

Battalion Classifieds

Research

(Continued from page 1)

specific programs or studies, which in themselves become unclassified, Dr. Jane Armstrong, director of HARC's External Relations Office, said. The projects then are subcontracted to the universities.

"It's a mechanism whereby a faculty member can work with that kind of project without having to do it on their own campus," Armstrong said.

Greg LeRoy, director of Houston-based public interest group Public Search, said, however, that the research still shouldn't be conducted at universities that prohibit classified studies.

"They (HARC) divide a military contract into, say, 10 sections," LeRoy said. "Cutting that down, they restructure that program, calling it something else. But it still would be related to that particular program and it would be related to that particular type of research."

"That's not technically legal, but there again, no one has challenged it. I suspect a very vigorous challenge could be made, and it could go as far as the Supreme Court, but someone has to take the time to do it."

Although no litigation has been brought against HARC, LeRoy says he sees indications of "tremendous opposition" at Rice and UH to HARC's subcontracting Strategic Defense Initiative research contracting.

He cites a parallel opposition in a Science magazine survey that shows only 9.5 percent of National Academy of Science members support the SDI program and 57 percent of the faculty members in the nation's top twenty physics departments have pledged not to accept SDI funding.

Yet HARC says it receives 25 to 30 percent of its funding from SDI research, LeRoy said.

Instead of opposition to the subcontracted research, however, Hamilton said the universities benefit by allowing faculty members to work on research projects off campus.

"It's an advantage to the universities to keep certain faculty members they might lose to industry because they couldn't do that research on campus," she said.

Research done in HARC later could be applied to classified projects.

Feenan Jennings, A&M executive director of University research, said, "If the Navy, for example, wants to apply that research to something classified, they can, and it (research findings) is classified."

But some object to what they see as HARC's deception. "HARC is camouflaging military research and development so that it can be sneaked onto the Texas A&M campus in the guise of civilian research," LeRoy wrote in a general information letter.

"It is a national program to funnel contentious military programs onto local university campuses," he wrote. "It appears that HARC is a cooper-

ative effort between private defense contractors and military and intelligence agencies."

A&M does accept some classified research, Anderson said, some of which comes from the Department of Defense. He estimates the total value of department-sponsored activity is \$12 million, less that 10 percent of the total University research budget of \$176 million.

That proportion of classified research is probably stable, Anderson said. "Our general feeling is that we do not want to increase our classified activities on the campus," he said.

"If we are asked to do so," he said, "we will consider it, because neither do we wish to ban or forbid it."

"The policy, then, is that faculty members should be free to propose to assist the government in doing classified work where it is appropriate and where they wish to be involved in advanced work."

"It's a moral question. Professors at campuses are doing what they consider to be pure research, under the assumption that it will be used as such, when actually it is a National Science Foundation program, for example."

— Greg LeRoy, director of public interest group Public Search

A significant restriction that accompanies classified research, however, is the projects' demand of secrecy, Anderson said.

"(We want to) protect our classrooms from the intrusion of this sort of thing into what has always been a free and open atmosphere for inquiry and for discussion and debate," he said. "We do not want to have our faculty members inhibited in performing their roles by not being able to discuss significant parts of their own lives and their own activities."

LeRoy's objection is that not only are students and colleagues left uninformed about the researcher's work, but even the researchers do not always realize what is done with their project results.

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But Armstrong's concern about classified research at universities is for the protection of the research work.

"The required security measures are difficult to maintain," she said. "You can't necessarily let graduate students work on these projects — if they're working on it for their thesis, they must publish the thesis, but you can't publish classified materials."

"A university campus is an open, free kind of environment. And for that kind of research (classified), you need a secure environment."

Jennings also addressed the raised concern some have about the safety of classified materials on an open campus but says such research may be beneficial.

"If it contributes to the advance of knowledge and the education of the students and if A&M can do the research we should do it."

Whether or not graduate students can assist with classified projects is tentative, but their access to other research benefits is guaranteed, including use of the SX-2, the fastest supercomputer in the world.

The \$22 million computer can calculate 1.3 billion multiplications per second, performing in 23 seconds what it took HARC's previous computer, a VAX 750, one week to complete.

"Training doctoral students on a VAX is about like training them on a slide rule," Mitchell said.

Like classified research subcontracting, use of the supercomputer involves a research agreement. HARC didn't actually buy the SX-2, but instead established a cooperative research agreement with Nippon Electric Co., which invented the machine, Anderson said.

"We have quite frequent interaction with the Japanese on joint research programs that should be done on the supercomputer at HARC," Anderson said.

"Rather than sell the machine to us and take dollars out of the country," he said, "they have chosen instead to invest in HARC by making the machine available. They have also given \$500,000 a year to HARC to invest in joint research programs."

Before 1982, LeRoy said, HARC and such joint agreements couldn't even have been established because of antitrust laws. "A consortium of major universities has a monopoly on the research," he said.

Not until 1984's Cooperative Research Act, he said, did the legality of research consortiums become more stable. "But there are still very great problems with the antitrust laws," he said.

With new, immediate obstacles to confront, however, Mitchell is ready to continue HARC's expansion.

"It can help build the institutions and get the money flowing in," he said. "It can revolutionize the region, but it may possibly take 20 or 30 years."

"But I think it has merit. We'll support it. We want to make it work."

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Explosion rocks oil refinery in California

TORRANCE, Calif. (AP) — A spectacular explosion ripped through a Mobil oil refinery Tuesday evening, sending a billow of orange flame that could be seen for miles hundreds of feet into the air. "It was a huge explosion," said Anne Peterson, a nearby resident. "We all thought it was an aftershock (from an earthquake)." There were no immediate reports of injuries. A spokesman for Mobil could not be reached in a call made to corporate offices in the Los Angeles area.

uations. Pedestrians and the curious were being ordered away, however.

As firefighters battled the flames that lit the night sky for miles around the refinery in the heart of Torrance, witnesses reported that more than one explosion may have occurred.

"I was just driving down the street when I heard a big explosion and saw the flames and smoke," said Jose Torres, 28. "It was bigger than the Fourth of July. The first explosion was the biggest, but the second and third sent up the highest flames."

Los Angeles County fire companies responded, along with medical workers and a special foam fire-fighting unit, dispatcher Hubert Parker said.

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