APS Proposes Revised Constitution

A proposed revision of the constitution of the American Physical Society was approved by the society's council during its April meeting. The most significant proposals provide for:

- enlargement of the council by granting voting representation to the divisions
- an executive committee to prepare major business for council action and to take action on lesser matters between council meetings
- an executive secretary, elected by and responsible to the council, in charge of a staff to organize meetings, pay bills and handle other matters of day-to-day business.

The revisions have been designed to make more effective use of the divisions in accomplishing the purposes of the society, to allow the council to deal with the increasing number of issues about meetings, publications and other matters that come before it and to provide an improved mechanism for the execution of council policy. The complete revised version of the constitution appears in the June issue of the *Bulletin* of the American Physical Society. Adoption of the revisions depends on a vote by the full membership of the society, scheduled for October.

Divisions. The council has felt it necessary to change the structure of the society so that divisions could exert more influence on policy making and administration. The result would be an increase in efficiency as well as prevention of the possibility of divisions choosing to disaffiliate from the society. The membership has risen to 23 000 with 20% division-affiliated, so that the activities of the society have become quite numerous and diverse. The complex task of administrating the affairs of the society should thus properly involve the divisions. To accomplish the required change, the proposed revisions call upon each division to elect a member to a voting seat on the council for a term of four years. The resulting increase in size of the council would then in effect increase

Present and Proposed APS Offices

	Present						*Proposed*					
Office	*No.*	*How elected*	*Term (yr)*	*Max term (yr)*	*Council vote*	*Salary*	*No.*	*How elected*	*Term (yr)*	*Max term (yr)*	*Council vote*	*Salary*
Past presidents	5	A	—	—	Yes	No	3					
President	1	A	1	1	Yes	No			(remainder			
Vice-president	1	A	1	1	Yes	No			unchanged)			
Vice-pres. elect	1	M_2	1	1	Yes	No						
Secretary	1	M_2	1	∞	Yes	Yes			(renamed)			
Exec. secretary			—				1	C	1	R	Yes	Yes
Treasurer	1	M_2	1	∞	Yes	Yes	1	C	1	R	Yes	P
Business manager			—				1	C_s	T	T	No	Yes
Managing editor	1	M_2	3	∞	Yes	Yes			(renamed)			
Editor-in-chief			—				1/0	C	D_c	D_c	Yes	Yes
Sec. emeritus			—				1/0	C	1	∞	No	N
Treas. emeritus			—				1/0	C	1	∞	No	N
Div. councillors			—				X	D_d	4	2	Yes	No
Counc.-at-large	8	M_1	4	1	Yes	No	X	M_1	4	2	Yes	No
Appointive counc.	2	C	2	1	No	No			(none)			

Key—A: automatic; C: council; C_s: by council on recommendation of executive secretary; D_c: determined by council; D_d: determined by division; M_1: membership—usually more than one candidate proposed by nominating committee; M_2: membership—usually one candidate proposed by nominating committee, others by 1% of the membership; N: nominal; P: part-time; R: to retirement; T: indefinite tenure; X: one per division; 1/0: one or none.

the active participation of the membership in policy making although relative to size the number so involved would remain small compared to other comparable professional societies. At present, there are six divisions of the society: electron and atomic, high-polymer, and solid-state physics, fluid dynamics, chemical, and plasma physics. Nuclear physics, already approved by the council, may be added by 1967.

Decisions. The proposed creation of an executive committee of the council would allow the council to deal more expeditiously with policy decisions so that it can have more time to focus on longer-range issues such as divisional structure, meetings, sections and publications. Three of the seven members of this committee would be elected by the council to one-year terms. The four other members would be the president, vice-president, vice-president elect and executive secretary.

Responsibility. Under the revised constitution the operations officers of the society would be elected by the council and not, as at present, by the entire membership. Among these officers, the executive secretary, in a newly created position, would handle routine business of the society. This officer would be elected by the council to one-year terms until retirement. The position would be salaried and would include a voting seat on the council. The executive secretary would have a professional and secretarial staff and would administrate the policies of the council. The staff would include a business manager appointed by the council on recommendation of the executive secretary. This position would be salaried, but would not include a council vote. New quarters at the American Institute of Physics might be made available to the executive secretary and his staff.

Also to be elected by the council of the society would be the treasurer. He would be salaried on a part-time basis.

Another proposed revision renames the managing editor "editor-in-chief," so that his function would be more clearly spelled out. The editor-in-chief, too, would be elected by the council.

Concerning these important changes an eminent scientist-administrator, and former president of the society, W. V. Houston, who has served as an adviser to the committee on the revision of the constitution, has eloquently stated: "During its entire life, and particularly in recent years, the society has been fortunate in having the service of fellows as secretary and as treasurer who have been willing and able to devote long hours of effort, with meager compensation, to the business of the society. Such a situation cannot be expected always to exist. The proposal is that the council be able to negotiate with, and to select, such persons as executive secretary and as treasurer as can be persuaded to serve under terms which the council feels able to arrange. The provision of a one-year term implies that the executive secretary and the treasurer serve essentially at the pleasure of the council.

"Much of the intention of these amendments is to place clearly on the council the responsibility for the operations of the society. The election of the councillors then becomes the important function of individual members or groups of members in exercising their influence on society affairs. The increased size of the council provides more widespread contact than heretofore with the membership as a whole."

Officers emeriti. Two additional offices have been proposed. Essentially honorary, the posts of secretary emeritus and treasurer emeritus would be filled by council appointment. These positions would carry nominal salaries, the officers serving the council in advisory capacities.

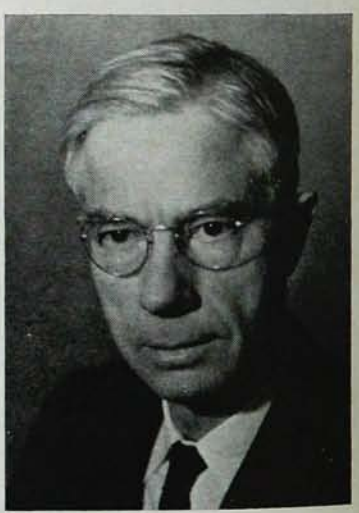
The proposed constitutional revision is the result of considerations of two committees. The 1965 committee on the organization of the APS consisted of Benjamin Lax, W. James Lyons and William W. Havens Jr, chairman. Members of the committee on the revision of the constitution were John Bardeen, Owen Chamberlain, Lyons, John A. Wheeler and Charles Townes, chairman, with Robert F. Bacher, Felix Bloch and William V. Houston as advisers.

Proposals for reconsideration of any provision can be communicated in writing by 29 July to the APS council in care of the secretary or deputy-secretary, American Physical Society, Pupin Physics Labs, 538 West 120th St., New York, N.Y. 10027. After study and modification, if necessary, a copy of the revised version of the constitution and a ballot will, tentatively, be mailed to every member on 1 Oct. The tentative deadline for receipt of marked ballots is 15 Nov.

NAS honors

The National Academy of Sciences has awarded the James Craig Watson medal to Wallace J. Eckert and has honored others by election as members and foreign associates. The academy is a private organization dedicated to furthering science and its application to human welfare. It was established in 1863 to act as an official adviser to the federal government.

Watson medal. Eckert received the Watson medal during the academy's annual meeting in Washington at the end of April. He is director of the IBM Watson Laboratory at Columbia



ECKERT

University and is professor of celestial mechanics at Columbia. The medal, given for outstanding research in the astronomical sciences, honors the 19th-century astronomer-mathematician James Craig Watson.

The award cited Eckert's recent computation of the orbit of the moon (see PHYSICS TODAY, June 1965, page