

New Bylaws join recently revised Constitution

The revised Constitution of The American Physical Society has been accepted by a majority vote of the membership. Subsequently, the Council accepted the revised proposed Bylaws during its meeting in New York on 17 October 1976. This action concluded the work on the revision of the Society governance documents begun in February 1975. Chien-Shiung Wu (Columbia University), then president, charged the Committee on the Constitution and Bylaws headed by Vera Kistiakowsky (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) to begin work on the Constitution, Bylaws and Council Regulations that had controlled the development and operation of the Society since 1966.

The Society has, over the past several years, established the Forum on Physics and Society, accepted the report of the Committee on the Future of The American Physical Society, undertaken the first Summer Studies, established the Panel on Public Affairs and made certain significant changes in the committee structure of the Society. In areas other than publications production and the organization of meetings, the Society has also undertaken a program of member service activities that required an improved quality of support and the broader participation of Society members in order to succeed.

The Committee concluded that it should prepare two documents: a Constitution that incorporates the fundamental objectives, philosophy and organization of the Society, amendable only after lengthy, careful and deliberate action, and Bylaws that contain the details of organization and procedure, amendable in six months or less by Council action. Versions of the proposed Constitution and Bylaws were offered to the members of the Council and of the Society for comment (see *Bulletin*, May 1976).

In September 1976 the membership of the Society approved, by vote of 6467 to 219, the proposed revised Constitution. Changes received after publication in May were incorporated in the text sent to members with the ballot. Then, in accord with the provisions of the new Constitution, the Bylaws were presented to the Council at its meeting in New York in October for final approval. The Bylaws were published in the January *Bulletin*.

The new Constitution has significantly altered these aspects of the Society's organization:

► The following are now the statutory

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committees of the Society: the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee and the Publications Committee. In addition to statutory members, the membership of the Executive Committee has been expanded to include five members of Council elected annually by Council. The Budget Committee has been discontinued because it had been meeting jointly with the Executive Committee, and also had largely overlapping membership and identical voting privileges.

► The Chairperson-Elect of the Nominating Committee is now elected by Society members and serves during the second year of the term as Chairperson. The Committee prepares slates for positions that are filled by membership election; it also provides names and information about nominees for publication before election ballots are cast. In addition, slates are prepared for some of the other standing committees as an aid to the President.

► A new mechanism has been established for the adoption or amendment of the Bylaws. A vote of two-thirds of the members of Council present at a regularly scheduled meeting is now required. Such an action may be recommended by the Executive Committee, be considered as the result of an affirmative vote by a simple majority of the members of Council present at a regularly scheduled meeting, or be considered upon receipt of

a petition signed by at least 1% of the total number of Society members. The proposed Bylaw or amendment is to be published before the second vote of Council.

► In addition to the statutory, ordinary and ad hoc committees of the Society, provision has been made for standing committees as designated in the Bylaws. These are continuing committees of the Society whose members serve staggered terms of several years to ensure continuity of the committee's work.

The recently adopted Bylaws contain these significant modifications of the procedures by which the Society functions:

► The following have been established as standing committees of the Society: Panel on Public Affairs, Committee on Professional Concerns and Opportunities, Committee on Education, Committee on Fellowship, Committee on the Applications of Physics, Committee of Representatives to the AIP Governing Board and the Finance Committee. For each standing committee, their charges have been summarized, and the number and the method of selection of their members have been detailed.

► The Panel on Public Affairs is charged to make recommendations to the President of the Society and to the Council concerning the public-affairs activities of the Society that have been designated by the Council. The fifteen members of POPA serve staggered three-year terms and are elected by Council. A Steering Committee, consisting of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, immediate past-Chairperson, the Vice-President Elect of the Society and two members of the Panel elected from among and by its members, is responsible for monitoring the continuing work of the Panel, assigning specific problems to task forces and forwarding recommendations to Council.

► Procedures and criteria have been established for use by the Nominating Committee in broadening the participation of members in Society affairs.

The new provisions and flexibility of the Constitution and Bylaws are expected to enable the Society to meet expectations of the membership for diverse programs and services that can be investigated quickly and thoroughly, organized swiftly and operated efficiently. At the same time, the continuing projects and traditional Society activities are assured of careful attention and proper support. □