

AAAS Offers Forum on S&T Policy

In recent years, partisanship in science policy has increased in the United States while R&D funding has shrunk. The 1997 AAAS Colloquium on Science and Technology Policy will give policy-makers and members of the science and technology (S&T) community an opportunity to consider ways to reverse both of these trends as they discuss and debate key issues.

"There's a greater need to focus on all the nuances of the funding process, on what is and isn't happening. The Colloquium is the right venue for that," says Stephen D. Nelson, director of the AAAS Science, Technology and Government Program, which sponsors the Colloquium. "It comes at a point in the budget year that is very useful for a lot of people. Because it's after the President's proposed budget is released but before Congress has had a chance to act on it, people who want to influence the process at the congressional end can still do so."

The 22nd annual Colloquium will run 23 to 25 April 1997. Confirmed speakers include Senator William H. Frist (R-TN), the new chairman of the Senate

Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space, and Representative F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-WI), the new chairman of the House Committee on Science. "These new congressional leaders are not well known among members of the S&T community," says Al Teich, director of AAAS's Science & Policy Programs. "We are looking forward to getting better acquainted with them and their views at the meeting."

This year's theme, "Toward a Strategic View of Science and Technology," is particularly relevant to current trends in S&T policies. Explains Teich, "For the past 2 years, science policy discussions have taken on an increasingly partisan tone. Also, long-range budget projections have become the focus of growing attention. Our hope is that this year's Colloquium will serve to bridge some of the partisanship and give policy-makers an occasion to take a look at the long-term needs of science and technology and their growing role in society."

In addition to the congressional speakers, White House Science Adviser John H. Gib-

bons will present the President's S&T proposals, and officials from federal agencies will discuss their views of funding trends. The Colloquium will also offer AAAS's analyses of R&D in the budget.

Although the Colloquium highlights R&D in the budget, it has been broadened over the last decade to address S&T policy issues that go beyond fiscal concerns. For example, this year's meeting includes a plenary session on how to enhance the interplay of science and engineering. "The intent of the session," explains Nelson, "is to figure out ways to develop national policies that would improve the innovation process by getting those professions back together, talking and working with each other more closely."

The Colloquium will also investigate methods for improving cooperation between the industrial, academic, and governmental sectors so all three—and R&D—will benefit from each other's strengths. Other sessions focus on such topics as the future of research universities in the United States and S&T policy issues posed by patent and copyright law and other intellectual property concerns.



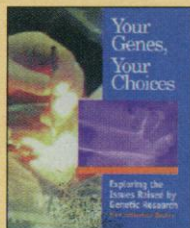
AAAS at the ends of the Earth. When Rita Colwell's chairmanship of the Association ended at the 1997 Annual Meeting, she presented AAAS with the flag she had flown at the South Pole. Colwell traveled to Antarctica in January as part of an 11-person team charged by the National Science Foundation to find ways to maintain the United States Antarctic Program.

The Colloquium Web site (<http://www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/rd/colloqu.htm>) provides the AAAS analyses of the budget proposals and updated program information. It also permits online registration. For more information, call 202-326-6600; to register by phone, call 202-326-7075. The deadline for advance registration is 8 April 1997. On-site registration will be at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Humanizing the Human Genome Project

If the police ask, should you volunteer for DNA testing when a co-worker is murdered? If your parents died young of heart disease, should you change your life-style?

Instead of answering these questions outright, *Your Genes, Your Choices* gives readers the information they need to decide for themselves. The newly released AAAS book presents the science behind genetics as well as the issues that the latest findings raise. Although written on an 8th- to 9th-grade level so it is easy to understand, the book offers an adult perspective. Each chapter begins with a fictional case study that draws the reader into a relevant dilemma. For instance, should a child of short parents receive growth hormones?



"The way the book relates genetic information gets people thinking, asking questions, and wanting to learn more," says Helen Travers, a genetic counselor for the Miami office of Genzyme Genetics, the largest diagnostic genetic testing company worldwide. Travers, who counsels families who are at risk for genetic disease, found the book highly informative, interesting, and able to reach a wide audience. "It humanizes the Human Genome Project by showing the impact of genetic research on people's lives," says Travers. "The glossary alone will help readers understand news reports on genetics."

Your Genes, Your Choices was produced by AAAS's Science + Literacy for Health project, with funding from the Department of Energy. Its intent is to empower people through scientific knowledge, explains Shirley Malcom, director of

AAAS's Education and Human Resource (EHR) Programs. "Sometimes those of us who have been educated in science take for granted how much it means to have this knowledge available to us as we negotiate our lives. As our understanding of our genetic makeup increases, so do our choices. I cannot imagine facing such choices 'unarmed' with the basics to understand my options."

A companion 7-minute video is also available. "The video is a perfect springboard for discussion," says Travers, though she and EHR staff recommend that somebody with expertise in genetics be on hand to lead group presentations. The book stands on its own.

The book and video are free, with \$5 for postage and handling. To order, call (202) 326-6454 or write to the Science + Literacy for Health Project, AAAS, 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.