

POPA forms committee to assess physics-workforce issues

In October 1985 the APS Panel on Public Affairs formed an *ad hoc* committee to evaluate issues related to the physics work force, with Bernard G. Silbernagel of Exxon Research & Engineering and Peter A. Wolff of MIT as cochairmen. The other members of the committee are David Bodansky (University of Washington), Roland H. Good (Pennsylvania State University), Warren E. Henry (Howard University) and Helen R. Quinn (Stanford Linear Accelerator Center).

Members of POPA proposed that the *ad hoc* committee consider three questions initially:

- Is there a shortage in the physics work force?
- Is there some aspect of the problem that would merit an APS study?
- How can APS resources best be mobilized to address the various aspects of the problem?

To address the first two questions, committee members examined the Brinkman report, *Physics Through the 1990s* (PHYSICS TODAY, April), and an Office of Technology Assessment report of December 1985, *Demographic Trends and the Scientific and Engineering Workforce*. The committee held discussions with a number of experts, including APS Councilor Daniel Kleppner of MIT, who served on the Brinkman survey committee, John Andelin of OTA and Beverly Fearn Porter, manager of the AIP manpower-statistics division.

The committee also sent questionnaires to the heads of 197 departments that grant physics PhDs and did a more informal survey of selected industry R&D managers. Four-fifths of the departments responded, and preliminary findings point to significant weaknesses in the supply of PhDs in some key areas such as experimental condensed-matter physics.

The *ad hoc* committee concluded in an interim report this summer that there is a tightening market for physicists and that future demand is uncertain and warrants continued monitor-

ing, but that there is no present need for a formal POPA study. The committee said that existing APS committees provide ample means of grappling with work-force problems.

The *ad hoc* committee plans to meet this month with Kenneth W. Ford, the APS consultant for education programs (head, Committee on Education), John Hulm of Westinghouse (Committee on Applications of Physics), Linwood Lee of the State University of New York at Stony Brook (Committee on Opportunities in Physics), Eugene Collins of Southern University (Committee on Minorities in Physics) and Barbara Wilson of AT&T Bell Laboratories (Committee on the Status of

Women in Physics).

On 20 October, APS officers plan to meet in Somerset, New Jersey, with industry physicists to discuss the future supply of physicists, novel options for joint industrial-academic research and national support for research. This meeting will take place just before the AIP Corporate Associates meeting at Exxon R&E in Annandale, New Jersey.

POPA's *ad hoc* committee on the physics work force will soon complete a final report, which will be mailed to individuals who participated in the committee's surveys; it will be made available to the APS Council and APS members.

Newsletter in applied physics is launched

This fall the APS Committee on Applications in Physics will start a newsletter for applied physicists and other interested APS members. This initiative is a response to a suggestion made by a group of APS officers and industry representatives who got together just after the October 1985 AIP Corporate Associates meeting in Rochester, New York. Members of the group thought there was a need for a communications network for physicists working in a wide variety of applied areas.

The Committee on Applications in Physics has identified three ways in which the newsletter could be useful: to explore and publicize the spectrum of applied areas—conventional and unconventional—in which physics contributes significantly; to solicit the physics community's reactions to proposed symposium topics and candidates for CAP membership; and to highlight applied-physics activities sponsored by other APS committees, divisions and groups. Other suggestions for the contents of the newsletter will be gratefully received.

CAP is a nine-member standing committee charged with promoting and coordinating APS activities that con-

cern the applications of physics and with encouraging the participation of applied physicists in APS, its functions and publications. The committee is probably best known for the popular symposia it sponsors at APS meetings.

The members of CAP are John Hulm, chairman (Westinghouse, Pittsburgh), B. S. Chandrasekhar (Case Western Reserve), Wolfgang J. Choyke (Westinghouse, Pittsburgh), Arthur J. Epstein (Ohio State), Gilbert Hawkins (Eastman Kodak, Rochester), Daniel Murnick (AT&T Bell Laboratories, Murray Hill, New Jersey), Tihro Ohkawa (GA Technologies, San Diego), Francis W. Perkins (Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory) and Bernard G. Silbernagel (Exxon Research & Engineering Co, Annandale, New Jersey).

Please send any expressions of interest, ideas for articles or inquiries concerning the contents of the CAP newsletter to the editor, Bernard G. Silbernagel, Exxon R&E Co, Clinton Township, Route 22 East, Annandale NJ 08801. Any APS member may obtain a free copy of the newsletter by writing to CAP Newsletter, APS, 335 East 45th Street, New York NY 10017. □