overextending themselves.

But others dismiss such fears, saying that Korean scientists are making good use of the new opportunities. Seung-Ki Joo, an associate professor of materials science and engineering at SNU, is managing 10 private and government grants with the help of 20 Ph.D. students and three secretaries. Joo, who was trained at Stanford University, thinks there are a number of checks and balances that keep professors from overextending themselves. Promising students avoid professors who neglect their grad students, and government grants are subject to a yearly review.

More importantly, Joo thinks that it is appropriate for Korea to concentrate its limited resources in those areas that can build up the economy. "Basic science is important, of course, but we cannot spend on basic science right now," he says. That view is shared by many in government. "As far as the promotion of basic research is concerned, the role of the government in Korea can't be the same as that in developed countries," says Kyung-Chul Chang, director-general of research planning and coordination for MOST. The current emphasis, he says, should be on helping boost the level of technology within Korean companies.

One way to lessen the gap between the haves in the hot research areas and the have-nots in basic research and the humanities is to increase the percentage of each grant that the university takes for overhead and spread this money around. SNU plans to boost its current rate from between 10% and 15% to 20% within 3 years, says Hiwon Yoon, SNU associate dean of research affairs, and eventually to 30%. POSTECH is taking a similar tack and using the pooled money to support basic research and provide seed money to new professors in all disciplines, says Jeon-Young Lee, POSTECH's dean of research.

Most universities don't have centrally managed systems to oversee research moneys, however, so they have no way to redistribute funds. "Research as a legitimate university activity is a relatively recent event in Korea," says POSTECH's Kim. "We're still very new in this kind of game." SNU's Lee agrees: "These problems will be overcome, but it will take time."

Meanwhile, construction continues. SNU has joined the trend of inviting private companies to set up labs within the university grounds. Bulldozers and backhoes are now stirring up dirt and spewing diesel fumes as they level out a corner of the campus for a new university industrial park. Only after the dust settles will it be possible to tell whether this flurry of construction is also changing the face of basic science in Korea.

–Chang-Yop Kim and Dennis Normile

Chang-Yop Kim is a science reporter for Joon-Ang Daily News *in Seoul.*

MEDICAL GENETICS

NIH, Hopkins Team Up on Genotyping

Scientists hoping to pinpoint genes involved in complex diseases from arthritis to autism have a new facility to turn to for high-powered help. Earlier this week, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Johns Hopkins University unveiled a center in Baltimore devoted to genotyping, the painstaking process of searching for culprit genes in families afflicted with inherited diseases.

While a handful of disorders are due to errors in a single gene, most inherited diseases arise from an interplay between several genes and environmental factors. The Center for Inherited Disease Research (CIDR) was created to help speed the search for these genes and to "empower clinicians and epidemiologists who may not have access to genotyping facilities," says the National Center for Human Genome Research's Robert Nussbaum, who conceived CIDR.

The center is to open this spring, as reported earlier by *Science* (18 October 1996, p. 331). It will be equipped with the latest gel-electrophoresis technology and statistical expertise for locating DNA sequences thought to be associated with particular diseases. In this procedure, "you're looking to identify variation between individuals at specific sites in the genome," says Robert Karp, an NIH geneticist who is part of a non-CIDR genotyping study on alcoholism.

What makes CIDR unusual is that it will include several disciplines needed for high-quality genotyping and be accessible to all researchers. Only a handful of projects will be chosen, however, in a two-stage process. Researchers will submit proposals to a panel of peers, which will recommend action to a governing board made up of directors of the eight NIH institutes that fund the center.

The competition is expected to be intense, as CIDR will have a capacity at the outset to genotype about 2 million markers per year—equivalent to several research projects—and will perhaps reach 4 million markers in a few years. Complex diseases, such as juvenile diabetes and multiple sclerosis, require up to 1 million genotypes. CIDR has received inquiries—but no proposals—from groups interested in disorders ranging from breast cancer to speech pathology.

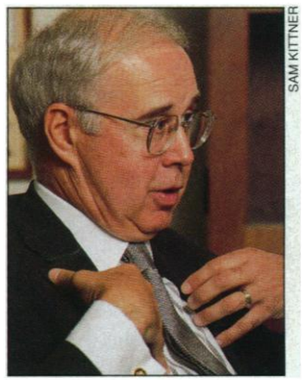
NIH will provide core funding of $21.8 million over 5 years. Groups supported by participating institutes will pay $1.00 per genotype, while others will pay $3.50—a rate comparable to that charged by industry shops, Nussbaum says. But the rates "aren't set in stone," he adds, as advances could reduce the cost. Indeed, CIDR will devote resources to testing new technologies, such as chip-based and mass spectrometer–based genotyping.

–Richard Stone

SCIENCE POLICY

Ex-Rep. Walker Joins Lobbying Firm

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Robert Walker, the former chair of the House Science Committee, stepped through a well-worn revolving door on 6 January: He was named president of the Wexler Group, a prominent Washington lobbying firm. Walker retired from Congress after 2 decades in the House of Representatives, where he rose to become a leading advocate of basic science and critic of applied research.



SAM KITTNER

Potomac fever? Walker will stay in Washington.

After the 54-year-old Republican lawmaker announced his decision to retire last year, many of his colleagues and staff members predicted he would return to rural Lancaster County in Pennsylvania at the urging of his wife. But instead he started a post-Congress career at Wexler's downtown Washington office, a few blocks from the White House. Anne Wexler, a former Carter Administration official who is the group's chair and chief executive officer, in a statement praised Walker's leadership skills and said he will provide clients with "unparalleled insight and strategic counsel." The firm handles a spectrum of clients, both liberal and conservative. Walker will provide "general leadership and guidance," says one Wexler manager, adding, "He won't have one particular focus."

Representative James Sensenbrenner (R–WI) took over from Walker as Science Committee chair when lawmakers convened the 105th Congress on 7 January for a 3-day session. One of Sensenbrenner's first actions—which is not likely until after Congress returns in early February—will be to name the chairs of the panel's subcommittees.

–Andrew Lawler