Since 1991 she has been a staffer for the Two-Year College Physics Faculty Enhancement Program funded by NSF, Texas A&M University and Lee College.

Robert F. Sears Jr, a physics professor at Austin Peay State University, in Clarksville, Tennessee, was reelected treasurer of AAPT.

1992 AIP SALARY SURVEY RELEASED

"Because that's where the money is," said Willie Sutton when he was asked why he robbed banks. Few physicists would echo Sutton's remark in explaining their decision to study physics. Money, however, remains the preferred medium of exchange, and statistical profiles of salaries provide one perspective on the careers of physics-trained professionals.

The most recent report on salaries from the American Institute of Physics's education and employment statistics division tabulates the results of a 1992 salary survey of members of AIP member societies. The eighth in a series, "1992 Salaries: Society Membership Survey," by Jean M. Curtin and Raymond Y. Chu, presents 20 tables and 16 figures of data in 23 pages. Among other things, the report examines salaries of PhDs by geographic location, employment sector (see the table above), primary work activity and gender; and salaries of masters and bachelors by employment sector. Questionnaires were sent to about 19 000 people, which is about one-fifth of the AIP member-society membership; about 12 500 were completed and returned.

As in the past, the report makes use of the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association cost-of-living index, which indicates differences in the cost of goods and services in various cities. Of the 20 selected metropolitan areas, New York City, with its index of 221.6, ranks as most expensive. Knoxville, Tennessee (93.0), Austin (93.7), St. Louis (96.5), Albuquerque (98.9), Atlanta (99.6) and Phoenix (99.7) are six cities with indices nominally below the national average of 100. The report uses the indices to create a salary adjusted for cost of living. Knoxville then comes in with the highest annual median, $69 900; New York with the lowest, $29 800.

Highlights of the report include:

▷ Across all degree levels, 75% of respondents earn at least $43 000 per year and 75% earn less than $75 000 per year.

Salaries of PhDs by major employment sector, 1992[a]

	Median salary	Mean salary (thousands of dollars)	Standard deviation	Median age	Total number known
University					
9–10 month salary	54.0	56.6	17.6	49	1640
11–12 month salary	52.0	57.7	28.5	41	1102
Four-year college					
9–10 month salary	43.0	44.4	12.2	48	288
Industry or self-employed	71.5	77.6	41.2	44	1623
Government	62.0	64.6	19.0	47	823
FFR&DC[b]	69.0	69.2	19.0	44	722
Nonprofit	60.0	63.3	26.7	42	180
Hospital	78.0	80.4	39.1	47	170
UARI[c]	53.7	58.2	24.7	40	83

[a]Postdoctorates included

[b]Federally Funded Research and Development Centers

[c]University-affiliated research institutes and observatories

▷ Across all employment sectors, postdoctorates report a median annual salary of $30 000 (with a standard deviation of $5500).

▷ On average, female society members earn less (by 4–8%) than their male counterparts, even after their salaries are statistically controlled for differences in educational level, employment sector and years of experience.

Individual copies of the survey report are available free of charge from the Education and Employment Statistics Division, AIP, One Physics Ellipse, College Park MD 20740-3843.

US COLLEGES GAVE 2100 GRADUATE DEGREES IN 1992

For the past three decades, the American Institute of Physics has tracked the backgrounds, characteristics and initial employment of US physics graduate students through its annual graduate student survey. Among the results of the latest survey, covering the 1991–92 academic year: Starting salaries for physics PhDs in potentially permanent positions rose by 5%, and about 7% of respondents said their research involves computer simulation.

The survey asked respondents to list their subfields of interest. The proportion who named condensed matter physics, the perennial top choice, was about the same as in the 1990–91 survey, at 32%. A distant second was elementary-particle physics, in which 12% of the respondents said they were specializing. Astrophysics accounted for about 8%.

About 7% of respondents said their work involved primarily computer simulation, compared with 67% doing experimental physics and 27% in theory.

Among those who found work in the US, the ratios of postdocs to permanent jobs differed widely by subfield. Overall, 60% of the respondents accepted postdocs and 27% took permanent positions. But in astrophysics and elementary particles, for example, nearly 80% accepted postdocs, whereas in optics about two-thirds were hired to fill permanent positions.

PhDs who found potentially permanent work reported earning $3830 per month on average, a 5% increase from the previous year. Of this group, those in industry and at Federally Funded Research and Development Centers garnered the highest salaries: $4340 and $4165, respectively. Starting salaries otherwise remained about the same as last year's, with postdocs earning an average of $2500 per month and master's degree recipients earning $2680.

Slightly more than half of the 1346 PhDs awarded at US universities in 1991–92 were given to Americans. Among the 752 master's degree recipients who planned to stop their physics educations at the master's level, 70% were US citizens. Women earned 19% of the master's degrees, but only 11% of the doctorates. Overall, women accounted for 15% of the graduate student population.

For the 1991–92 survey, all 14 500 students enrolled in US graduate physics programs were polled; the response rate was 54%. Copies of the survey report, which also includes data on astronomy, are available from the AIP Education and Employment Statistics Division, One Physics Ellipse, College Park MD 20740-3843. An article on physics employment written by the survey report's senior author, Susanne D. Ellis, appeared in the December PHYSICS TODAY (page 29) and covered some of the findings from the 1991–92 survey. ■