

formed frogs have fueled widespread controversy and alarm in the media from the very beginning, effectively performing an end-run around scientific research. I agree with David Wake (director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley) that sorting this out could be a scientific nightmare.

Stanley K. Sessions
Department of Biology,
Hartwick College,
Oneonta, NY 13820, USA
E-mail: sessions@hartwick.edu

References

1. www.npwr.org/narcam
2. S. K. Sessions and S.B. Ruth, *Exp. Zool.* **254**, 38 (1990).

■

Royalties or Research Funds?

The University of California's recently reported maneuvering to deny to faculty the 50% of royalties from corporations due them according to university policy on licensing fees for inventions is deeply disturbing. (Jocelyn Kaiser, "Inventors' court victory worries universities," *ScienceScope*, 19 Dec., p. 2045). Understandably, univer-

sity administrators and their legal staff wish to maximize the amount of discretionary funds available to them from all sources and may well take extraordinary steps to do so. But to justify such attempts on the grounds that "[t]he university has to be able to ... assure the corporate sponsor that the money will go for research and not royalties," as stated by an attorney for the University of California, is the height of hypocrisy. Such "research funds" are managed by university administrators who have broad discretionary powers regarding disbursement. By using these funds for certain types of designated research, they may well be able to free up other funds already targeted for such purposes and divert them to other uses. But in so doing, the university may not be fulfilling its obligations to its own faculty inherent in its policies.

If corporate sponsors do not wish to have royalties paid to the inventors of the technology they wish to license, the university can advise them to seek an alternative technology elsewhere from a source that does not recognize the rights of inventors.

Ernest B. Hook
School of Public Health,
University of California,
Berkeley CA 94720-7360, USA
ebhook@socrates.berkeley.edu

Drugs for the Third World

The News article by Nigel Williams (5 Dec., p. 1704) about the failure of drug companies to collaborate in an effort to develop drugs for the diseases of the Third World does not surprise me. What I find amazing is that no one has come forward with a really innovative approach to this problem. Felix Lobo, former director of pharmaceuticals at the Spanish Ministry of Health, made the following suggestion: Foster an agreement between the health authorities of the major markets (the United States, Europe, and Japan) whereby any pharmaceutical company that develops a drug for a tropical disease is automatically given an x-year extension of the patent life of one of its "Western" drugs marketed thereafter. This plan might bring some results.

Sergio Erill
Esteve Foundation,
2 Llobet i Vall-Llosera,
Barcelona, Spain

■

Nuclear Research at Duke

In the News & Comment article "Physicist sues Duke over control of lab" by Eliot

Them.