

strategic assessments and studies outside the agency, and provide an additional outreach to the professional community concerned with such environmental problems.

AAAS will structure a 3- or 4-day orientation for the fellows with particular emphasis on environmental R&D and arrange for weekly seminars.

The selection committee for the program included: Roger Cortesi, associate deputy assistant administrator, Office of Health Research, EPA; Warren Easley, director, Regulatory Affairs, Monsanto Company; David Gushee, chief, Environmental and Natural Resources Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; William Moomaw, professor of chemistry, Williams College; Martha Sager, director, Environmental Systems Management Program, American University; Richard A. Scribner, manager, Science and Policy Programs, AAAS; Dennis Tirpak, director, Office of Exploratory Research, EPA; and Phyllis Windle, science and diplomacy fellow, Office of Environmental and Health, U.S. Department of State.

Puerto Rican Scientists Call for New Organization and Reforms in Science Education

At a recent meeting, Puerto Rican scientists and science students called for the creation of an organization to serve their interests and drafted recommendations for increasing their number and status in scientific, biomedical, and technical fields.

The meeting was held 22-24 April in Bethesda, Maryland, under the auspices of the AAAS and 12 institutes and divisions of the National Institutes of Health. Seventy-five Puerto Rican scientists, engineers, and students, mostly from the mainland United States, presented background papers, held work sessions on topics arranged by educational level, and heard panelists and speakers. The conference was chaired by S. Maria Hardy, physiologist, Louisiana State University at Shreveport, and chairperson, AAAS Committee on Opportunities in Science (OOS).

The conferees decried federal budget cuts which they perceived as conflicting with their goals. Among those cuts are: (i) proposals to eliminate the National Health Service Corps scholarship; (ii)



Mendez (left) and Raub at meeting of Puerto Rican scientists. [Photo Cesar Rodriguez]

proposed termination of National Science Foundation science education and research support for minority scientists; (iii) reductions in funding of the major NIH programs for minorities in biomedicine; and (iv) cuts in the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants.

Calling the distinction between mainland and island an artificial one, conferees called for much closer interaction and exchange through both formal and informal means. Puerto Rican scientists may work part of their professional lives in Puerto Rico and part on the mainland, so the meeting asked for a unified scientific association which includes both locations. However, on matters of education policy, inherent difference must be taken into account. For example, a resolution on bilingual instruction must note the native language.

Controversy surrounding the practice of "tracking" students by ability level, methods and objectives of organizing, and other topics surfaced during the meeting. The subject of statehood versus independence for the island was talked about among scientists between sessions but did not result in a formal resolution.

Recommendations which were endorsed included the following:

- 1) Materials should be produced which publicize the achievements of Puerto Rican scientists to encourage Puerto Rican students to think about such careers.

- 2) Wider dissemination should be made of traveling exhibits which offer students "hands on" experience in science to motivate them to pursue further study in technical fields.

- 3) The director of Puerto Rican scien-

tists must be updated and computerized for use in role model projects, network creation, and peer review assignments by science agencies.

- 4) Career orientation programs should be initiated to brief Puerto Rican (and other) students on graduate school application, financial aid, and the availability of academic resources, and research opportunities for undergraduate students.

- 5) Student attendance at scientific meetings should be encouraged as a way to learn how scientists conduct their business and to establish contacts.

- 6) Churches, Puerto Rican clubs, and Spanish language media should be used to disseminate information about science and scientists.

The scientists decided to set up regional networks around the United States and on the island as a prelude to creating a national association, which might be formed next January at the AAAS meeting in Washington, D.C. Besides the island, regional centers are proposed for New York, California, the Rocky Mountains states, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., with possible future sites in Texas, the Southeast, and the Chicago area.

The Office of Opportunities in Science at AAAS will serve as "mailbox" for the regional groups until the national organization takes over the function.

Conference speakers included Major General Enrique Mendez, deputy surgeon general of the United States Army and currently the highest ranking Puerto Rican in the military. Mendez pointed to the positive effect of the long tradition of Hispanic culture in the United States and its notable absence from publications