that Beijing University doesn't have the resources to do the genetic analyses of the blood samples, some 4200 of which are locked in a well-guarded safe at Beijing University. University officials are seeking additional support from China's Natural Science Foundation, but scientists have not sought state permission for international help in analyzing the blood samples. "Currently it's too sensitive a topic," says Zeng. As for the suit, none of the cases has reached a judge, although two courts held hearings last fall to gather evidence.

Outside scientists believe that the suit raises a larger issue, namely, China's right to equal status in any international collaboration. "We don't have to find out the original motives of the project organizers," says Yang Huanming, director of the Human Genome Center of The Institute of Genetics with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, who helped draft the recent regulations on exportation of human genetic materials. What's critical, he says, is that "the project must be carried out on the basis of mutual benefit and equality."

–ZHANG DAN AND XIONG LEI

Zhang Dan and Xiong Lei write for *China Features* in Beijing.

SCIENCE CAREERS

MIT Issues Mea Culpa On Sex Bias

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is winning widespread praise for publicly admitting that it has sinned—if only inadvertently—against women scientists. A report from an MIT faculty committee posted on the university's Web site this week concludes that MIT's School of Science has provided a better work environment for male faculty members than for women. Officials say they have taken steps to rectify inequalities among the School of Science faculty, and the university administration is considering how to generalize its new insights campuswide.

> "This problem is the same at all [elite] schools." But "these other universities ... are just in denial."
>
> —Nancy Hopkins

In the summer of 1994, molecular biologist Nancy Hopkins and two other tenured women science faculty members polled their colleagues (the faculty had 15 tenured women and 194 tenured men) and found what they suspected was true: Compared to their male peers, the women were getting less money, office space, and access to research resources and positions carrying greater responsibility. They took their grievances to science dean Robert Birgeneau, who promptly set up a nine-faculty-member committee to explore the issues further.

The committee went on to document numerous instances of gender bias in a series of internal reports withheld from the public. A summary of its final report, completed 2 years ago, was put online this week (web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html) as an "educational" process for the whole university, says Birgeneau. Cleansed of telling detail, the report offers only vague observations and conclusions. For example, it states that while junior women faculty feel "well supported" in their departments, "exclusion and invisibility proved to be the common experience of most tenured women faculty." Discrimination in this "post–Civil Rights era" doesn't take obvious forms, the report notes, but "consists of a pattern of powerful but unrecognized assumptions and attitudes" that have concrete penalties such as lower salaries for women as well as "subtle differences in ... treatment." According to Hopkins, "it took a lot of work to put together a case that you couldn't deny."

University officials have swiftly endorsed the report. In an accompanying statement, MIT President Charles M. Vest said, "I have always believed that contemporary gender discrimination within universities is part reality and part perception ... but I now understand that reality is by far the greater part of the balance." Birgeneau, whom the committee praised for his support, told *Science* that all the inequities related to matters such as salaries and lab space have been rectified in the past few years. In addition, he says, school officials are putting more energy into recruiting women science faculty, who have edged up from 22 of 274 positions in 1994 to 31 of 265 this year.

Birgeneau says he hopes other schools will learn from the MIT experience. Hopkins is dubious. "This problem is the same at all schools that are elite," she contends. But "these other universities ... are just in denial."

MIT still has plenty of work to do, Birgeneau says. For example, he says, there are still no women heading departments or labs in the School of Science. In addition, he says, MIT needs to "figure out how to generalize this from women to underrepresented minorities, where we have made no progress whatsoever."

–CONSTANCE HOLDEN

IMMUNIZATION

UN to End Children's Vaccine Initiative

The Children's Vaccine Initiative (CVI)—an alliance of United Nations agencies, private foundations, and industry set up in 1990 to improve vaccination programs for the poorest children in the world—is being disbanded after eight troubled years. No announcement about its future has yet been made, but *Science* has learned that it will be replaced later this year with a new structure for promoting cooperation between public and private sector groups in the international vaccine community. The details have not yet been worked out. Roy Widdus, who heads the CVI secretariat in Geneva, told *Science*: "I can confirm that the CVI is to be dismantled."

The vaccine industry will be sad to see the demise of the CVI, because it gave companies a strong voice with the UN agencies in policy and planning. But others seem to have few regrets. The alliance, observers say, was often hamstrung by turf battles between agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Epidemiologist D. A. Henderson of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, who headed efforts to eradicate smallpox, says, "I have been very disappointed to see infighting between WHO and UNICEF."

CVI is supported by a grant of $2.5 million per year, principally from WHO, UNICEF, and the World Bank. It was established in 1990 with the aim of reducing the number of children dying from preventable infectious diseases. Its remit was to set priorities for global vaccine development and delivery, promote collaboration between agencies, and find new sources of money.

Despite the high hopes for the initiative, it failed to raise significant amounts of new money or to coordinate the vaccine community fully, says Barry Bloom, dean of Harvard School of Public Health in Boston. Nevertheless, the CVI has had some successes, says Robert Breiman, head of the National Vaccine Program Office of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. "The areas where CVI has been most effective, for example, bringing industry to the table and taking a strategic view on the introduction of new vaccines, are not [easily] quantifiable."

For the past year, the global vaccine community has been discussing how to improve its record of immunizing the world's poorest children. Finally, at a meeting last week in Bellagio, Italy, senior officials from industry and the UN agencies recommended that each agency strengthen its own internal efforts to collaborate and that the CVI should become a scaled-down operation with a coordinating role but no responsibility for policy, fund-