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NRC not doing job

National Research Council, a federal government agency which supplies money for Canadian research grants, is not doing its job in regard to engineering research, Dr. Rolf Kellerhels, associate Professor of Engineering charged Monday.

In one of fifteen briefs presented to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) Commission hearing to study rationalization of university research, Dr. Kellerhels said that NRC-supported research in engineering is making a totally inadequate contribution to the pressing national needs of the development of secondary industry and of careful resource management.

He said that by placing prominent and heavy weight on publications in referred journals, the NRC, with it's granting policy, (and the university with it's promotions) is encouraging not immediately relevant basic research. The university community also drifts into basic research because to many engineers basic research is intellectually more rewarding than industrial development work on local problems. Since Canadian engineering profession is so closely integrated into the American profession, research is based on American rather than Canadian priorities.

The NRC and the universities should recognise that only a relatively small percentage of university staff members make successful research directors and an even smaller number are competent to do basic research, said Dr. Kellerhels. To remedy the situation the following suggestions were offered:

With a few exceptions only projects contributing towards national needs should be funded and, to implement this the percentage of academics on Operating Grants Committees should be reduced (to be replaced by engineers).

The number of recipients of NCR grants should be reduced and grants should be given for projects, not in support of continuing work individuals.

Success of a project should be measured in terms of impact on the Canadian scene, not through publications in referred journals.

The NCR should accept the summer salaries of university members as a research expense and it should encourage the universities to employ engineering faculty staff on an eight or nine month basis. This would encourage the use of university staff and facilities for contract development and sponsoring by industry or governmental operating agencies.

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SUB Theatre

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