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 The board attracted national attention in 1999 after taking a pro–intelligent design stance that was rescinded by the current board.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."

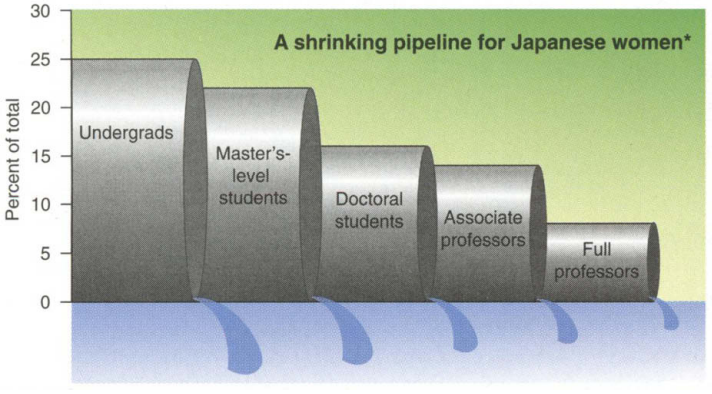
The new focus on gender issues in science in Japan traces its origins to a committee of the Japan Society of Applied Physics (JSAP), which last fall surveyed its 23,000 members about working conditions, job satisfaction, and balancing career and family responsibilities. The survey confirmed a lot of 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

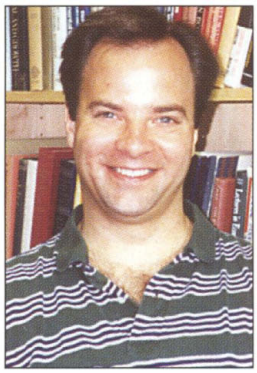


* Student percentages refer to the natural sciences; faculty numbers cover all disciplines.

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

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) MARK MCCLELLAN; SOURCE: JAPAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

of the time advancing the Administration's policy on Medicare reform. Currently, he sits on the Council of Economic Advisors.

FDA, though, doesn't deal much in academic issues. It faces an array of practical challenges, including an overhaul of its food safety division for improved biodefense; concerns about how to protect human subjects in drug trials; new worries about West Nile virus contaminating blood and transplanted organs; and a long-running budget battle. Without commenting on McClellan, FDA senior associate commissioner Murray Lumpkin confirms that the agency is confronting an unusual set of new obligations.

Those who know McClellan have no doubt he'll rise to the challenge. "He is gifted at searching out the room in the center where a compromise can be struck," says a former colleague at the Treasury Department. "I have zero concern about his ability to manage that agency."

One of McClellan's unique traits, says longtime friend and Harvard economist David Cutler, is his willingness to let the data overcome personal biases, as in a paper the pair produced showing that the benefits of new technologies to treat heart attacks outweighed their high cost—contrary to their expectations.

Cutler acknowledges, though, that McClellan probably wouldn't enjoy the "very political parts of the job," which might be "the things he'd do worst at or like the least." But Cutler and others who have worked with McClellan are convinced that his wide-ranging gifts will offset any shortcomings. **–JENNIFER COUZIN**

FRENCH SCIENCE

Scientists Blast Budgetary Bad News

PARIS—If the phrase "lies, damn lies, and statistics" hadn't already been coined, French researchers might have been tempted to do so last week when the government unveiled competing versions of its civil R&D budget for 2003.

Figures released by the Finance and Research ministries paint strikingly different pictures. According to the Finance Ministry, the 2003 budget would shrink by 0.8% to €8.65 billion—from €8.72 billion in 2002—whereas the Research Ministry has it rising by 1.4% to €8.84 billion. SNCS, a leading researchers' union, contends that the budget is in fact going down, and by week's end it had collected signatures from more than 1000 lab chiefs and rank-and-file scientists on a petition claiming that the cuts would have a "severe impact on the dynamism of our research."

