

APS SETS UP INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE, HOSTS FOREIGN SOCIETY LEADERS

In recent years the membership of The American Physical Society, as well as its core operations—meetings and publications—have become increasingly international. Foreign physicists now account for approximately 15% of APS membership, 60% of non-member journal subscriptions, 20% of invited papers at APS meetings and over half of all manuscripts submitted to the APS journals. The changing nature of APS membership and activities has the society's leaders rethinking its international programs.

"Our foreign contacts are increasing, and we are approached more frequently by foreign societies," says APS President Nicolaas Bloembergen (Harvard University). "But APS has limited funds to support its international outreach programs. There are plenty of opportunities for involvement. The question is, how much can we do?"

That and related questions prompted the APS Executive Board at its March meeting to authorize a Task Force on International Scientific Affairs, chaired by Mildred Dresselhaus (MIT). The task force will examine the society's current international programs, assess their effectiveness in light of the changing international situation and suggest opportunities for expansion and improvement.

Foreign contacts

Coinciding with the formation of the task force, APS recently hosted leaders from three prominent foreign physical societies at its New York City headquarters. APS officers met with the representatives to discuss a number of joint ventures, including conferences, workshops and reciprocal membership privileges.

On 12 March Alun Jones, chief executive of Great Britain's Institute of Physics, and IOP Publishing's managing director, Anthony Pearce, met with APS Treasurer Harry Lustig and Executive Secretary N. Richard Werthamer. With 15 000 members, IOP is the largest physical society in England; it is also a major publisher

of scientific books and journals. According to Werthamer, the IOP representatives were particularly interested in the recent report of the APS Task Force on Electronic Publishing and said that they would like to explore cooperative efforts in this area with other member societies of the American Institute of Physics. "They believe very strongly that maximal cooperation among publishers is both desirable and necessary to ensure the success of future activities in electronic publishing," Werthamer says, "and I certainly agree."

Yuri Novozhilov, vice president of the USSR Physical Society and a professor at Leningrad University, met with APS Associate Executive Secretary Brian B. Schwartz and other APS officials on 24 March, about

one year after the societies initiated contact (see *PHYSICS TODAY*, October 1990, page 109). Last October the two societies adopted a reciprocal membership arrangement, similar to those APS has with the German and Japanese physical societies.

Schwartz and Novozhilov discussed the first International School of Physics, a workshop being organized by the USSR Academy of Sciences to be held 1–15 September in Leningrad. According to Schwartz, the school is intended to "promote East–West collaboration in physics by providing advanced training for talented young scientists from the East and West." Lecturers for this year's school—entitled "The Standard Model in High Energy Physics"—are being suggested by members of the APS divisions of

Statements from The American Physical Society

The APS council passed two resolutions at its April meeting: One calls for the reopening of two Palestinian universities located on Israel's West Bank, An-Najah and Bir-Zeit, which were closed in January 1988; and the other reaffirms its statement of January 1985 on the necessity for peer review of Federally funded scientific projects. The full texts of the statements follow.

On the Reopening of Palestinian Universities

The council of The American Physical Society urges the government of Israel to promptly reopen the Palestinian universities, research laboratories and conference centers, and calls upon the government and the local Palestinian authorities to foster an environment conducive to education and scientific activity.

On Scientific Review of Research Facilities Funding

We deplore the inclusion in the Federal budget of major scientific projects that have not been subjected to the normal process of proposal submission and expert review. The consequences go beyond the diversion of scarce resources from projects of higher priority. Institutions are increasingly persuaded that political maneuvering is more important than scientific justification in securing Federal funds. Yet each year many worthy scientific projects must be abandoned or deferred for lack of funds. The developing pattern of funding major projects without subjecting them to impartial expert scrutiny diminishes science.

Quite clearly, Congress is responsible for considering a variety of factors—such as geographical balance, economic need and affirmative action—in allocating funds for major projects of any sort. We urge however that review by impartial scientific experts be an important consideration prior to any allocation of funds for research facilities.

particles and fields and physics of beams, and APS has sought funding from NSF to cover the travel expenses of invited US speakers.

In other Soviet-related activity, APS President-Elect Ernest Henley (University of Washington) was to represent the society at the First International A. D. Sakharov Conference on Physics, held in Moscow on 27–31 May.

Representing the European Physical Society, Maurice Jacob of CERN visited the APS headquarters on 3 April and met with Werthamer, Lustig and Roy Rubinstein, the chair of the Subcommittee on International Scientific Affairs. EPS is a loose federation of national physical societies in Europe. According to Lustig, its divisional structure and public affairs committees are strikingly similar to those of APS, and the officers would like to see more contact between the units of each society.

