

2003 U.S. BUDGET

NSF to Gain Funds From Smithsonian, Other Agencies?

Funding for three Smithsonian research centers would be transferred next year to the National Science Foundation (NSF) under a White House budget strategy aimed at rewarding agencies for their management prowess. *Science* has learned that the move is part of a proposed shift of roughly \$120 million from several agencies to NSF. Parts of the \$30 million water resources program at the U.S. Geological Survey and the \$60 million university-based Sea Grant program run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

NSF director Rita Colwell declined to comment on the proposed transfer, and an OMB official said the agency doesn't comment on ongoing negotiations leading to the president's 2003 budget proposal to Congress in February. But last week OMB director Mitch Daniels foreshadowed the move during a Washington, D.C., speech in which he singled out NSF for praise and warned other agencies to shape up or suffer the consequences. "Programs [like NSF's] that perform well, that are accountable to you as taxpayers for reaching real results, and measuring and attaining those results, deserve to be singled out, fortified, and strengthened," Daniels said. "Conversely, programs that make no such attempt or fail to deliver really need to be scrutinized and the money we are now investing in them redeployed to higher purposes."

The OMB directive, in response to the Smithsonian's 2003 budget submission, came as a shock to Smithsonian leaders and the research community. "To say that I was taken aback is an understatement," says Jeremy Sabloff, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and head of a commission evaluating the future of Smithsonian science.

Research at the Smithsonian has been squeezed for the past 20 years as the institution has struggled with ever-expanding needs for renovations and new construction. The situation came to a head last spring when Small proposed closing two research centers and rearranging scientific research throughout the institution (*Science*, 13 July, p. 194). Although Congress stepped in to protect those research centers, Sabloff and more than a

dozen other experts were tapped to advise the Smithsonian on what it should do.

The OMB plan would force scientists at the three centers to compete with academic researchers for the majority of their funding, although it provides for a 1-year transition in 2003. The research centers already support some of their work through outside grants: SERC, for example has \$18 million in peer-reviewed grants and contracts, including about \$1 million from NSF, says SERC director Ross Simons. But ending appropriated federal support "would be disastrous," says one Smithsonian scientist. Adds Sabloff, "it would be very unfortunate if [the proposed transfer] came to be."

The Smithsonian has asked OMB to reconsider its proposal in the next round of budget negotiations. Meanwhile, OMB has requested that Smithsonian and NSF leaders map out a plan by mid-January to implement these changes. —ELIZABETH PENNISI

With reporting by Jeffrey Mervis.

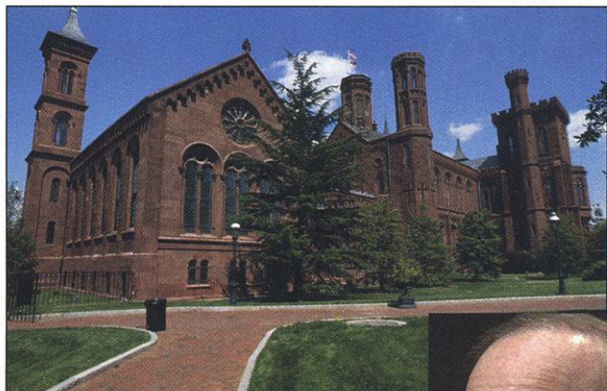
WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Caltech Aims for Big Jump in Women Faculty

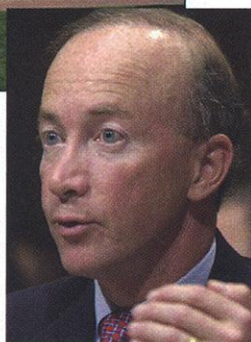
The California Institute of Technology (Caltech) hopes to more than double the number of women faculty members over the next decade to help rectify a glaring gender disparity at the elite science- and technology-oriented school. The goal would mean adding a net of four women faculty members a year, as women currently make up a mere 31 of Caltech's 284 faculty members. The target is included in a new report that examined the status of women faculty members at the university.

"Female faculty are markedly more dissatisfied than their male peers" with life at Caltech, says the report, which was commissioned 2 years ago in the wake of a similar report by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (*Science*, 12 November 1999, p. 1272). Although the Caltech committee found no conclusive evidence that women suffer in terms of salary or space, panel members say that the paucity of women made it difficult to carry out a meaningful statistical analysis or provide the necessary anonymity. The panel was chaired by astronomer Anneila Sargent.

The most sweeping recommendation in the report is to increase the number of female faculty members from the current 11% to



Storming the castle. OMB director Mitch Daniels wants to transfer money from three Smithsonian research centers.



Administration would also be moved.

Last week, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) wrote Smithsonian secretary Lawrence Small that it intended to take \$35 million away from his agency's 2003 budget and give it to NSF. The proposal, still under wraps by the Bush Administration, came as a surprise to Smithsonian officials wrestling with their own controversial plan to restructure science at the institution's 16 museums, National Zoo, and half-dozen research centers. Scientists at the affected institutes—the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC), and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute—would be free to compete for funding under NSF's regular programs.