

will confront our civilization as a result of genetic engineering" will be the most difficult ever, and that their solution will only be complicated if those responsible for original discoveries make commercial links with industry.

The subcommittee last week found a more congenial witness in Dr Donald Kennedy, president of Stanford University, who earlier this year was advocating a "second Asilomar conference" on the problems of university-industry relationships. Kennedy, who more recently has been back-peddalling on this proposal, told the subcommittee last week of the ambivalence of research universities towards proposals for industrial support in the present climate of stagnant federal budgets. Well-ordered agreements, he said, could be beneficial, but he also pointed to the dangers of conflicts of interest, secrecy and the distortion of research training.

Universities are perhaps more than usually aware of these problems because of the advocacy of the virtues of industrial support for the research universities by the National Science Board.

Exploiting research

Stanford rules

Washington

A proposal for regulating the commercial activities of members of the Stanford University faculty is to be put to the Academic Senate at its meeting in September. One of the proposals is that members of the faculty should disclose details of consultancy agreements with commercial organizations if there are reasons to expect that conflicts of interest have arisen.

The new scheme has been worked out by a committee under Dr Ingram Olkin, professor of statistics and education at Stanford, which has recommended that the university should not invest in commercial ventures set up to exploit the results of research carried out at Stanford "if any current Stanford faculty member participates" either as a shareholder or as a manager. Similarly, the university would not accept stock in such a company as part of a licensing agreement.

The proposals have been stimulated by the recent interest in the commercial exploitation of genetic manipulation, to which several members of the Stanford faculty are in a position to contribute. But it is acknowledged that similar problems may arise in other fields, the development of computer software for example.

The case for a distant relationship between the university and commercial enterprises in which faculty members are involved is based on the fear of the conflicts of interest that could arise in making faculty appointments and promotions, allocating space and settling faculty salaries, the danger that graduate

Yugoslavs to resign

Dr Pavle Savic, President of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences since 1971, has resigned in protest against the conduct of recent elections to the Academy. His resignation, which takes effect from the academy meeting of 28 May, came as no surprise — it had been openly discussed in the Yugoslav press for the preceding three weeks.

According to Dr Savic, he resigned because of the election of someone who had served several years' rigorous imprisonment as a "cominformist". He had been informed of this one month before the elections. On checking the allegation and finding it true, Dr Savic notified the appropriate Academy officials. But the election went ahead and the "cominformist" was elected. The next day, Dr Savic announced his intention to resign. Two vice-presidents and the general secretary of the academy also resigned; they, however, will serve out their full term of office (until the end of the year) to maintain continuity of the academy's activities.

Dr Savic's walk-out, seven months before his term of office ended, is widely seen as a protest, not merely against the election, but against the prevailing atmosphere in the academy. A physicist, he had hoped, to build up the research side of the academy, concentrating on modern trends including laser physics, solid-state electronics and molecular biology. He was particularly keen to bring in younger scientists into the academy's institute. Most members, however, showed little enthusiasm for his plans.

Vera Rich

education might be distorted and the possibility that the university's external reputation might be affected adversely.

The committee also advocates a change in the method by which the rewards from agreements for the licensing of patents are shared out. At present, if Stanford research leads to a patent, the income is divided equally between the researcher, his or her department and the university as a whole. It is now suggested that if the income from some invention should exceed one half of a department's annual budget, the two-thirds of the royalty income not due to the inventor should be paid into a research fund from which all departments at Stanford could hope to benefit.

The committee has obviously been cautious, perhaps even overcautious, in its approach to consultancy agreements. At present, academics are required to disclose the amount of time they spend in this way, which must not exceed 13 days a quarter. There is no mechanism for monitoring this gentleman's understanding. In future, if the faculty agrees, faculty members may have to disclose who they work for, and for how long.

Tropical disease finance World Bank acts

After a plea by Mr Robert McNamara, who resigns as president of the World Bank on 30 June, the bank governors are expected to agree this week to contribute \$2.48 million (£1.25 million) to the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Previously, the bank has been willing to act merely as a financial adviser and banker to TDR, as one of the programme's three co-sponsors. (The others are WHO and the United Nations Development Programme.) The bank's main concern is with development loans, and it has been exploring for more than a year how to refine its policy towards the direct support of research. That review is not complete, but McNamara thought it well enough advanced that a commitment should now be made to the tropical disease programme. He carried his executive board with him, and their recommendation has now to be approved by the governors — the nations which fund the bank. There is not expected to be any opposition.

The support for TDR comes at an opportune time. First firmly established in 1977, and dealing with six diseases — malaria, schistosomiasis (bilharzia), trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), leishmaniasis, leprosy and filariasis — TDR's funds first grew rapidly but have now become roughly static at about \$24 million (£12 million) a year. Moreover Britain, which was contributing around £600,000 a year (but actually received back more in research grants, according to WHO), announced last December that it could not pay its 1981 contribution — shocking the 25 other contributing governments, many of which see little or no return in terms of research carried out in their countries.

According to the Canadian chairman of the TDR Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, Dr A. B. Morrison, the effectiveness of the programme could be "crippled in the short term" if inflationary pressures are not compensated for; and in the long term, additional resources must be mobilized to permit large-scale trials of new tools for prevention and treatment now being developed.

Even so, Britain's contribution to TDR for the present year is definitely cancelled, says the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). And although next year's is "under review", the ODA's £1,000 million of aid money this year will fall by 5 per cent a year for the next three years, making a recovery of the TDR contribution less and less likely. This should not be taken as an implicit criticism of TDR, say ODA officials. On the contrary, the programme is the best managed of all the WHO special programmes, they say, thus putting a cloud over the two remaining programmes still