

Bachelor's-degree grads find more jobs, higher pay

A pleasant surprise awaited seniors who received bachelor's degrees in physics last June. Following several years of poor employment prospects and difficulty in obtaining financial aid for graduate school, the class of 1973 found more graduate assistantships available and more jobs at higher pay than in any recent year.

These findings came to light upon completion of the eleventh annual Survey of Physics Bachelor's Degree Recipients, conducted during the summer of 1973 by Susanne Ellis of AIP's Manpower Division. The survey, based on the names of graduating seniors supplied by department chairmen across the country, contains a wealth of information, including data on minorities and regional breakdowns of the graduates' postbaccalaureate plans.

The improved state of affairs that greeted last year's graduates is likely to continue because the fraction of new physics bachelors entering graduate study appears to have levelled off, following several years of rapid decline (from 55% in 1966-67 to 31% in 1970-71, where it has remained stable up to the present). Even though the fraction of new bachelors entering graduate school has remained constant at about 30% over the past three years, the actual number of graduates has steadily declined over the same period. As a result, fewer PhD's are coming onto the market. Consequently, holders of bachelor's degrees find themselves in an increasingly better position with respect to employment and graduate study. In addition, it is probable that the expected growth in energy-related research will contribute to an improving market for physicists in general, Ellis told us.

The group of 1973 bachelors planning to attend graduate school found research and teaching assistantships easier to come by than did previous classes. Over two-thirds (69%) of the bachelors who chose to continue in physics were assured assistantships at the time of graduation. But, in keeping with the results of past surveys, individuals choosing other disciplines appeared to be having a harder time, with only about one-third (37%) indicating offers of assistantships. The corresponding figures for 1971-72 are 58% and 26% respectively.

The employment prospect for new graduates has improved dramatically. At graduation, less than one-quarter (23%) of the group seeking employment had not received any job offers.

This is in marked contrast to the situation in the summer of 1971, the worst recent year in terms of employment, when almost one-half (49%) of those seeking employment had received no job offers.

Reversing a trend of the last few years, a smaller amount of graduates went into high-school teaching as more positions became available in industry. High-school teaching traditionally has not been very attractive to physics bachelors because of the relatively low salaries. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the group with definite job offers last year indicated plans to work in industry (either service industry or manufacturing). This figure represents a substantial increase over the previous year's figure (52%), and it is reflected in a higher median income for physics bachelors (\$790/mo. versus \$725/mo. for the class of 1972).

The survey also revealed that the number of physics graduates has fallen below 5000 for the first time since 1959. Approximately 4900 received degrees last year. Ellis told us that this decline was foreseen and that she does not expect the figure to drop below 4800 in the near future. The smaller number represents the more committed students—an interpretation supported by the fact that the decline in enrollment between the junior and senior year for the class of 1974 was only 7%. This is the first time the drop-out rate has fallen below 10% in the entire history of the survey.

For free copies of the summary report on the survey (pub. no. R-211.5) as well as for copies of reports from past surveys, write Susanne Ellis, AIP, Manpower Division, 335 E. 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

AIP issues new index for information program

Beginning this year the American Institute of Physics will expand its Current Physics Information program to include a new comprehensive subject and author index for all primary-research journals and conference proceedings published by AIP and member societies. The publication, *Current Physics Index*, will come out quarterly, with an annual cumulative subject and author index to appear at the end of each four quarters. Volume one will begin in 1974.

Each quarterly index will contain both subject and author listings, on approximately 560 pages, covering all publications that appear during the previous quarter. The subject index

will be organized according to the Physics and Astronomy Classification Scheme (PACS) and will contain complete abstracts for approximately 4300 articles in each quarterly issue. The annual cumulative index, expected to be around 1600 pages in length, will omit abstracts but will retain the same subject classifications in addition to expanded listings in the author index.

Users of *Current Physics Index* will be able to order reprints of any indexed article from AIP. The price of an annual subscription to the entire index is \$95 to nonmembers and \$30 to members. The annual cumulative index alone will be available for \$50.

Reviews of Modern Physics seeks tutorial articles

The editorial board of *Reviews of Modern Physics* has concluded that, while the principal role of the journal should continue to be the publication of comprehensive scholarly reviews of significant topics in modern physics, *RMP* should also seek to publish perspectives and tutorial articles in rapidly developing fields.

To this end, the board has begun to solicit articles on frontier topics in physics. According to David Pines, editor of the journal, these articles are intended to convey to graduate students, and to physicists in other fields, a sense of why that topic is of great current interest, what progress has been made recently, and what are its likely future directions.

The board also plans to solicit a small number of summer-school notes, conference reports and conference summaries. Criteria for selection will include both pedagogical style and the existence of substantial current interest in the subject concerned. In a similar vein, *RMP* has begun publication of articles based on lectures given by the recipients of some of the major awards in physics.

To help physicists keep abreast of the rapidly expanding current-review literature, *RMP* now lists review articles published in other journals. Starting with the January 1974 issue, reprints of individual articles will be available.

These new directions are the result of a self-study, undertaken by the editorial board during the past year, to determine how the journal could function most effectively to improve communication among physicists. Many of these changes were suggested to the editorial board by APS members responding to a questionnaire that was distributed with the 1972 annual bal-