



Three Q's >>

David Asai, a cell biologist at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California, and longtime grantee of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, has been named director of HHMI's undergraduate science education program, which gives out \$45 million in grants every year. Asai, 54, replaces Stephen Barkanic, who left last August.

Q: How would you characterize the state of U.S. undergraduate science education?

Science education over the last 50 years has been a remarkable engine for creativity and discovery, but science discovery [has] become more multidisciplinary. It's important to tap the very best and brightest, no matter what they look like and where they come from.

Q: Why is diversity so important?

The complexity of some of the problems in life sciences today is impossible to measure. It really helps to have people who come from different [racial, cultural, and disciplinary] backgrounds to think about the same problems.

Q: What will be your biggest challenge?

Working at HHMI, the opportunities for having an impact on students are immense. But I won't be in the classroom anymore. It's not better, it's not worse, but it's going to take some adjustment.

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IN PRINT

HOT TYPE. An upcoming paper in *IEEE Transactions on Power Delivery* describes how global warming could shorten the working lives of electrical power transformers. But don't look for "global warming" in the title. The authors replaced it with the watered-down "ambient temperature rise" after an anonymous reviewer asserted that predictions of increasing temperatures were scientifically unfounded.

The self-censorship was done "in the interest of getting the thing published as quickly as possible," says Gerald Heydt, an electrical engineer at Arizona State University in Tempe. Heydt says the reviewer cited 400 scientists who are skeptical that humans are changing Earth's climate. The paper reports that transformers are likely to fail more often if temperatures rise by an average of 4°C over the next century, as predicted by some models.

The journal's editor, Reza Iravani, says Heydt didn't need to change the title and that the reviewer strongly supported publishing the paper. The comments, Iravani says, simply noted that "this range of temperature change has not been established."

IN BRIEF

Michael Kluse has been named director of the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington, which is managed by Battelle. Kluse, who has a master's degree in industrial and systems engi-



neering, has served as interim director of the \$760 million facility since August 2007.

The **National Academy of Sciences** last week named 72 new members and 18 new foreign associates. The list is at www.nas.edu.

NONPROFIT WORLD

IN THIS TOGETHER. Freddy Nguyen had such a hard time learning about M.D./Ph.D. programs that he vowed to help other applicants avoid a similar fate. Last month, the organization that grew out of his frustration, the American Physician Scientists Association (APSA), hosted its fourth annual meeting in Chicago. The group is doing well enough for the 26-year-old Nguyen, an M.D./Ph.D. candidate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, to step down as president and hand the reins to the next generation.

APSA (www.physicianscientists.org) has more than 1000 student members from about 120 medical schools. It organizes national and regional conferences each year where this rare breed—who face a 10-to-14-year slog—can meet fellow students, present their research, and learn from senior investigators who have traveled the same path. "It's really about connecting people across organizations," says Nguyen.

"Freddy has a remarkable passion for this," says Joseph Bast, director of the M.D./Ph.D. program at the University of Kansas Medical Center, who calls the group "a very worthwhile organization." The new president is James Pauff, who attends Ohio State University in Columbus.



Deaths

JUST CURIOUS. Albert Hofmann, the Swiss chemist whose discovery of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) fueled an era of psychedelic art and music, died of a heart attack on 29 April in Basel, Switzerland. He was 102.

Hofmann was working at Sandoz Pharmaceuticals, researching the medicinal properties of plants, when he synthesized LSD in 1938. But only 5 years later did he stumble upon its hallucinogenic effects after accidentally absorbing it through his fingertips. The resulting "fantastic pictures of extraordinary plasticity and intensive color" convinced him that the drug could help treat psychiatric illnesses, and he often used himself as a test subject.

"[Hofmann] managed to keep his almost childlike curiosity for the wonders of nature and creation," said Dieter Hagenbach and Lucius Werthmüller in a written statement from the Gaia Media Foundation, where Hofmann served as a board member.