The bizarre budgetary duet played out at the annual budget press conferences here last week. At the Research Ministry's unveiling, new minister Claudie Haigneré claimed that the R&D budget was even healthier than the numbers indicated, as her ministry intended to carry over "very probably more than" €720 million in unspent cash from 2002, thus raising the budget by 5.3%. The former astronaut's budgetary magic dazzled—and befuddled—a room full of journalists. "Is the budget up or down; is it a success or a failure?" asked one anguished reporter.

Analyses suggest that the finance figures are nearer the truth. The Research Ministry's projected gains include €250 million next year in extra budgetary authority, including the French Petroleum Institute's €200 million budget and money from a handful of other programs. Moreover, much of the funds that Haigneré intends to carry over are not under her control, asserts SNCS secretary-general Jacques Fossey. "More than half belongs to the laboratories; the public research institutes merely act as bankers," he says. By SNCS's calculations, the 2003 figure is a 1.3% drop, or about 3% after inflation.

Even though rumors of a 7.6% cut in civilian R&D proved unfounded, many scientists are furious. "This is one of the most catastrophic research budgets we have had in living memory," says chemist Henri Audier, a board director of the basic research agency CNRS. Spending on research grants would fall by 11% overall, with CNRS absorbing a 17% hit. "It will be very difficult to launch any new projects without sacrificing existing ones," Audier says. In another sleight of hand, the draft budget—which must be approved by parliament—would create 400 temporary (18-month-long) postdoc positions at the institutes while scrapping 150 permanent posts. Universities would fare a bit better, winning an extra 420 positions for lecturers and professors.

"In France," grouses one researcher, "every time the right comes to power, research is one of its first victims." That characterization, however, is rejected by Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin. "You will see that we will invest more in research in 2003 than in 2002," he claimed in a television interview. Haigneré, meanwhile, insists that the draft budget is "transparent and true." Observers expect the budget to pass with minor tweaks later this year. **–BARBARA CASASSUS**

Barbara Casassus is a freelance writer in Paris.

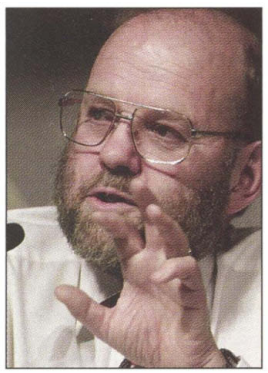
Looking on the bright side. Claudie Haigneré's figures show an increase for research; others' show a decrease.

CREDITS: (LEFT TO RIGHT) CARON PHILIPPE/CORBIS SYGMA; JOE MARQUETTE/AP

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Cloning Pioneer Heads Toward Human Frontier

BERLIN—The father of Dolly the lamb is hoping to blaze a new trail in the science of cloning: He plans to apply the technology in the controversial arena of human embryonic stem cell research. In a briefing for journalists here last week, Ian Wilmut, leader of the team at the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh, U.K., that 6 years ago produced the world's first mammal cloned from an adult cell, announced that his group will attempt to use nuclear transfer to create human embryos that are genetically identical to adult donor cells. These embryos would then be tapped for stem cell lines.



Pushing forward. Ian Wilmut wants to clone human cells.

Wilmut and his team are not the first out of the blocks to try nuclear transfer experiments with human tissue, but they appear to be the first to test the United Kingdom's new procedures for approving such studies. The creation of cloned embryos is allowed in the U.K. as long as a license is obtained from the U.K.'s Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). An HFEA spokesperson confirms that Wilmut's group would be the first to apply for a license. So-called reproductive cloning—implanting a cloned human embryo into a surrogate mother—is illegal in the United Kingdom and is not being contemplated by Wilmut.

Several teams have attempted nuclear transfer using human embryos in secret—with little apparent success. Advanced Cell Technology (ACT), a biotech firm in Worcester, Massachusetts, reported last year that its scientists had produced early embryos but no blastocysts and therefore no