

search. OMB wants the Department of Energy to be able to assess the environmental impacts as well as the energy-producing capability of a technology, particularly when attempting to compare conventional fossil technologies with the so-called "clean" technologies, such as fluidized-bed combustion.

Until now, EPA was responsible for developing pollution-control technologies — such as stack-gas scrubbers and electrostatic precipitators — for conventional fossil power systems. DOE will pick up these programs in the swap; in return EPA should get research on biological effects

of energy-related pollution and perhaps even human dose-response studies, says Steve Reznick in EPA's office of research and development. But while it is rather clear which EPA programs will go to DOE, the Energy Department has been "enormously uncooperative" in deciding which programs it will give up, so the swap is progressing slowly, Reznick says.

Environmentalists outside either agency are already concerned about the move. Chief among their worries is that DOE will be so concerned about producing energy that conflicting environmental problems will get short shrift. □

Behavioral Science: Positive reinforcement

Mental health advocates are not sure exactly how much it helps to have the president's wife on their side, but in light of Jimmy Carter's budget proposals most of those advocates would tell you it doesn't hurt. Rosalynn Carter was honorary chairperson of the President's Commission on Mental Health, which early last fall called for substantial appropriations increases in mental health, alcohol and drug research (SN: 9/24/77, p. 198).

Carter's 1979 budget follows the commission's recommendations to the letter in most cases. In addition to meeting the requested increases, Carter also complied with the commission's wishes to continue funding community mental health centers through at least 1979 and to maintain clinical mental health training funds at the 1978 level.

In addition, the proposed National Science Foundation budget calls for boosts in behavioral, neural and social sciences which NSF Director Richard C. Atkinson characterized as a "whopping big increase."

And in a move that could have indirect but long-term effects on future agency funding, Carter formally announced he will press for a new cabinet-level department of education.

Highlighting the behavior-related budget proposals for 1979 are:

- \$135.4 million — a 20 percent increase over 1978—for National Institute of Mental Health research. The total NIMH budget proposal of \$545.2 million represents an 8.4 percent agency increase.
- \$21.2 million — a 30 percent increase — for National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism research. The total agency proposal of \$174.3 million is a 3.4 percent increase.
- \$45.9 million — a 35 percent increase — for National Institute on Drug Abuse research. The overall NIDA budget proposal of \$275.3 million is a 5 percent jump over 1978.
- Increases of 17 percent (to \$33.1 million) in behavioral and neural sciences and 22.5 percent (to \$29.4 million) in social science research in the NSF budget plan. Much of

that money will go toward expanding studies of behavioral development in humans and key aspects of behavioral and neural functions, as well as assessing the impact of government programs and population redistribution, according to Atkinson.

- \$284.1 million for community mental health centers, a \$15 million increase.
- \$83 million for mental health, drug and alcoholism clinical training—the same as for 1978 — plus a \$2.5 million increase in mental health research training.

The proposed education department promises to become more controversial, primarily because HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano Jr. has opposed its creation. "If Congress okays it, there will be a big thing about [who gets] federal training supports," one federal source told SCIENCE NEWS. "And I don't think Califano wants to lose [from the present HEW setup] the health training bag." □

NIH budget: Not much change

A National Institutes of Health status quo budget is in the offing, as was the case for fiscal 1978. Specifically, the 1978 budget decreased slightly after accounting for inflation. In contrast, the 1979 budget of \$2.8 billion, or an increase of \$173 million over last year, translates to 6.5 percent, or about the current rate of inflation. Thus, the actual level of support will stay about constant in real dollars at best, or perhaps even decline a little.

All areas of research are up somewhat over the 1978 fiscal budget. Cancer would receive the lion's share, followed by environmental health, cardiovascular, neurological and visual, metabolic diseases and arthritis, infectious diseases, mental health, child health; health services research and development, population and family planning, pulmonary, nutrition, dental and aging. Funding for research facilities, however, is down. □

Freshmen: On making the 'inflated' grade

It has been obvious for some time now that U.S. college campuses no longer are the frenzied incubators of desperate political and social movements. Some observers have speculated that with a change of wardrobe and hairstyle, the class of 1980 might be mistaken for its 1960 counterpart. This swing back toward conservatism is among a number of trends—some of them disturbing — reflected in a nationwide survey of 1977 college freshmen conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles and the American Council on Education.

The survey, conducted annually for the past 12 years, also indicates that many students may be entering college with "inflated" high school grades and academic preparation inferior to that of past years. More than four of every 10 students in the 200,000-student sample say that an important reason for deciding to go to college is "to improve my reading and study skills," according to UCLA's Alexander W. Astin, director of the survey.

Paradoxically, A students now outnumber C students in high school, whereas in the late 1960s C students outnumbered A students two to one. Sixty-one percent of those surveyed concede that "grading in high schools has become too easy."

Other indicators that today's college freshman is less knowledgeable than the 1967 freshman include: Less than one in three, compared with nearly one-half 10 years ago, can describe the personal freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights; just one in five (two in five in 1967) knows the difference between stocks and bonds; the percentage that can use a slide rule declined from 34 percent in 1967 to 19.3 percent. "This latter trend suggests that the ready availability of low cost hand calculators has reduced the need for students to learn how to use a slide rule," Astin says.

Other findings among the students, sampled from 374 institutions, include:

- Fifty-seven percent describe themselves as "middle of the road," politically. The percentage of liberals has declined to 27 percent, from 37 percent in 1970. At the same time, however, more than half of the freshmen favor the legalization of marijuana, and increasing numbers advocate equal rights for women and more student power and autonomy.
- A steady rise in plans for a business career (18 percent, up from 16 percent in 1976) contrasts to a declining interest in school teaching (6.9 percent, down from 8 percent a year ago). In the first survey in 1966, teaching was nearly twice as popular (21.7 percent) as business (11.6 percent).
- The "increasingly materialistic" attitude is further reflected in the percentage of students that wants to be "very well off financially" — 58.2 percent, up 3 per-