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**JOBS OF
THE WEEK**

Last week saw the publication of yet another report on troubling trends in US science and engineering research. Sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, *ARISE: Advancing Research In Science and Engineering* sounds a familiar refrain: universities and government should provide better support to early-career faculty members, and should encourage high-risk, high-reward research. Specific recommendations include creating multi-year awards for early-career faculty members, strengthening mentoring programmes, reconsidering promotion and tenure policies, and investing more in grant-reviewing officers.

But unlike most reports of this ilk, *ARISE* does not request more government funding. Tom Cech, president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and chair of the committee behind the document, says *ARISE* focuses on “modes and mechanisms” of improvement rather than a funding infusion. If the panel wants Congress to take the report seriously, this is a wise move — too often, lawmakers receive recommendations that simply advocate more money as the solution.

And in what Cech calls the committee’s “boldest recommendation”, the report says that universities should pay a greater proportion of the salaries of faculty members, rather than forcing investigators to rely almost entirely on government funds. This might be heresy to many university administrators, but it would help early-career researchers to avoid the ultra-competitive federal funding pool.

It could also provide an incentive for more practical planning. Consider places such as Florida, where local and state funding have sparked numerous bioscience initiatives. Administrators there expect newly hired young faculty members to support themselves with federal money once their multi-year start-up packages end (see *Nature* **449**, 371; 2007). Given the current trends, this means that many good scientists will struggle when the purse-strings are cut. Universities and institutions would be wise to rethink the extent to which they incorporate salary costs into their initiatives. The *ARISE* report’s most heretical idea is one that merits serious consideration.

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