duce the number of funding sources—a move the industry group has not advocated, although media reports have incorrectly described the plan as a proposal to create a Japanese National Institutes of Health. Some scientists also worry that the task force could overlap with the work of the new, top-level Council for Science and Technology Policy.

The fate of the proposals is uncertain, but industry leaders are heartened by a message to the summit from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who said it is "very important to develop a strategy for life science research." Koji Omi, the minister for science and technology policy, promised to "take all these opinions into consideration" in plotting the future of life science research in Japan.

–DENNIS NORMILE

CHINA

First Western Chair Named at Qinghua

BEIJING—When Purdue University's Gavriel Salvendy met with a delegation from China's prestigious Qinghua University last spring, he had no idea they were on a recruiting mission. But this month Qinghua made history by appointing Salvendy as chair of its new industrial engineering program. Salvendy, who will divide his time between Qinghua in Beijing and Purdue in West Lafayette, Indiana, will be the first foreign scientist to head a university department in China since the Communists came to power in 1949.

Honored. Gavriel Salvendy gets a pioneering post at Qinghua University.

CREDITS: (LEFT TO RIGHT) COURTESY G. SALVENDY; SOURCE: F. GIORGI/ABDUS SALAM ICTP

Salvendy's appointment is part of a larger effort by Qinghua, already regarded as China's top technology school, to recruit outsiders to further raise the quality of its academic programs. "I'm the guinea pig," says the 63-year-old Salvendy, who was born in Czechoslovakia, raised in Israel, and trained in Europe before coming to Purdue in 1971. Qinghua officials say they plan to offer key positions to some 50 leading Western scholars in the next 5 years, financed by contributions from wealthy Chinese companies within the country and overseas. "We wish to build up our industrial engineering department to international standards in education and research as soon as possible," says Lin Heng, vice chair of the new department. "With Professor Salvendy as our dean, we are hopeful of achieving our goal."

Salvendy's first nine faculty appointments are all native Chinese—"I didn't have the option of hiring from the outside," he says. But greater interaction with the United States is a priority. "Each year we will have three U.S. professors teaching and working in China for 1 month, and there will also be a student exchange program between the two universities. The idea is to move totally to English instruction within 3 years."

Salvendy, an expert in human-machine interactions and a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering, adds his Qinghua duties to an already full plate as the NEC professor of industrial engineering at Purdue and founding editor of three international journals. He says that he wouldn't have taken the job at any other school: "I've had 10 Ph.D. students from Qinghua in the last decade, and the quality of their work is phenomenal." He expects to spend 1 month a year in Beijing, and his $100,000-a-year salary—more than 10 times what the average Chinese academic earns—will go into a special fund to support his Purdue lab.

Being an outsider may even work to his advantage, Salvendy says. "You know," he jests, "that companies always listen more closely to consultants than to their own people."

–JEFFREY MERVIS

With reporting by Yang Jianxiang in Beijing.

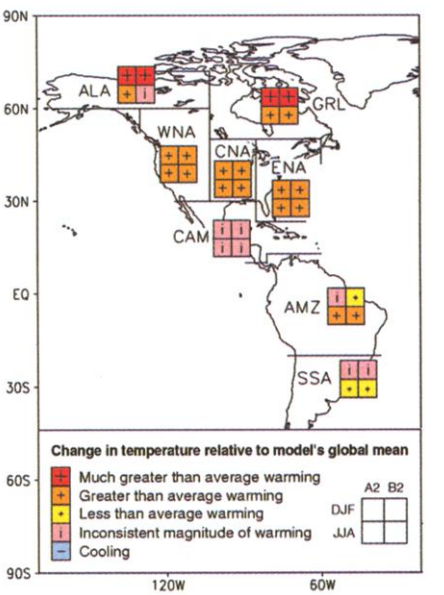
CLIMATE CHANGE

A Little Sharper View Of Global Warming

With scientists suggesting that the globe could warm by at least a couple of degrees by the end of the century, members of Congress want to know exactly what's going to happen in their city-size districts back home. Who will the winners and losers be, they ask? Tough as the question is to answer at the local level, researchers are starting to see a glimmer of improvement in predictions of regional climate change: an emerging consistency in model calculations of temperature and precipitation for subcontinental-scale regions. "To me, it's quite surprising that the response [of the models] is so consistent at the regional level," says modeler Filippo Giorgi of the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy. "Now the models are starting to show some patterns," ones that suggest a distinctly uneven impact of greenhouse warming.

The hints of coming regional changes are in the just-published U.N.-sponsored report *Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis* (Cambridge University Press), for which Giorgi and Bruce Hewitson of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, were coordinating lead authors of the regional climate chapter. The chapter examined forecasts by nine state-of-the-art global climate models, the largest number ever compared at a regional scale. With a sharper view of climate and improved representations of key atmospheric processes, this latest generation of models is "definitely doing better" at reproducing current climate on a regional scale, says Giorgi.

The new comparison confirms the previously reported much-greater-than-average warming in winter at high latitudes, as well as the greater-than-average increase in precipitation there. But it also pushes a greater-than-average warming down into northern midlatitudes. The June-July-August period would warm less than average over southern South America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. In much of the tropics and subtropics, however, most models disagreed widely about how far temperatures would rise. Predictions for precipitation were less consistent, except at high latitudes, although the consensus called for a stronger summer monsoon across most of Asia and drier winters in Australia and southern Africa.



A mixed bag. Climate models call for greater-than-average greenhouse warming (orange) over most of North America and less-than-average warming (yellow) some seasons in South America, but often they can't agree (pink).

Climate researchers welcome the regional-scale comparisons. "I think this is heading toward more quantifiable estimates of reliability," says modeler Gerald Meehl of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado. But "we've got a ways to go in producing good regional projections," warns meteorologist Kevin Trenberth of NCAR. "Simply because models agree doesn't mean they're right." They could agree in a region because they are all wrong in the same way, he notes, such as not reproducing the effects of El Niño. To be sure that models are agreeing for the right reasons, more and ostensibly better models must be compared.

–RICHARD A. KERR