IDA: Marketing

Academic Research

CATHY MCAFEE / Graduate student in History of Science, Princeton University, member SDS. Research assistance for "Ernest Dorfsteil and Steven Kindred of University of Chicago SDS" and James Forte of Princeton SDS.

Today IDA has over 600 employees and an annual budget of $12 million. In addition to WSRG, IDA now does studies for the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Defense Department, the National Security Agency, the State Department, the Office of Civil Defense, and the Federal Aviation Agency. Recently, IDA has been applying its knowledge of military "control and count" to resource management to studies of oil-field development, and the poverty problem, and the draft.

Most of IDA's work is highly classified, and all of it is done at the Institute's Arlington, Va., headquarters, or at the Communications Research Center on the Princeton University campus. This is because much of IDA's scientific and administrative employees come from industrial laboratories, and from a few government agencies, almost all have tours in universities at one time. Many are recruited directly from their campus, and there is a growing trend to hire recent Ph.D.'s as academic work at IDA during their leaves of absence, and about 20 are added to the summer staff. The average length of stay of an employee at IDA is about one year.

Academic scientists are finding it increasingly difficult to pursue their careers without contributing to this kind of work. Not only do they depend on government contracts for support, but they must also become involved in defense projects merely to gain access to the information and equipment they need for research. Moreover, the prestige of a professor at a university is increasingly measured, certainly by his teaching ability, and not so much by his publication, but by the demand for his expertise in the market of the knowledge industry. The university is, in fact, pressured by its corporate members through their boards of trustees, but in practice that body, the corporation and the university have two separate policies. The formal re-