

versity's income through profits accruing to the industrial centre.

The University College of Swansea in Wales is also hoping to set up a science park with local government support next year. It has won the council's support to develop a 20-acre site inside a public recreation area adjoining the university campus.

Similar schemes at the universities of Bristol and Southampton, however, have done less well. The University of Bristol has apparently abandoned its plan for a science park for lack of capital and demand from local industry. And the University of Southampton's project is held up after a refusal of planning permission.

Judy Redfearn

British academic business

NRDC prizes

The National Research Development Corporation, now united with the National Enterprise Board in the British Technology Group, hopes to develop the business sense of British academics by awarding five prizes worth £20,000 each for promising schemes to exploit research results. The prizes will be awarded on a regional basis, the overall winner receiving an extra £30,000. The corporation is also promising to consider favourably investing up to £250,000 in each of the winning proposals.

The aim is to encourage more academics to set up companies to exploit their inventions. According to the corporation, many academics have expressed an interest in doing this, although the more usual way of exploiting research results is for the corporation to take out patents which it then tries to license to industry. Some academics have severely criticized that method, claiming that the corporation is too slow and cautious. The new development suggests that the corporation is prepared to call the academics' bluff.

The corporation has always said that it lacks sufficient good ideas from academics. Nevertheless, to win a prize, academics will still have to convince the corporation of the commercial potential of their plans. Applications for the awards are invited by the end of February 1982 from people who have held postdoctoral or post-graduate studentships or a staff post in an academic institution since January 1979 and who have since either set up or are in the process of setting up a company to exploit an invention.

Applications should include a business plan giving a full description of the product to be manufactured and a marketing strategy. Entrants will be assessed on the probability of success of the business, the technical merits of the product (which must be based on novel technology) and the quality of the business plan.

The corporation is undecided about whether to make the awards in subsequent years, preferring first to assess the quality of next year's applications. **Judy Redfearn**

Swedish universities

More means fewer

Stockholm

Swedish universities are to press the government for an increase in the allocation of students by 10–15 per cent over the next two to three years, to cope with a population bulge among 16–18 year olds — but they believe they can handle the bulge with only a 1 per cent real increase in budget if staff or salaries are cut. These are the current proposals of the Universities och Hogskoleämberget (UHÄ), the national board of universities and colleges which negotiates with the Swedish government.

The proposals are radical in Swedish terms because university grants have been falling by 2 per cent a year for the past three years. Research councils (whose funds, as in most countries, are accounted for separately) have asked for a 4–5 per cent rise, but this is comparable with recent increases (3–4 per cent a year for the past two years) and is in line with a two-year-old commitment by the minister of education to increase science spending by Sw.Kr.70 million (£7 million) per year for three years. Total Swedish research and development spending is relatively low among Western countries, by comparison with gross domestic product, and most political parties in Sweden support an increase in government research spending.

The big target for savings, however, may be the university lecturers themselves. Staff costs account for 80 per cent of the UHÄ budget, and it will be possible to accommodate an increasing number of students within a nearly constant budget only by making savings on salaries. UHÄ has "no policy yet" on whether the cuts will come through redundancies, reduced replacement of retiring staff or pay cuts. Parliament must take a decision on the budget in January.

Robert Walgate

Tropical medicine

Out in the cold

The two principal British centres of education in tropical medicine, in Liverpool and London, last week published a mild but reasoned protest at the damage done by government policy. The two institutions hope to persuade the British government to relax its policy on overseas students' fees on the grounds that if overseas aid as a whole is to be reduced by 15 per cent over the next two years, the government might logically spend more on training in tropical medicine.

The argument by the two schools, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, appears discreetly as a supplement to *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine* under the title "The present state of tropical medicine in the United Kingdom". Both the London

and Liverpool schools have been hit hard by the increases in fees paid by overseas students, which were increased by government decree in the academic year beginning October 1980. Fees now amount to about £5,000 a year for courses involving clinical instruction, compared with £1,230 in earlier years. Although both schools maintained the numbers of students from overseas in the first year of the new regime — at the London school over 70 per cent of full-time students came from abroad — they are anxious about the effects in the second (and present) academic year, and in any case, they argue, the increased fees do not fully compensate for reduced support from the University Grants Committee.

The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, with support from the Wellcome Foundation, produces this 22-page booklet for general practitioners. The value of having such expertise in this country is one of the main planks of the case for the London and Liverpool schools.



The London school has also suffered from the way in which the Court of the University of London has distributed its grant from public funds. In 1979–80, its income of £2.78 million was made up of a 44 per cent subvention from the University Grants Committee (paid through the University of London), 40 per cent from research grants, 6 per cent from students' fees and a similar amount from payments for "services rendered".

The contributors to the society's report, including the society's president Dr A.J. Duggan, of the Wellcome Museum of Medical Science, and Professor D.J. Bradley, director of the Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, concentrate on two main arguments. First, the value to developing countries of work done in the United Kingdom on tropical diseases; and second the benefits to the United Kingdom in the form of indigenous expertise of value to the medical profession faced with increasing risks of "tropical" infections contracted by travellers.

The British government recently published its response to the Brandt Commission proposals on Third World development in readiness for the Mexico summit at the end of the month, in which it defends its intention to reduce overseas aid. The Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene is putting forward the Liverpool and London schools as cost-effective institutions for helping developing countries, claiming that this is not a one-way process since much of the research in this country on tropical disease is funded by the World Bank and World Health Organization (WHO).

Charles Wenz