Other issues

As APS redefines its international role, Bloembergen says, one important issue to be resolved is whether the society should consider forming alliances with other major physics organizations, in addition to the reciprocal membership agreements it already has with the German, Japanese and Soviet physical societies. There is a possibility that APS could be inundated by requests from foreign societies, which Bloembergen feels

would place undue burdens on the present officers.

Another concern, says Bloembergen, is that there are now a large number of prominent foreign physicists—some of them Nobel Laureates—who are not APS Fellows. In the past fellows were nominated exclusively through the divisions, whose selection committees considered a nominee's involvement with the division as part of the criteria. Because most overseas members have no division affiliation, they were frequently passed over. To remedy this situation, the Fellowship Committee, which is chaired by Henley, recently changed the nomination process to allow nominees not associated with a division to be considered directly by the Fellowship Committee.

Werthamer feels that the society also needs to examine how its international activities are administered. "The current programs have developed in response to need, and thus the staff support for them is fragmented," he says. At his urging, the council recently authorized the creation of a 1–2 year post for a Director of International Scientific Affairs, who will help coordinate and plan APS's international activities.

"It's important to recognize that APS is an increasingly international organization," says Werthamer. "I believe our programs and operations should fully reflect that."

APS DIVISIONS STEP UP RECRUITING EFFORTS TO BOOST MEMBERSHIP

In the face of declining memberships, a number of APS divisions have undertaken strenuous recruitment efforts to attract new members and encourage lapsed members to rejoin.

The drop in division memberships resulted from the reinstatement in January 1989 of a \$5 annual fee for each subunit. Prior to 1980 APS members were charged \$2 for each subunit they belonged to, but the fees were suspended that year pending installation of a new computer system and database. The reinstatement of fees prompted some members to drop divisional affiliations, raising concern within some divisions because of new governance rules.

According to the revised APS constitution approved last year (see *PHYSICS TODAY*, June 1990, page 87), divisions are required to maintain a membership of at least 3% of the total APS membership. Divisions whose count is below or only slightly above the critical 3% level are in danger of

losing their divisional status and reverting to topical groups—a serious matter because divisions are entitled to a voting representative on the council, while topical groups are not.

Divisions whose count was below 3% at the time the constitution was adopted, such as the divisions of biological physics and high polymer physics, were grandfathered for four years. At the end of 1994, divisions that still fall short of the 3% mark will be reclassified as topical groups.

Innovative strategies

To boost their memberships, the divisions of high polymer physics and biological physics have adopted an innovative strategy: They are now encouraging members to cross-register. "A lot of our people can find scientific common ground," says Stephen H. Carr (Northwestern University), secretary-treasurer of the division of high polymer physics. His division has also mobilized a task force of 45

"hard core" members to develop other ways to raise membership. High polymer physics has now increased its membership from 2% to 2.5% of the APS total, and Carr is confident the division will meet the 3% requirement before the end of 1994.

Eugenie Mielczarak (George Mason University), secretary-treasurer of the biological physics division, says she is urging current members to actively recruit among their colleagues. And like many subunits, the division is making a strenuous effort to recruit more graduate students.

Although the division of astrophysics was well above the 3% mark prior to reinstatement of the \$5 charge, it has since dropped very close to the cutoff point. Secretary-treasurer Frank C. Jones (Goddard Space Flight Center) now plans to use the APS membership database to target potential new members.

The division of fluid dynamics is currently hovering at about 3.1% of total membership. Unfortunately, cross-registration is not a viable strategy, says secretary-treasurer Russell J. Donnelly (University of Oregon), because there are no APS divisions with related fields of interest. "Very few of our members are 'card-carrying' physicists," explains Donnelly, which also makes it difficult to recruit physics graduate students. Donnelly has written several letters to division members; the last one, which included an appeal from division chair Katepalli Sreenivasan, was moderately successful.

Although the situation is less critical for the larger APS divisions—nuclear physics and condensed matter physics—they too have seen some drop in membership, and fewer members does translate into less money to cover expenses. Accordingly, both divisions have been sending their members information about division activities, events and benefits.

APS President Nicolaas Bloembergen says that in exchange for their \$5 dues, subunit members receive substantial services, as well as the opportunity to develop important contacts within their subfields. Of the current \$5 fee, \$4 is used to support newsletters, meetings and other activities that directly benefit the subunit's members. Bloembergen also points out that subunits play a central role in organizing general APS meetings and advising editors of the various subsections of *Physical Review*. "The subunits are the vital organs of the society," he says. "I hope all members will join one or more of them to get the full benefits of APS membership." ■