

Research

(continued from page 1)

playgrounds. It's a situation that has some questioning who is running the show.

"Who are the professors working for, the university or the company?" asked Russell Jacoby, author of the "New Intellectuals - American Culture in the Age of Academe."

Companies often invest their money in construction of new research facilities on campuses - investments that can pay dividends when they come calling for future projects based on their relationships with the schools.

For example, Eastman Kodak, General Foods and Union Carbide helped establish a biotechnology institute at Cornell U. in 1983. And Washington U. in St. Louis has signed a 12-year contract with the Monsanto chemical corporation worth about \$100 million. And this is only the tip of the corporate-funding iceberg.

The companies, however, say this is nothing more than the reality of the modern marriage of academia and industry.

"The research universities are a tremendous resource for scientific discovery, and what this funding does is marry the discovery capability to a way to market and commercialize those findings," said Gary Barton, science communication director at Monsanto. "We can help the universities get the benefits out into society."

Corporate Conflict

But many in today's research environment fear corporate funding can lead to conflicts of interest. In some cases, it already has. In 1988-89 it was revealed that researchers at various universities reviewing TPA, a heart attack drug, also were stockholders in Genentech, Inc. the company manufacturing it.

Also, when the Allied Chemical Company funded research for plant geneticist Ray Valentine at the U. of California, Davis, they didn't know his study of nitrogen-fixation would leave campus. Later it was discovered the Calgene, a company Valentine founded, was a second site for the research.

Problems stemming from double allegiances range from criminal involvement to educational deterioration.

"When you manipulate the scientific information or decide to buy or sell stock based on information only you know - that puts you on the wrong side of the law," said Bob Roseth, director of the office of news and information at U.



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 — Russell Jacoby

of Washington.

But legal offenses aren't the only concern in the corporate research game. Some fear that professors may botch, stall or alter research to further their own financial or business agendas. Research vital to tackling disease, saving the environment or growing better crops could be jeopardized.

"It becomes a very incestuous kind of situation if there's a failure to carry out the academic responsibilities in an open environment," said Norman Scott, vice president of research at Cornell.

But Stanley Wright, director of corporate contributions for Eastman Kodak, said such fears are incidental compared to the benefits of corporate-sponsored research.

"What we're investing in is access to technology; we're actually having them help us," Wright said.

Although the potential for conflict exists when corporations spend millions, Cornell's Scott said the research is critical to the advancement of technology.

Classifieds Continued From Page 23

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