

AIP STUDENT SECTIONS

BOTH in number and in over-all membership, the Student Sections of the Institute have been growing rapidly. This in itself is not astonishing, but the rate of increase has become extremely impressive even to those of the Institute staff who have been in close touch with the Sections. An approximate tripling has occurred, both in the number of Sections (from 52 to 150) and in student membership (1500 to 5200), during the past two years.

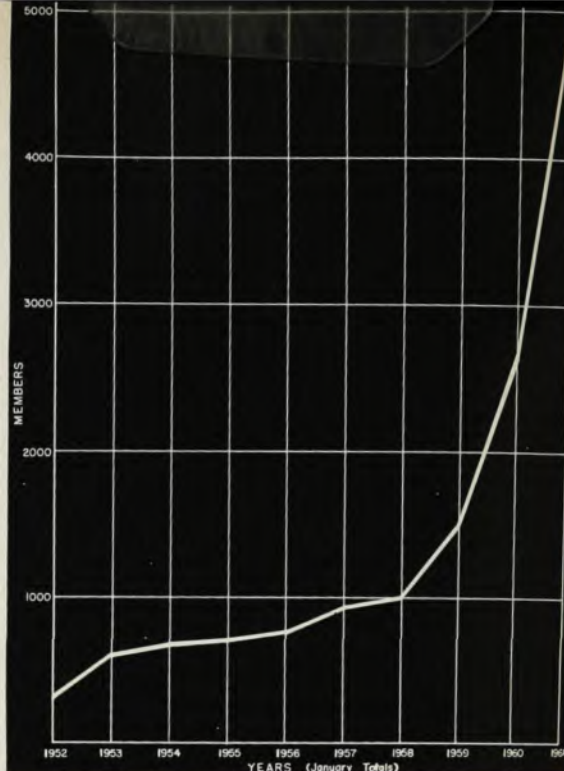
There are good reasons which might be cited for this sudden expansion of the student branch of the American Institute of Physics. Interest in physics has increased, as has the work of physicists among college undergraduates, and these influences could be expected to have encouraged the establishment of new Sections. At the same time, the action of the AIP in increasing benefits and services to the Sections cannot be minimized as a factor contributing to the surge in student membership. The additional services were instituted as a result of action on recommendations submitted two years ago by the AIP Advisory Committee for Student Sections under the chairmanship of R. S. Shankland. These recommendations served as a guide in developing the integrated Student Section Program now in operation. The benefits are summarized briefly below.

First, there are those which allow the student to keep abreast of the latest developments in physics. Falling in this category are his subscription to *Physics Today* and his receipt of the *Student Section Newsletter*. In addition, Sections may request popularized versions of papers presented at regular meetings of the Societies. These summaries are prepared by the investigators and contain good physical descriptions of the significant features of their work.

Second, aid is given the Sections in the form of supplements to their own program resources. Two lists, one of films of a review nature which are available free of charge and the other of speakers from research laboratories, have been prepared. They specify the name of the man to contact to secure a film or a speaker, and they indicate the approximate lead-time required to arrange a program.

Third, both graduate school information and career guidance and placement information are sent to the Sections. This material includes literature on graduate assistantships and fellowships, graduate physics research specialties, planning for graduate study, and information concerning employment opportunities.

Fourth, a booklet describing each of the AIP Member Societies is sent to the Sections as a means of encouraging students to think about joining professional societies of physics. Junior membership opportunities in the Societies are emphasized. To encourage attendance at scheduled Society meetings, students are registered free and a room in which a



Membership of Student Sections of the American Institute of Physics has increased more than ten times since 1952, the first year of the program.

special supplementary program is held is reserved for Student Section members. Arrangements are made for a group of lectures aimed specifically at students and their needs, presented by speakers who are giving much the same paper during the regular meeting. The timing is such that the student can hear both versions of the paper, and the result is a kind of "impedance matching" function.

Thus far, three such programs have been held. The first was at last year's spring meeting of the American Physical Society in Washington and consisted of a single lecture by S. F. Singer on "Radiation in Space". The second was at the 1960 APS (Thanksgiving) meeting in Chicago, where D. Lazarus talked on "Diffusion in Solids" and S. S. Hanna discussed "The Mössbauer Effect". The third was in January at the annual APS-AAPT meeting in New York, where P. G. Bergmann spoke on "Observables in General Relativity", L. Slifkin on "Imperfections in Solids", and H. Schopper on "The Structure of the Proton and the Neutron". Over 450 students heard the last three lectures, and many commented later that they had attended the regular sessions and felt that they had been able to follow the lectures quite well.

To sum up, the AIP Student Section Program seems to be meeting a real need, if it may be judged by its acceptance. Hopefully, it helps the student to help himself. It offers an early affiliation with the professional groups of physicists, and the services supplied to the Sections help in deciding what physics offers as a career and in determining how to go about preparing for such a career. It is important for students to make such decisions early, and they are encouraged to do just that.