federal suit, filed 21 August.

Meanwhile, conflicts over evolution are simmering on other fronts. An Ohio committee developing new science teaching standards is also being asked to allow teachers to "teach the controversy." The panel meets 14 to 15 October to prepare a recommendation to the state board of education. And in Kansas, two moderates lost their primary bids this summer to remain on the state board of education, improving the chances that conservatives could capture half of the seats in the November general election. The board attracted national attention in 1999 after taking a pro–intelligent design stance that was rescinded by the current board.

–CONSTANCE HOLDEN

WOMEN IN SCIENCE

## Japanese Societies Tackle Gender Issues

**TOKYO**—Next week some 30 national academic societies will meet here to tackle a subject they have been slow to examine: the dearth of women in the scientific and engineering work force. The meeting marks the debut of a coalition on gender issues that could be a powerful force for change, say advocates, if it's willing to address tough issues such as sexual harassment and a glass ceiling for managers.

The nascent organization, which doesn't have an English name yet, represents more than 100,000 working scientists in disciplines from basic physics to mechanical engineering to architecture. "Given the size of their memberships, they should be able to produce results," says Mariko Kato, an astrophysicist at Keio University in Yokohama and a longtime activist in the effort to improve conditions for women scientists. "But I'm waiting to see what they do next."

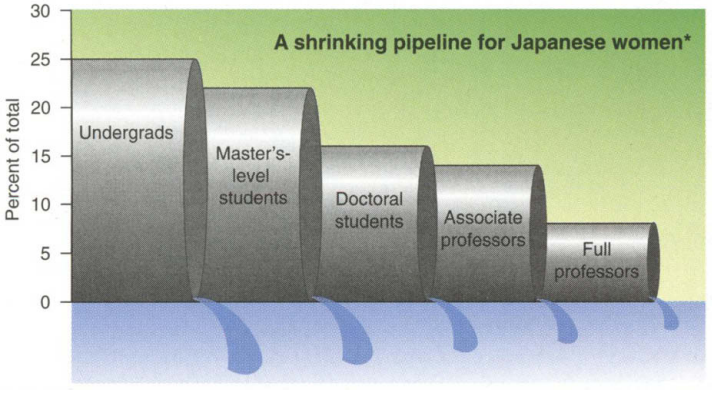
The new focus on gender issues in science in Japan traces its origins to a committee of the Japan Society of Applied Physics (JSAP), which last fall surveyed its 23,000 members about working conditions, job satisfaction, and balancing career and family responsibilities. The survey confirmed a lot of common suspicions: Men climb career ladders faster and go higher than women (see graph). Men spend more time on the job and do less housework, particularly during their 30s and 40s. Male researchers in their 40s and 50s are more likely to be married and have more children than their female counterparts, suggesting that women tend either to drop out of the work force to raise families or to eschew a family to focus on their career. Both men and women overwhelmingly want a better balance between work and family responsibilities.

Subsequent discussions within the committee and at small symposia have focused on issues raised previously by other groups (*Science*, 2 February 2001, p. 817; 20 April 2001, p. 416). They include the need to examine regulations and unwritten customs that make it difficult for women to reenter the scientific work force after having children, the value of child care leaves for men, and the importance of having women on research teams and as managers of large projects.

The JSAP committee decided that there was strength in numbers. "We realized there is no point in each society pursuing such activities on its own," says Kashiko Kodate, a physicist at Japan Women's University in Tokyo, who chairs the committee. JSAP contacted the Physical Society of Japan, the Chemical Society of Japan, and several other academic groups, which drew up plans for next week's formation of a liaison council. Their combined membership has caught the eye of a long list of politicians and government officials, who will offer statements of support. Participants are expected to adopt a resolution calling on government, industry, and academia to address gender-equity issues.

Kazuo Kitahara, a physicist at International Christian University in Tokyo and current president of the Physical Society, admits that the group's goals and how to pursue them "are still under development." But he agrees that it needs to move toward framing concrete proposals. "If the liaison council could produce some definitive resolutions, that would have a big impact on the Ministry of Education and also the national universities," he says. "I think the council should move in that direction; otherwise it will just be [another group] holding meetings."

–DENNIS NORMILE

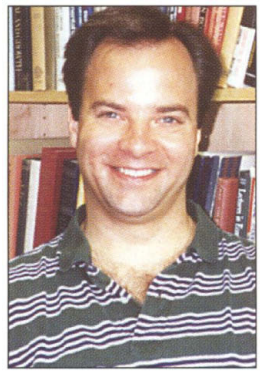



* Student percentages refer to the natural sciences; faculty numbers cover all disciplines.

BIOMEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

## White House Adviser Tapped to Head FDA

After 20 months without one, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) might soon have a new boss. Last week, President George W. Bush announced his choice for the next commissioner: Mark McClellan, a 39-year-old economist, physician, and current White House adviser. McClellan has impressive bipartisan credentials—he comes from a prominent Texas Republican family and has occupied posts in both the Clinton and Bush Administrations—but he has never run anything like the 10,000-person FDA, which governs everything from pharmaceutical products to genetically modified food.



**New prescription.** Mark McClellan is an economist and physician.

The FDA appointment has been mired in politics since President Bush took office. Democrats such as Senator Edward Kennedy (D–MA), chair of the panel that screens the nomination for Senate confirmation, let it be known that they would oppose any candidate with close ties to the pharmaceutical industry. At the same time, some conservatives reportedly were looking for a nominee who would halt sales of the "abortion pill," RU-486.

McClellan apparently has no industry ties, and it's not known how he will respond to the RU-486 controversy, but friends and co-workers say they can't imagine a more able candidate. "One of the things he'll bring [to FDA] is a great sense of fairness and pragmatism," says Alan Garber, director of the Center for Health Policy at Stanford University, where McClellan worked for several years. "He's not an ideologue by any means." McClellan declined to comment before being confirmed.

McClellan's career has crossed many boundaries. He studied economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) while enrolled in a joint Harvard-MIT medical training program. After a medical residency in Boston, he relocated to Stanford University, where he treated patients, advised medical school students, and conducted research on a favorite subject: the economics of medical technology. In 1998, he was appointed deputy assistant secretary for economic policy at the U.S. Treasury under then-President Bill Clinton, where he spent much

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