JTBPHOTO/ALAMY

would not renew Taira's contract, which ended on 31 March.

A separate committee, set up earlier this year at the University of Tokyo, interviewed Taira, Kawasaki and other lab members about the lab's management and the possibility of misconduct. It plans to report to the university's president by 10 April, and to pass the issue to the university's disciplinary panel, which will decide possible penalties in the next few months.

Ichiko Fuyuno

Additional reporting by David Cyranoski

1. Kawasaki, H. & Taira, K. *Nature* **423**, 838–842 (2003).
2. Kawasaki, H., Suyama, E., Iyo, M. & Taira, K. *Nucleic Acids Res.* **31**, 981–987 (2003).
3. Kawasaki, H. & Taira, K. *Nature* **431**, 211–217 (2004).
4. Kawasaki, H. et al. *Nature Biotechnol.* **20**, 376–380 (2002).
5. Kawasaki, H. & Taira, K. *EMBO Rep.* **3**, 443–450 (2002).

biological evolution in Islamic societies.

Jennifer Robinson, associate vice-principal for communications at McGill, says the university will ask the council to review its decision. "In our view it is a factual error," she says. "The theory of evolution is a well-established science, and intelligent design is a religious belief."

Philip Sadler, a board member of the centre and director of science education at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is more philosophical. "If he was trying to answer the question as to whether all this popularization had had an impact, he just saved the government \$40,000," says Sadler. "He found the evidence without doing the study."

Hannah Hoag

Korean science powerhouse sends Nobel laureate packing

Perhaps the relationship never had a chance. Robert Laughlin, who shared the 1998 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work on quantum fluids, was hired in July 2004 to reform the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in Daejeon. Last week, the institute's board of trustees decided not to renew his two-year contract.

Laughlin, formerly of Stanford University in California, was recruited by the office of South Korea's president, Moo Hyun Roh, to help shake up the country's university system. The reforms he proposed were fairly standard from a US perspective: he advocated competitive hiring of faculty at market rates; expanding the undergraduate student body; and running preparatory undergraduate degrees in

medicine, law and business.

Many of KAIST's 400 or so professors did not agree with Laughlin's approach. Of 278 that took part in a vote, 89% said they did not want him to continue. Choon Sup Yoon, a condensed-matter physicist who heads the faculty association, says that Laughlin's plans to expand the university's professional schools and humanities departments would have undermined KAIST's traditional status as a science and technology powerhouse. "His philosophy is totally different from what KAIST is about," says Yoon.

Another KAIST researcher, who did not want to be named, says the problem was more to do with Laughlin's attitude. "The content was not that bad. But he made enemies, probably because of a lack of experience in running

an organization," he says.

Laughlin admits that he lacked experience, but says that was not the real problem. The point of his dismissal, he says, "was to discredit the policy of hiring outsiders".

It was a stormy end to a bitter affair in which Laughlin was even at times accused of abusing his vacation privileges. Some say it was inevitable. Chan-Mo Park, head of Pohang University of Science and Technology where Laughlin still holds a post as distinguished professor, says that philosophies simply clashed. "Everything resulted from a cultural difference between the two countries," says Park. "It's a very sad story."

Laughlin finishes at KAIST in mid-July and will return to Stanford to resume teaching in the autumn.

David Cyranoski

By the board: Robert Laughlin's contract with prestigious South Korean institute has not been renewed.

SOUTHERN INDIA SEES DROP IN HIV

Good news is tempered by continued global rise.
www.nature.com/news