After all of the hoopla of the 1951 commencement, a cat lazes in the shade.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Congress Mulls Federal Rules For Transfer of Academic Credit

By Ellen S. Smith

A fter Congress returned on June 1 from its Memorial Day recess, the House Appropriations committee began considering some annual funding bills, including those for the National Science Foundation and NASA as well as for the Defense, Homeland Security and Interior departments. They began without passing a non-bonding budget resolution, a common practice in recent years.

The Association of American Universities (AAU) and other higher education associations expressed strong concern to House Education and Workforce members about certain provisions in H.R. 4283. In particular, they focused on new regulatory and reporting requirements that might jeopardize academic freedom.

In a recent report, the General Accounting Office (GAO) urged the Federal government to secure a method of insuring independence, balance and transparency in scientific advisory committees. The report, which also recommends that advisory committee members be screened for conflicts of interest, suggests that stronger efforts be made to balance views on controversial topics. The report, titled GAO-04-328, can be found at www.gao.gov.

On May 25, the National Institutes of Health held a public meeting on march-in rights as related to the drug Norvir. March-in rights give the Federal government to enforce march-in rights as related to the drug Norvir. March-in rights give the Federal government to enforce

CUMC to Study Connections Between Diabetes, Memory Loss

Understanding the link between diabetes and early dementia—as well as how diabetes relates to other causes of memory loss—is the focus of a new study at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) and approximately 40 other medical institutions nationwide. The study, called ACCORD-MIND, is the first major trial to test whether cardiovascular risk factors affect memory loss in older persons. CUMC will be the coordinating center for the northeastern United States.

“People with diabetes have a greater risk of memory loss with age and at least twice the risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease as people without diabetes,” said Ronald M. Lazar, professor of clinical neuropsychology in neuropsychology and neurological surgery at the University’s College of Physicians & Surgeons and principal investigator for ACCORD-MIND’s northeastern network.

“We want to learn how to control diabetes so that we also reduce the risk of memory decline.”

It is known that higher risk for cardiovascular problems occurs with poorly controlled blood sugar and elevated blood pressure and lipids. ACCORD-MIND researchers will determine whether more stringent control of these risk factors in diabetics will reduce structural changes in the brain and the rate of memory decline. This will be the first randomized study of long-term blood sugar control, cognitive function, and structural brain changes in people with Type 2 diabetes. Some participants will undergo brain scans using magnetic resonance imaging to learn more about structural changes that occur in the brains of people with diabetes.

“We want to learn if there is a more favorable level of control that helps minimize diabetes-related memory loss,” said Lazar. “We may even learn more about the mechanisms of some conditions like Alzheimer’s disease or stroke-related dementia.”

ACCORD-MIND is part of a larger ACCORD project focusing on reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke in people with diabetes. ACCORD-MIND will enroll about 2,800 participants at 40 sites in the Southeast, Northeast, Minnesota, Iowa and the West Coast. About 700 people from the New York-New Jersey region will participate. The larger ACCORD study will enroll about 10,000 people nationwide and last for eight years. Volunteers with diabetes who are older than 55 are needed; more information is available by calling 212-355-2920.

The research is funded by the National Institute on Aging in cooperation with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.