pesticide use on 75% of U.S. cropland within 5 years. It's not enough for scientists to provide IPM tools, Stauber says: "We need [social scientists] to get people to use them." And with his expertise in policy and multidisciplinary programs, Stauber argues, he's right for the job.



Karl Stauber

But Stauber's C.V. is a little thin on scientific credentials compared to previous USDA science bosses. "A concern is that he won't bring the credentials to the table that will command attention" when federal research dollars get divvied up, says

Rodney Foil, chair of the board of agriculture of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, who says he wants USDA science to regain its political voice. The Senate is expected to decide in early May whether that voice will be Stauber's.