

editorial

The new physics register

During January keep an eye on your mail for an envelope from AIP containing the new physics register questionnaire. Known officially as the APS-AIP 1973 Register of Physicists and Related Scientists, you will find it resembles in appearance the old National Register that you have been used to getting from the National Science Foundation.

One important difference is that the money for the new register is not coming from the Government; it is coming from the physics community itself. As we mentioned previously on this page (April, page 88), when NSF was forced to discontinue the National Register last year APS and AIP decided it was imperative that the physics community take over the job of collecting data about physicists on its own. The cost of the new 1973 survey (about \$150 000), while small for a government agency, is a significant burden for APS and AIP budgets. But it is absolutely essential to continue a survey activity of this kind if physicists are to be accurately informed about key problems such as the employment picture in the various subdisciplines. Information gathered about the distribution of physicists according to subdiscipline, kind of institution, job function, salary, meeting attendance and so on will enable the professional societies to assess trends in the field and determine the kinds of services most needed by their members.

Since it has been designed especially for the needs of the physics community, the new questionnaire will provide more and better information than the old one. One difference is that questionnaires will go to nonphysicist as well as physicist members of the societies affiliated with AIP. As a result the 1973 survey will be able to furnish information about the relationship of physics to neighboring disciplines. In addition to the funds being provided by APS for the basic survey, the Optical Society of America and the Society of Rheology, as well as APS, have already agreed to contribute funds to pay for the computer

processing of information provided by the nonphysicist members of their organizations.

In addition, a lot of effort has gone into including on the list of recipients, the names of physicists who are not affiliated with any of the societies.

In the last National Register about 80% of PhD physicists returned their questionnaires, as did 70% of non-PhD physicists. This is certainly a good response, but we hope for an even better response to the new questionnaire now being mailed. Remember, when you see it in the mail, that your money helped pay for it—make sure it doesn't go to waste.

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