cials. John Gallin, who was chosen by Varmus in 1994 as clinical center director, said: "If you had asked me a year ago what would happen, I would not have expected this outcome; I'm very pleased. ... The outside group [of hospital finance experts who consulted with the Smits panel] made a lot of constructive suggestions." Likewise, Gregory Curt, the chief intramural clinical officer at the National Cancer Institute, which uses 40% of the clinical center's capacity, welcomed the report. The panel, Curt said, cut "right to the heart of everything—governance." He supports the panel's recommendation that the clinical center be run by a unified management structure rather than a series of institute representatives.

Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the second largest user of the clinical center, gave the report a qualified vote of confidence. "I'm in favor of the general philosophy and theme" of the recommendations. However, Fauci said he's eager to read the fine print. He's still uncertain whether it's a good idea to give the clinical center an independent budget, but says, "if that gives it true stability, then I'm for it."

–Eliot Marshall

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Showdown at the UC Corral

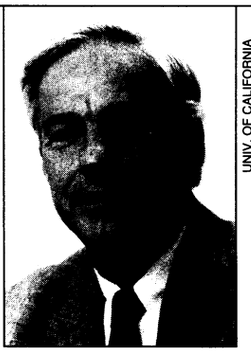
BERKELEY—Like gunslingers in the Old West, University of California President Richard Atkinson faced off last week with California's governor and the UC board of regents. The issue: how quickly Atkinson was willing to implement a new race- and gender-blind admissions policy the regents had ordered. For a day or two, it looked like Atkinson's move might cost him his job. But after a tense standoff, both sides blinked and backed down.

Atkinson, a psychologist, was caught between the views of UC's faculty and chancellors and the will of its governing board of regents on the issue of affirmative action. When he left his position as chancellor of UC San Diego to take the UC presidency last fall, the university system was already under orders by the regents to dismantle race and gender preferences in admitting students, beginning with the entering class of 1997. Atkinson, the nine chancellors, and much of the UC faculty had opposed the policy, but as president, Atkinson was obligated to implement it.

The face-off began on 23 January, when Atkinson announced that the university couldn't possibly have the policy in place for the entering class of 1997, but would require an additional year. That delay was cheered by faculty opposed to the new plan, but viewed as insubordination by a number of the regents, including the board's president, California Governor Pete Wilson—whose anti-affirmative action stance was a central element in his unsuccessful presidential campaign. Atkinson was summoned to the governor's office, but he refused to change his position. That prompted 10 of the 26 regents, led by Ward Connerly, a black businessman and staunch affirmative action opponent, to call a special regents' meeting for 31 January to review Atkinson's performance as UC president.

The meeting never took place, however, because Atkinson quickly softened his truculent stance, apologized for not consulting the regents on the scheduling change, and proposed that UC could have the new policy in place 6 months earlier than he had previously said, in time for the admission of midyear transfer students in the spring of 1998. The first full class to be admitted under the new policy would be the entering class of fall 1988, as Atkinson originally proposed.

It appears that the regents may accept that compromise when they hold their next scheduled meeting on 15 February. Connerly, who of all the regents took the most umbrage at Atkinson's stance, says he will vote for Atkinson's spring '98 date. He added, however, that he is willing to go along "more in the spirit of compromise" than in the belief the university really needs the extra time.



UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Caught in the crossfire. UC President Richard Atkinson.

"Affirmative action really became a proxy for the issue of governance," as Atkinson and the regents jockeyed for decision-making power, says Patrick Callan, executive director of the San Jose–based California Higher Education Policy Center. And as the UC regents seem likely to continue taking a more activist role in setting university policy than they have in the past, there may be more such encounters in President Atkinson's future.

–Marcia Barinaga

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Two Eyes Are Better Than One

The sharing of scientific information between Russian and U.S. researchers has become almost routine since the end of the Cold War, except for one area: oceanographic and environmental data collected by spy satellites. Last week, however, the veil began to lift when officials from both countries announced an exchange of maps made from photos that record petrochemical hazards at the other country's military air bases. And for good measure, they revealed plans for a joint naval oceanographic survey next summer.

The announcement came from a working group formed last summer to find ways for Russia and the United States to exchange security data useful for environmental research (*Science*, 28 July 1995, p. 473). The maps, which will be used for environmental cleanups, are the first installment. They show Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and Yeysk Air Force Base near the Black Sea in southern Russia, and reveal such features as fuel storage areas and water pathways for oil spills. The maps were constructed from "data you never even admitted you were looking at," says a U.S. official. More important, notes National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Director James Baker, who is leading the U.S. team, there's "a process actually delivering information for the first time between the U.S. and Russia."

The joint oceanographic survey announced last week will move the process along. It will take place this summer in the Sea of Okhotsk, off Russia's east coast. Although one goal is to become familiar with the other side's data collection techniques and smooth the way for future data exchanges, the cruise will also explore circulation patterns in the sea and its role in absorbing carbon dioxide.

The two sides are also moving forward with previously announced projects to disseminate U.S. cloud data accumulated over a 30-year period by Russian satellites and to share decades of information on Arctic ice conditions and circulation. A demonstration data hookup for a system to exchange current satellite information on environmental hazards such as forest fires, volcanoes, and oil spills should be ready for the commission's next meeting in June, says Robert Winokur, NOAA's assistant administrator for satellite and information services.

Ultimately, it may be dollars rather than lingering Cold War suspicions that limit cooperation. "There is no shortage of projects," says Baker. "The problem is that we both have limited funding."

–Jocelyn Kaiser