

Groups study poor attendance at annual meeting

Two APS committees are studying the problem of poor attendance at the Annual Meetings. Last fall, in response to growing concern over the decline in popularity of the APS/AAPT Joint Annual Meetings, APS and AAPT established a Committee on the Annual Meeting, headed by W. W. Havens Jr and made up of representatives of both APS and AAPT. Now an APS Ad Hoc Committee on the Pattern of APS Meetings has been formed under the chairmanship of Arthur Schawlow and is turning its attention to meeting attendance as well.

The joint APS/AAPT committee has considered several factors affecting attendance, including location, timing and long-range planning of the Joint Annual Meetings. During the 1979 Annual Meeting the committee developed several observations and recommendations. A summary of these was sent to the Committee on the Pattern of Meetings for comments.

In essence, the summary emphasized that the factors causing the decline in popularity of the Annual Meeting are complex and that the variables are probably not separable.

It was pointed out that the decline in the popularity of the Annual Meeting was primarily the decline in the interest of APS members rather than that of AAPT members. The number of papers contributed to the AAPT program, the committee said, appears to have remained approximately constant for the last few years, while the number of papers contributed to the APS program has decreased.

The committee also noted that there is a general feeling among research physicists that the latest research results in physics have all but disappeared from the Annual Meeting.

Financing was also cited by the committee as a serious problem. The facilities required for the joint meeting are only available in large, luxury convention hotels where the room rates are very high. It is not reasonable to expect university staff members to stay at the headquarters hotel, the committee pointed out. One solution suggested was to hold the Annual Meeting at a large university. This possibility is now being investigated.

Noting that the attendance per con-



tributed paper at the New York Annual Meeting is much higher than at any other meeting, the committee concluded that there is a much larger commuter attendance at this meeting than at meetings that are held elsewhere. To increase commuter attendance at the Annual Meeting the committee recommended that attractive and important sessions be arranged.

A joint session with the American Association for the Advancement of Science Physics Section is being planned for the Annual meeting by Rolf Sinclair, Secretary of the AAAS Physics Section.

The summary of the APS/AAPT Joint Committee on the Annual Meeting will be reviewed by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Pattern of APS Meetings, which was asked to submit a report to the APS Executive Committee on 13 June.

Proposed amendment for executive vacancies

In 1978, when then vice president-elect Marvin Goldberger resigned, attention was called to the fact that the Constitution was ambiguous in describing how the vacancy of the office of vice president-elect should be filled. The Committee on Constitution and Bylaws has therefore recommended the following amendment to the Constitution, which will be proposed for a vote of approval by the membership with the next election ballot in October. Members may submit comments on the proposed amendment (see text at right) by writing to the Executive Secretary.

Article VII: Section 8

Vacancy in Office of President, Vice President, or Vice President-Elect. If a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall succeed and shall complete the term and shall serve as President during the following year. The Vice President-Elect shall succeed to the Vice Presidency and shall complete the term, and shall also serve as Vice President during the following year and then as President. If a vacancy occurs in the office of Vice President otherwise than through advancement to Presidency, the term of the then President shall be lengthened by one year. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Vice President-Elect otherwise than by regular advancement to the Vice Presidency, the post shall remain unfilled during the remainder of the term. If the vacancy occurs before the regular election ballot for officers has been distributed, both a Vice President and Vice President-Elect shall be elected. If the vacancy occurs after the election ballots have been distributed, a special election for Vice President-Elect shall be held. The Vice President-Elect elected by the regular ballot shall become Vice President the following year. The Vice President-Elect selected by the special election shall be Vice President-Elect for the following year. If a vacancy occurs in any other office the Council shall fill it by appointing a member to serve out the unexpired part of the term of the original officer. If a more complicated situation arises, the Council shall have power to fill any vacancy that may result. □