What’s been the best move by the Bush Administration on science policy?

Keiper: On stem cells, the Bush Administration in 2001 developed a policy that’s in fact a sensible compromise … that does not view nascent human life as a resource for experimentation.

Moreno: That’s a hard one.

Q: And the worst move?

Keiper: I’m unhappy with the gap between the end of the shuttle system and the arrival of the Orion [transportation] system. Those will be 5 years where the United States won’t be able to put people into space. … As a matter of national prestige, this gap ought to be avoided. This is of course not simply a Bush Administration problem, it’s budgetary pressures, it’s Congress.

Moreno: Whether they’ve intended to or not, they’ve created a terrible morale problem in sciences, … a lack of respect for evidence. … [They] search for sources of pluripotent stem cells as though they don’t need to also continue work with embryonic stem cells. This is wildly uninformed by the science.

Q: Why publish journals like yours when Washington is flooded with policy advice?

Keiper: The sorts of issues we deal with … are not only strictly science questions, they’re ethical and philosophical questions, and they should be weighed by policymakers.

Moreno: What there’s not is the vision thing. Our role is to look more broadly at the role of science in American life.