



**Choosing life (science).** Daniel Goldin and the space station.

## Goldin Dives Into Life Science

In a move that offers clues to the vision he is seeking for his agency, NASA's new administrator Daniel Goldin has spent much of the past 6 weeks being briefed by a normally obscure part of the NASA community—its life scientists.

According to Goldin's spokesman and several NASA science officials, the administrator has met on at least six separate occasions—including two 5-hour Saturday sessions—with two dozen or so bench scientists, both within and outside the agency. Goldin, who has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the City College of New York, is anxious

to expand his understanding of biology, says spokesman Bill Livingstone. The reason? Goldin is convinced that life science research is the prime justification for the space station, and he is looking to arm himself with detail before embarking on a round of briefings with members of Congress.

So far, Goldin's briefers have focused mostly on space physiology, suggesting that the administrator will continue to emphasize the importance of station-based research to long-term manned exploration of the solar system. As far as the scientists themselves are concerned, however, it's exhilarating just to have the agency's head asking them tough technical questions about their work. "We're a small part of the agency, so it's nice to see some interest from our leaders," says one.

## Officials Disagree on Use of Fetal Tissue

Top U.S. health research officials can't seem to agree whether the Bush Administration's recent plan for a network of fetal tissue banks—an idea officially intended to encourage federally funded work with fetal tissue from spontaneous abortions and ectopic pregnancies—is the Administration's final word on the subject or simply a first step toward lifting the federal funding ban on transplant research using tissue from induced abortions.

NIH Director Bernadine Healy, for instance, told *Science* last week that the plan may be just a temporary measure. Healy, who has made no secret of her opposition to the ban, says that if an evaluation of the banks scheduled for a year from now shows that they can't provide enough usable tissue for researchers, the Administration will consider lifting its funding moratorium. Furthermore, she notes, the banks themselves could easily be used to handle material from induced abortions.

But Healy's political boss—Assistant Secretary for Health James Mason—doesn't share that view: "The department is not looking at this as a 1-year activity—it's a permanent activity as long as there's a need for human fetal tissue in research."

## PCAST Hits the Road to Study Universities

In an attempt to understand better why the administrators of research universities are increasingly concerned about the future, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) has scheduled a series of public meetings at institutions across the country, intended to solicit public comment for a study on the health of research institutions.

The council has scheduled six meetings (see table) to discuss the relationship between research universities and the federal government, particularly where it touches on research facilities, peer review, ethnic and gender diversity in the scientific community, and federal support for research. Each meeting will include comments from administrators, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and state or industry officials.

Recent PCAST discussions on the subject have been open to the public, a departure from the council's practice of closing all but a brief introductory section of its meetings. PCAST announced it would open the meetings shortly after the Bureau for National Affairs, joined by *Nature* and *Science*

and *Government Report*, filed a lawsuit seeking to prevent PCAST from holding secret meetings un-

less discussions of matters such as national security or industrial secrets were involved.

PCAST's University Study Road Show

Date	Location	Host Institution
24 June	Cambridge, MA	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
15 July	Berkeley, CA	University of California
17 July	Austin, TX	University of Texas
21 July	Durham, NC	Duke University
24 July	Washington, DC	National Academy of Sciences
24 Sept.	Chicago, IL	Northwestern University

## OSIR Finds Gallo Report a Hot Potato

Had everything gone according to plan, NIH's investigation of intramural AIDS researcher Robert Gallo should be all but over now. Once NIH Director Bernadine Healy signed off on the final investigative report by her agency's Office of Scientific Integrity (OSI) last March, the only hurdle left to jump before Assistant Secretary of Health James Mason could give it final approval was a review by the Office of Scientific Integrity Review (OSIR). But OSIR's review of the report is going nowhere fast.

Aides to Representative John Dingell (D-MI), who as chairman of an NIH oversight subcommittee has dogged the agency's handling of the case since last August, say that OSIR director Lyle Bivens and members of his staff have met with them twice in the past month to ask for their concerns about OSI's final report. Dingell's aides showed Bivens and his staff a 46-page critique that accuses OSI of overlooking important evidence against Gallo and of "construct[ing]

its own arguments exculpatory to Gallo." The message was clear: If Bivens approves the OSI report, he will have to answer the subcommittee's complaints in a public hearing. "It's a terrible dilemma," says one individual present at the meetings. "If they sign off on the report, they and Mason and everyone up the line will be called to account."

Bivens declined to comment on the subject. But subcommittee aides say Bivens told them he is unlikely to challenge Healy by sending the report back to OSI for additional work. At the same time, however, he reportedly told them that the OSIR review would likely take another 2 months.

The recently announced reorganization of OSI and OSIR, which merges the two offices and eliminates OSIR's case review responsibilities, isn't going to lift Bivens off the horns of his dilemma, either. In an interview last week, Mason said the review of the Gallo report would continue despite the reorganization.