

associated with CNRS with this status—the rest will simply teach.

The reaction to Courtillot's upheaval is not wholly negative, however. Jean Pailhous, director of the CNRS Cognition and Movement laboratory at the University of Aix-Marseille, for one, argues that the reforms were needed. "At last we have the impression that higher education has a research policy which complements the CNRS policy without replacing it or entering into conflict with it," he says. "Certainly, some people are probably unhappy, but they're not likely to be doing much research," says Pailhous.

Jacques Curie, professor in social sciences at the University of Toulouse II, is another supporter. By concentrating grants on the best researchers, he says, universities will no longer "under-optimize grant money." But he worries that the whole system could come unstuck.

"The links between CNRS and the Ministry of Education are fragile," says Curie. Just 2 years ago, Allègre, who had lost his campaign to become director of CNRS, was clashing swords with the successful candidate, François Kourilsky. Now, while Allègre



Claude Allègre

and Courtillot are trying to strengthen the links between the universities and CNRS, Kourilsky, backed by the research minister, Hubert Curien, is lending his weight to the

opposite policy of "dissociation."

To encourage growth in the provinces, Kourilsky says he will not associate CNRS with any new university laboratories in Paris. But Paris is just where Courtillot is spending extra money to give dynamic new research groups a special boost. By the time their 4-year Ministry of Education contracts expire, Courtillot expects these groups to have forged links with the CNRS. "It is obvious that if, after 4 years, these young groups come against a wall of nonrecognition by CNRS, there will be massive problems in higher education," says Pailhous.

After 50 years as the unchallenged leader of French research it is no surprise that CNRS is in no hurry to accommodate the universities. But that could quickly change. Allègre had been widely tipped to be the next minister of research. If that were to happen, the tectonic forces that have been driving the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Research in opposite directions would rapidly diminish. ■ PETER COLES

Peter Coles is a free-lance journalist living in Paris.

Mid-Course Correction at LBL Genome Center

Last week, Charles Shank, director of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory (LBL), announced that Berkeley geneticist Jasper Rine has been appointed acting director of LBL's troubled Human Genome Center. The announcement indicates that a controversial plan to run the center by committee (*Science*, 26 April, p. 500) has undergone a slight metamorphosis.

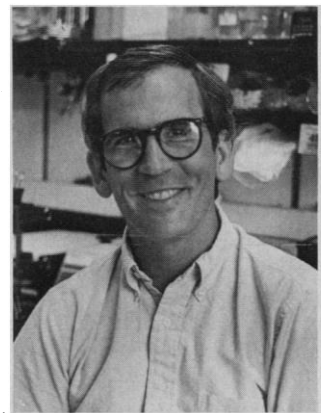
The center has been without a director since Charles Cantor stepped down almost a year ago. Finding a replacement, however, has proved tough. Earlier this year, when it became abundantly clear that LBL was not going to snag anyone of the caliber it wanted, like first choice Leroy Hood of Caltech, Shank and his advisers settled on an admittedly risky new strategy. Their solution was to appoint a top-flight committee to run the center while at the same time actively recruiting a handful of hot young scientists at the assistant professor level. The hope was that one of them would emerge as natural leader within a few years.

Rine's appointment does not signal a renunciation of the plan, insists geneticist Gerald Rubin of the University of California at Berkeley and one of the plan's chief architects. It simply reflects the "realization that there has to be someone on the scene to make the day-to-day decisions," he says. Several critics within the national laboratories made just that point when the plan first went public last April; indeed, they predicted it would fail.

Rine, 38, who was traveling and unavailable for comment, is a relative newcomer to genome research, though he entered with a bang about a year ago with an ambitious project to map the dog genome (*Science*, 19 April, p. 382). Rubin describes Rine as "committed to seeing the genome center succeed. He is also one of the smartest people I know." Rine was active in the search for a new center director and, indeed, is on the advisory

committee that Shank set up a couple of months ago to give overall direction to the genome center, along with Rubin and genome experts Leroy Hood, David Cox of UC San Francisco, and David Botstein of Stanford. Says Rubin: "We realized running the center takes more time than Hood, Botstein, and Cox can give." The committee, which will meet every 2 months, will still set overall policy, say both Rubin and Sylvia Spengler, who has been running the center since Cantor's departure, but it will be advising Rine and not Shank. Indeed, the committee is planning a 2-day retreat this July to hash out just what the center's mission should be—to figure out, as Rubin describes it, how to match the considerable resources at LBL with the unmet needs of the Human Genome Project.

Meanwhile, LBL has just recruited Michael Palazzolo, who comes from Maynard Olson's lab at Washington University in St. Louis, considered one of the best genome labs in the country. Palazzolo will bring a postdoc, Charles Martin, and two technicians from St. Louis when he arrives in July. "Palazzolo is exactly the kind of person we had hoped to get," effuses Rubin. "Things are going well. I am very optimistic. All we need are two more like Palazzolo and we will be on our way." ■ LESLIE ROBERTS



Jasper Rine