The Month at Caltech

Coed Progress Report

Since Caltech announced that it will admit women undergraduates, the response from young women who want to enroll as freshmen has exceeded all expectations. According to Peter Miller, director of admissions, applications are arriving at the rate of one a day. He expects to have 100 applications by the February 1 deadline. From those the admissions committee hopes to select 20 to 25 fully qualified first-year students. Additional women may be admitted as sophomore and junior transfer students; they have until April 1 to apply.

Change of Name

The Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories are now the Hale Observatories, according to a new plan of joint operation for the Carnegie Institution of Washington and Caltech. The change of name honors George Ellery Hale, founder of both observatories and one of the founders of Caltech, who did more than any other scientist of his day to awaken interest in and find support for science.

Observatories director Horace Babcock also announced the appointment of J. B. Oke, staff member and Caltech professor of astronomy, as associate director of the Observatories. Oke is known for his work on the structure and composition of the universe and for his development of electronic instrumentation.

Awards and Appointments

WILHELMUS A. J. LUXEMBURG, professor of mathematics, is the new executive officer for mathematics. Luxemburg, who has been on the Caltech faculty for 11 years, succeeds Marshall Hall Jr. who, after four years as executive officer, wants to devote more time to research in algebra and combinatorial problems concerning arrangements.

Observatories associate director Oke

Mathematics executive officer Luxemburg

Departing biologist Edgar

A native of the Netherlands, Luxemburg received his undergraduate education at the University of Leiden and his PhD at the Delft Institute of Technology. His main field of mathematics is functional analysis. During the last six years, however, he has spent a great deal of his time developing methods for applying certain techniques of model theory to conventional mathematics, thereby resolving certain paradoxes of the infinitesimal calculus that go back to the discovery of the calculus.

ROBERT EDGAR, professor of biology, left Pasadena on January 1 to become provost of College No. 6 of the University of California at Santa Cruz. A member of the Caltech faculty since 1957, Edgar has made important contributions to understanding the molecular basis of heredity. In 1965 he received the United States Steel Foundation Award in Molecular Biology, given by the National Academy of Sciences, in recognition of this work.

At Santa Cruz, College No. 6 is still unbuilt, unfunded, and unnamed; however, its new provost hopes it can start operations soon, even if classes have to be held in a dormitory.

The University of California at Santa Cruz is organized as a cluster of self-contained colleges, each with all the regular academic departments and, theoretically at least, each with a special orientation. College No. 6 will have a science "flavor"—to be implemented, Edgar hopes, by focusing on some area of general interest that will promote interdisciplinary activities and consequent interaction among all the faculty. One possibility he is currently considering is that of environmental studies.

Because he is interested in upgrading both the teaching and the learning process, Edgar also hopes that the faculty and student body of College No. 6 will be willing to experiment with applying behavioral science techniques to teaching and to their relationships with each other. He believes that much of the current student dissatisfaction stems from an academic atmosphere devoid of both feeling and action. "We faculty project a pretty unsatisfactory set of values," he says. "I'm looking for a program that will excite the faculty to teach what they want to teach rather than what they think students ought to learn. Maybe in the process we can validate authenticity in both scholarship and relationships."

WILLIAM H. CORCORAN, vice president for institute relations and professor of chemical engineering at Caltech, has won the $500 Western Electric Fund Award of the American Society for Engineering Education for excellence in the instruction of engineering students.

At Caltech, Corcoran has developed one course based on the design of artificial kidneys, and another that includes the social and economic aspects of chemical engineering. His two books are widely used in chemical engineering, and he has developed laboratory techniques that are useful in teaching the subject.

WHEELER J. NORTH, professor of environmental health engineering, was appointed in December by Governor Reagan to the State of California's Advisory Commission on Marine and Coastal Resources. An authority on marine biology and the author of several books on that subject, he serves as a consultant to the city of San Francisco and to the National Science Foundation.

Trustee No. 43

Benjamin F. Biaggini, president, chief executive officer, and director of the Southern Pacific Company, has been elected to Caltech's board of trustees. He becomes the 43rd member.

Biaggini has been associated with the Southern Pacific railroad for more than 33 years, starting as a surveyor's assistant at Ennis, Texas. He spent several years in engineering work before he was made vice president for Southern Pacific Lines in Texas and Louisiana in 1955. He became vice president of the company, with headquarters in San Francisco, in 1956; executive vice president in 1963; president in 1964; and also chief executive officer in 1968. Biaggini was born in New Orleans and was graduated magna cum laude from St. Mary's University of Texas in 1936.

Leader of America

The Caltech YMCA's Leaders of America program has been reactivated after several years in hibernation. The first visitor this year was California Assembly Minority Leader Jess Unruh on November 25 and 26.

The Leaders program was begun in 1955 with money provided in the estate of Robert Millikan. It brings important and stimulating people to campus for two or three days of mostly informal discussion with students and faculty. But in recent years the nation's increasingly affluent students have booked speakers in such numbers that the demand has far outstripped the supply—in spite of the hundreds of people now on the academic lecture circuit. The honorarium the YMCA used to provide for three days is now the going rate for a 45-minute lecture and sherry session afterwards.

Politicians, however, don't expect to be paid to talk. And although they don't usually spend much time at any one speaking engagement, Unruh stayed on campus for two days. While he did give two public addresses, he spent the greater part of his time just listening to Caltech faculty talking about the kinds of problems they thought a politician should know about.

The topics discussed centered on priorities in science and how to provide support for the future, on problems of environmental degradation and how they might be approached technologically, and on progress and predictions for relief of poverty.

When Unruh announced shortly after his Caltech stay that he would run for governor of California in 1970, at least 16 Caltech faculty members had the unusual satisfaction of knowing that a major candidate was aware of their opinions on subjects of deep concern to them. It is, after all, a rare occasion when a politician comes to the campus seeking guidance. Even so, the YMCA invited two other likely candidates for governor of California—Governor Ronald Reagan and San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto—to participate in similar programs. Reagan has said he would like to and will do so if he can work it into his schedule; Alioto has since decided not to run.