

COUNCIL APPROVES NEW CONSTITUTION; MEMBERS WILL VOTE THIS SUMMER

Following two years of scrutiny and discussion, The American Physical Society council approved a new version of the APS constitution at its meeting on 28-29 April in New York. The proposed constitution is based on deliberations of a Task Force on Governance, which was established in 1988 to examine problems arising from the growth in size and complexity of APS, and which was chaired first by Eugen Merzbacher of the University of North Carolina and then by Nicolaas Bloembergen of Harvard. The new constitution is intended to streamline the decision-making process within APS and to ensure that members are fairly represented in the governing process.

APS members will vote on whether or not to adopt the new constitution this summer, when special ballots are mailed to members along with the regular forms for electing new officers and councillors. Members may consult the June issue of the *Bulletin of The American Physical Society* for the full texts of the new and old constitutions.

Under the proposed constitution, the council will be enlarged to about 40 voting members, consisting of the officers, general councillors, and councillors representing the divisions and forums. The larger council allows greater representation of the subunits, but protects the voting rights of APS members who are not associated with any division or forum. The council will meet twice a year, will focus on the broader decisions and policy issues of the society, and will review and approve the annual budget.

In the present constitution, the responsibilities of the executive committee are limited somewhat vaguely to "what the council may delegate" to it. Under the new constitution, this committee will be replaced by a new 14-member executive board, consisting of APS officers and eight councillors elected from and by the council. The executive board will carry out the decisions of the council and over-

see and approve expenditures for current APS operations. The board will also be able to "authorize public policy statements on behalf of the society if timing does not allow prior council approval." Such statements would then be submitted to the council for review.

The number of councillors allocated to each division and forum will be determined by how large its membership is in comparison to the entire APS membership. Heretofore unrecognized, topical groups are formally given a place in the new constitution, and if they reach a certain size they may become divisions entitled to representation. Geographical sections above a certain size will be allowed a non-voting adviser on the council. General councillors (formerly councillors-at-large) representing members

unaffiliated with a division or forum will be elected by the general APS membership. Their number will be proportional to the total membership not belonging to any division or forum and will not be less than 12.

The formulas for determining subunit status and representation appear in the new constitution, and values will be assigned to their variables in the bylaws. A division will be allotted N councillors if its membership exceeds NX percent of the total APS membership; topical groups as such will not be entitled to representation on the council, but a forum (currently just one) will be allotted a single councillor if its membership exceeded X percent. (A value of 3 has been suggested for X , but the idea is for the value of X to be flexible, so that the size of the council can be maintained or adjusted without a mail ballot to the whole membership.)

In general, the new constitution more carefully delineates the duties of all elements of the society, including individual members, governing bodies, officers and subunits. Many non-substantive changes have also been made to improve and clarify the language of the constitution.

Before 20 July 1990 any APS member may submit a proposal for reconsideration of any provision of the new constitution by writing to the council in care of the Executive Secretary, American Physical Society, 335 East 45 Street, New York NY 10017. These communications will be considered, and modifications in light of them may be made to the proposed constitution as published in the June *Bulletin*. The council, acting through the executive secretary, will then send a copy of the final version of the proposed new constitution to every member by mail with a ballot form for approval or disapproval.

After approval of a new constitution by the membership, the council will consider and vote on a new set of bylaws to reflect the changes and implement the intent of the new constitution. ■

Council Votes to Move APS Headquarters to Washington Area

The issue of whether or not to move APS headquarters from New York City was settled on 28 April, when the council voted to relocate with the American Institute of Physics to the area of Washington, DC. The vote capped more than two years of debate over the issue (see *PHYSICS TODAY*, May, page 71).

The following resolution was approved by the council: "Whereas it is the understanding of the council that the American Institute of Physics plans to move its headquarters from New York to within 50 miles of Washington, DC, be it resolved that The American Physical Society shall proceed with plans to relocate its headquarters with AIP and that APS will appoint a task force to participate in negotiations with AIP regarding the relocation of their respective headquarters."

The move itself will probably not begin for at least two years.