versity did not provide a list of the faculty members they plan to dismiss. Today (14 October), Tenet spokesman announced that "notices to laid-off faculty would begin going out early next week."

Apparently, the lawyers advising the university believe that this plan is legal, under bankcruptcy laws, and will be approved by the court. However, there is no precedent in the United States for a university reorganizing itself by arbitrarily dismissing, without due process, a large number of tenured and nontenured professors.

If this plan succeeds, this precedent will offer a temptation to other universities in financial difficulties to follow the same course. We urge all faculty and academic organizations to voice their strong objection to the destruction of the academic integrity of our university.

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Scientist-Diplomats

When I worked in the State Department in the 1980s, one of the foreign service officers in my office took advantage of my scientific expertise by asking me how to spell "Superconducting Super Collider" for a memo he was drafting. I told him and, almost as an afterthought, he asked, "What *is* a Superconducting Super Collider?" That said, I read the National Research Council's report (*1*) on improving the State Department's scientific expertise with some interest (D. Malakoff, News of the Week, 25 Sept., p. 1937).

Two of the report's recommendations for systematizing the use of personnel from other agencies (for example, the National Science Foundation or the Centers for Disease Control) and expanding the use of outside advisors and experts are cost-effective and imminently doable. However, there was no suggestion in the report to use Diplomacy Fellows from the AAAS. Since 1981, the AAAS has supplied the State Department (and the Agency for International Development) with more than 230 scientists (*2*). The fellows have Ph.D.s in a variety of fields, are put through a careful screening process, have to pass a background check, and often have language skills and international experience as former Peace Corps volunteers. State typically takes one or two fellows each year for a stint of 1 to 2 years. Most fellows then return to academia or move to other federal agencies. Preventing this annual loss of experienced scientists would help the foreign policy establishment shore up its scientific and technical base.

The AAAS could also assist the State Department in recruiting outside experts and advisers. A database of already vetted scientists—along with their technical and policy expertise—currently exists in the *Directory of AAAS Science and Engineering Fellows* (*3*). The State Department's efforts to integrate science with foreign policy can be accelerated by tapping into the pool of former and current fellows, many of whom are still in the Washington area.

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3. *Directory of AAAS Science and Engineering Fellows, 1973–1998* (AAAS, Washington, DC, June 1998).

Ache puberty ceremony

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Among the Guayaki (Ache)

I have worked with the Guayaki (usually referred to as the Ache) in Paraguay for the past 21 years and have published nearly 40 articles about them (with almost a dozen different colleagues), as well as a 500-page book about their demographic patterns (*1*). Thus, I was surprised to find that two of the four groups that I have been studying are pronounced "vanished" in the review of the translation of Pierre Clastres's book *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians* (*Science*'s Compass, 18 Sept., p. 1813). This appears to result from an error in the translator's introduction.

Furthermore, it is asserted in the review that remaining Ache "have lost much of their culture and traditional knowledge." Exactly how this loss was measured or what "much" means is unclear to me, but I saw the same puberty ritual illustrated in the book review take place in 1998. The Ache have changed in 20 years, but still spend considerable time in their ancestral forest environment and adhere to many of the cultural practices that characterized them before first peaceful outside contact.

Are Ache beliefs and behaviors accurately portrayed by Clastres? On the basis of years of interviews in the Ache language, and thousands of hours of data collection, I would reply, "partially." But since Clastres does not specify methods, operationalize or measure variables, or have a systematic sampling procedure, it is difficult to know how accurate his accounts are or how he reaches the many interpretive conclusions in his book. The Clastres work is good literature and provides many fascinating hypotheses about Ache cultural patterns. However, it is not science, and answers to important anthropological questions can not be obtained using the method that Clastres illustrates.

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Fishing Expeditions

There appears to have been a remarkable increase since last year in the prominence of what might loosely be termed "omic" research in biology. Following the definition (*1*) of "-ome" as an "abstract entity, group, or mass," "omics" would be the study of entities in aggregate, in this case the DNA, RNA, protein, or other molecular complement of a cell, tissue, or organism.

Beyond semantics, omic research appears to require a different mind-set from the more traditional study of one gene, gene product, or process at a time. Often, one generates a database of molecular information with only limited ability to predict what about it will prove most useful. A 1984 position paper on sequencing the genome (*2*) offered the candid opinion that

> In some respects, like the journeys to the moon, it is simply a "tour de force"; it is not at all clear that knowledge of the nucleotide sequence of the human genome will, initially, provide deep insights into the physical nature of man. Nevertheless, we are confident that this project will provide an integrating focus for all efforts to use DNA cloning techniques in the study of human genetics.

Despite obvious excitement about the genome project, some referees, editors, site visitors, and study sections have tended to disparage other omic studies as