editorial

The fall elections need you!

One of the few developments to inspire any feeling of hope for remedying the alienation of the college-age generation is the plan to encourage students to become involved in this fall's political campaigns.

It would help greatly to ensure the success of this movement if the students' teachers would set an example by becoming more active on campus themselves this fall, working within the political system to achieve the kind of society they, the teachers, would like to see.

From the viewpoint of physicists and other scientists, this ideal society needs to be one that appreciates the value of basic research and is willing to support it at some reasonable level. Most physicists are by now resigned to the fact that future support will be at a reduced level compared with that in pre-Vietnam days. But possibly too few physicists realize that even a reduced budget can not be taken for granted. There is little evidence that the public and Congress really understand the value of and the need for basic research. To be assured of even minimal support scientists are going to have to renew their efforts to explain what science is about and compete vigorously in Washington along with all the other groups who are looking to the government for funds.

As Senator Kennedy points out on page 73, scientists as a group and as individuals have much to learn about the techniques of this kind of competition.

If you are a physicist on campus (or in a laboratory anywhere, for that matter), the most practical step you can take at the moment, both to further your ideals of what society should be and to help make sure physics gets at least minimum support, is to get involved in the fall election campaigns yourself. Chances are you don't know the names of the candidates running for Congress in your district. Find out who they are, and when you decide which man you want to back get him out to the campus for a visit. (Now during election is the time, of course, when candidates are most available.) And, while he is touring your lab and learning something about physics research, make sure you get a chance to introduce him to some of those bearded, long-haired alienated students.

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