

Graduate student support

In the fall of 1975 a questionnaire seeking information concerning support levels of graduate students of physics, among other things, was sent to each PhD-granting institution of physics in the United States. As is the case of a similar study conducted in 1972, about a 90% response was obtained.

GUEST COMMENT

by

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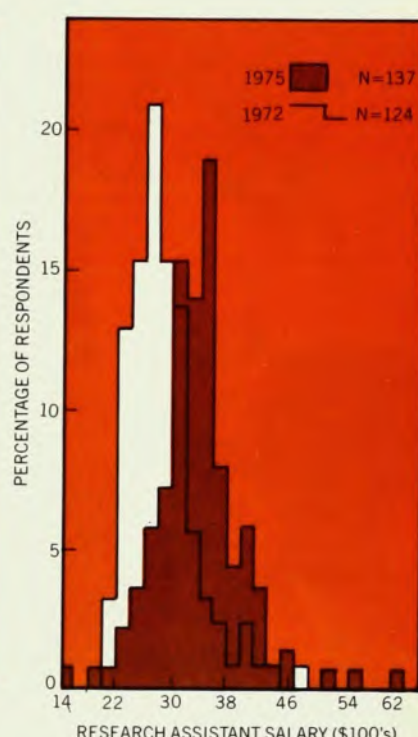
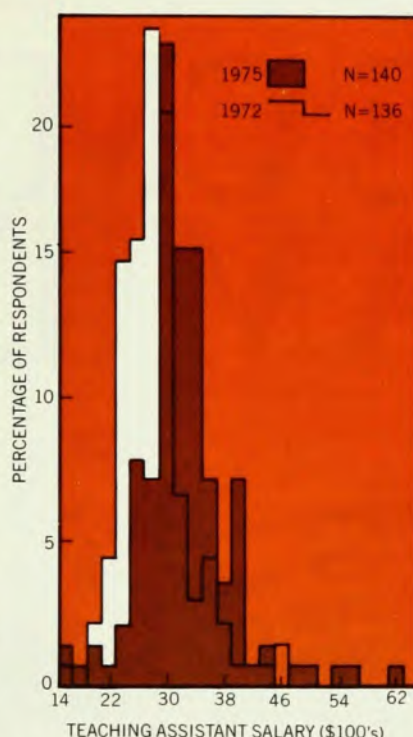
Traditionally students of physics have supported their education by means of fellowships, teaching assistantships or research assistantships. Our results from the 1975 survey again show that four out of five graduate students of physics are able to support their education by one of these traditional means. Among those who receive support we find the following distribution of the type of support:

	1972	1975
Fellowship	13%	10%
Research assistantship	43%	41%
Teaching assistantship	44%	49%

Again in 1975 an unmarried third year student was selected to gain more information. The dollar figures given below represent dollars which are available to the student after applicable tuition fees for which the student is responsible have been paid:

	1972	1975
9 month Teaching assistantship	\$2902	\$3252
9 month Research assistantship	\$2685	\$3258
12 month Teaching assistantship	\$3385	\$3909
12 month Research assistantship	\$3378	\$4288

The tuition figures used for these computations were always instate figures in those cases where instate and out of state



Salaries for Teaching (left) and Research Assistantships (right) for school year, less tuition.

tuition costs differed. A direct comparison between the 9 month support levels can be made between 1972 and 1975. In the case of 12 month support levels caution is necessary since a somewhat different percentage of cases may have offered summer support in 1975 than did so in 1972. The data have not been examined in sufficient detail to account for that possibility.

Two examples of the more detailed results of the survey are presented in the figures. In each case the histogram records the percentage of respondents in the particular survey year which fall in the various salary ranges. The salary figures represent dollars available to the unmarried third year physics graduate student after applicable tuition fees have been paid.

The 1975 questionnaire was less narrow in scope than that used in 1972. For example, information on the number of entering first year graduate students of physics, number of full time faculty, number of tenured faculty and post-doctoral salaries was requested. These data

were then tabulated in various ways. For example, the ratio of the number of entering first year students to the number of faculty was obtained for each respondent. The histogram for these particular data is broad, with a median of 0.4.

A report which contains a copy of the 1975 questionnaire and histograms of the results of the survey, including comparisons to 1972 where appropriate, has been prepared. A limited number of copies are available by postcard request.

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Laser safety

Edward Breinan, who appeared closely observing a laser glazing process on the cover of the November issue should have been wearing eyeglasses as a precaution against reflections from the laser. In view of the very high power densities involved,