

Budget Cuts Hurt Many— But Not as Badly as Feared

The financial outlook for university physics remains grim, according to a survey just completed by the Committee on Physics and Society (COMPAS) of the American Institute of Physics. More than 80% of the department chairmen who answered said their staffs had been affected by budget cuts. Although some chairmen offered gloomy comments, the consensus appears to be that things are not as bad as some had feared a year ago.

Lewis Slack, COMPAS secretary, queried 197 PhD-granting physics and astronomy departments; 131 replied. He found that research projects of 1361 professional staff members have been affected. Extrapolation to the schools that did not answer produces an estimate of 2000 for all schools. The number of those who lost all financial support is much smaller, however. A COMPAS survey in the fall of 1967 had revealed that department chairmen expected 21% of those individuals affected to lose all support; the actual figure was 7.5%, or 102 physicists.

The mean number of faculty members continues to grow, but at a reduced rate. The growth rate has slipped from 9.1% in 1966-67 to 7.5% for the 1968-69 year. The projected rate for the year starting next September is 3.2%.

Apparently fewer faculty members than usual are leaving their posts. The number of new faculty members during the 1968-69 year was as projected, while the total turned out to be larger than anticipated.

Fewer postdoctoral fellowships were awarded during the year, but the decline was not as great as had been feared. The mean number of postdoctorals per department dropped from 7.9 to 7.4 rather than the projected 7.0. The mean number of new postdoctoral appointments per responding department fell from 3.8 to 2.8, however, even lower than the projected 3.0. For 1969-70 the study projects a mean of 2.2 new postdoctorals per department, with a mean total per department of 6.5.



EUROPEAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY members gather outside the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence during the society's first scientific meeting, "Growth Points in Physics." One American, Victor Weisskopf, was elected to the council.

The total number of graduate students continued its slow decline of the past three years, but a reversal is expected in 1969-70. Higher draft calls could make decline inevitable, however.

On the question of capital expenditures, 34% of the chairmen who responded said they had to alter plans for new buildings or equipment. Items scrapped, delayed or scaled down include accelerators, on-line computers, optical and radio telescopes and physics buildings.

The chairmen supplied comments along with their figures, some of them eloquent pleas for help. A sample of the more dismayed:

- "We have abandoned plans to construct a new physics building.

Political Storm Breaks over Appointment of NSF Director

Whether anybody likes it or not, the National Science Foundation is now in the center arena of national politics. The President's decision to reject Franklin A. Long of Cornell as the next director of the National Science Foundation because of his criticism of

There is a serious question of whether we can proceed with a PhD program."

- "If the current trend continues, studies of this kind will be useless in three years. Except in the largest, highest-quality schools, the back of most research efforts will have been broken."

- "We are advising many students to move to engineering or engineering science."

- "What you have not learned from this questionnaire is that young professors cannot get support in the present climate. Over the past two years we have lost three assistant professors because they could not obtain support. At present we have two assistant professors who are willing, capable, but are unsupported."

the antiballistic-missile system opened a crevasse; even when Nixon publicly reversed himself two weeks later and offered the job to Long again (Long rejected it), the gap was not entirely closed.

Traditional party politics was not at