

## COMPUTING

## Microsoft Puts Down Roots in Cambridge

LONDON—Cambridge University and the software giant Microsoft hastily convened a news conference this week to confirm mounting rumors that they had struck a deal to site Microsoft's first foreign research center at the university. Over the next 5 years, Microsoft will spend \$80 million on the new center, which will employ about 40 leading researchers and accommodate other short-term academic staff and graduate students. The researchers will be employees of Microsoft, but will be encouraged to give lectures at the university and interact with academic staff. The university is helping to provide land and buildings for the center.

"It's a big step to go beyond the United States, but our view was that there were greater opportunities for us if we did that," says Nathan Myhrvold, Microsoft's chief technology officer. Following the success of its first research center at Redmond, Washington, founded 6 years ago, Microsoft de-

cided last year to triple its research effort. "We really wanted to broaden our perspective, and Europe was a high priority," says Myhrvold. Microsoft considered several other European sites, but "we chose Cambridge because of its track record on computing research, the existence of many local technology companies, and personal relationships between Microsoft and university staff," Myhrvold says. Myhrvold was a postdoc of Cambridge cosmologist Stephen Hawking before moving to industry.

Alec Broers, the university's vice chancellor, who helped broker the deal, welcomed Microsoft's decision. He said it would also boost the research efforts of the university's computing department. Roger Needham, former head of the computing department, will head the new center, and other staff will be recruited from across Europe and beyond. Needham said the goal of the center is to develop the next generation of computing

technologies that will enable machines to interact with their users in a more intelligent way. "We have no detailed research agenda on how to achieve this and just want to recruit the very best people," says Needham. The company has set up a technology advisory board of top European researchers to help it recruit key staff and highlight research areas, Needham said.

Margaret Beckett, head of the U.K. government's trade and industry department, who was at the press conference, welcomed the initiative. "The decision to locate in Britain is a vote of confidence in the country as a good place for research and business in Europe," she said.

Microsoft also unveiled plans to invest \$16 million in venture capital for local high-technology industries in Cambridge. "Interactions with industry have been an enormous help for academics, and the whole process has been positive," says Needham. "We hope this initiative will help Cambridge become a multimedia communications research center to rival the best in the world," says Broers.

—Nigel Williams

## ANTHROPOLOGY

## Cultural Divide at Stanford

Anthropologists go to great lengths to understand the people whose diverse cultures they study. But sometimes they have trouble understanding their colleagues down the hall. Nowhere is this more apparent than at Stanford University's anthropology department, where a high-profile tenure case has widened the rift between cultural and biological anthropologists, and exposed a deep schism in their methodology and values.

Tensions erupted last month, when a Stanford dean overruled the anthropology faculty's offer of tenure to Akhil Gupta, a cultural anthropologist who uses so-called "postmodern" or deconstructionist methods to study the impact of development on farmers in India. Students protested, cultural anthropologists worldwide mounted a letter-writing campaign, and faculty charged that the administration was biased against this sort of "politically correct" work. And although both sides officially voted for Gupta, physical and cultural faculty members are said to be barely on speaking terms and continue to fight over new hires and the department's future.

Anthropologists say Stanford's troubles are an extreme case of the ideological differences tearing apart many departments around the country, some of which have given up the idea of unity altogether (*Science*, 24 September 1993, p. 1798). Stanford's current department chair, biological anthropologist William Durham, says Gupta's case is a symptom of the larger problem of what kind

of scholarship anthropology should include. "The issues and the debate in this department are national issues and debates about the nature of anthropology," he says.

But at Stanford, the joining of biological and cultural anthropology in 1993 was "a shotgun marriage," admits cultural anthro-



**Postmodern man.** Akhil Gupta's tenure was denied by a Stanford dean.

pologist George Collier, department chair from 1990 to 1994. In the 1980s, the small department was almost completely socio-cultural, with a core of a dozen or more researchers studying gender, race, and power relations in different cultures, and often using descriptive methods from the humanities rather than scientific hypothesis testing. For years, the department had only two biological anthropologists, including Durham, and

two biocultural anthropologists.

Then in the mid-1980s, senior members of the department say, then-dean of arts and sciences Norman Wessells heard a lecture by renowned paleoanthropologist Donald Johanson and proposed that the department hire several more biological anthropologists. That directive met with hostility, especially because the faculty was then being cut from 21 to 13 positions. "We were struck by the strong and widespread opposition," recalls one member of a 1986 visiting faculty committee, National Science Foundation archaeologist John Yellen.

The first of what was intended to be several new hires in biological anthropology was finally made in 1993: Richard Klein, a leading expert on early human tools and behavior. But Klein's efforts to hire a tenure-track paleoanthropologist failed after two searches, though he did manage to hire one non-tenure-track lecturer. Klein declined to comment, but several senior faculty told *Science* that these hires were stymied in part because the cultural faculty objected to Klein's recruitment procedures and to the shortage of women and minority finalists.

In the midst of this turmoil, Gupta came up for tenure. At 38, he's an associate editor at *American Ethnologist*, and other cultural anthropologists say that his work, applying mainly descriptive rather than quantitative methods to such questions as how technology affects poor farmers, is "groundbreaking." The faculty—including the biological anthropologists—unanimously approved his tenure in December, but it was overruled in January by