



ROBERT D. GEHRZ

sity, Catherine A. Pilachowski of the National Optical Astronomy Observatories and David N. Schramm of the University of Chicago were elected councillors; and Mark J. Reid of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and Ethan T. Vishniac of the University of Texas at Austin were elected to the AAS nominating committee. Karen J. Meech of the University of Hawaii's Institute for Astronomy was chosen to serve on the US National Committee of the International Astronomical Union.

Graduate Enrollments in Physics and Astronomy Plunge

Enrollments in graduate physics and astronomy programs in the US continue to decline, a recent survey by the American Institute of Physics has found. And so, while the number of graduate degrees in these disciplines has been on the rise in recent years, a sharp and sustained downturn in PhD production now seems inevitable.

In 1996, there were 2500 first-year physics grad students, down 5% from the previous year and down 26% since 1992. In astronomy, there were 149 first-year grad students in 1996, compared to 226 five years earlier. Although the decline is occurring among both US and foreign students studying in this country, it's been greater among the US ones. The survey report also noted that the drop seems to stem from student choice rather than from departmental policies intended to shrink graduate enrollments.

The number of physics bachelor's degrees—4263—hit a 30-year low in 1996.

Based on the number of junior-year physics majors, which has fallen by 20% over the past decade, this downward slide at the undergraduate level is likely to continue for at least two more years, the survey report concluded.

Enrollments in introductory physics courses remained strong, attracting some 380 000 college students in 1996. Introductory astronomy courses drew in about 150 000 students.

Single copies of the 1995–96 *Enrollments and Degrees Report* are available free of charge from the Education and Employment Statistics Division, AIP, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740; phone 301-209-3070, e-mail stats@aip.org.

IN BRIEF

The Australian Institute of Physics is accepting nominations worldwide for its 1998 Women in Physics Lecturer. The award will go to a woman who has made a significant contribution to physics research and who also has demonstrated public speaking ability. The winner will give a lecture tour in Australia for 2–3 weeks next summer, with accommodations and travel paid for. Lectures should be aimed at a general, nonspecialist physics audience. For more information, contact Judith Pollard, Department of Physics and Mathematical

Physics, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 5005 Australia; e-mail jpollard@physics.adelaide.edu.au. Send nominations (self-nominations are welcome) with a 300–500-word supporting statement to Moira Welch, PO Box 283 Richmond, NSW, 2753 Australia; e-mail M.Welch@uws.edu.au. They are due by 15 July 1997.

Robert Hull, an associate professor in the materials science and engineering department at the University of Virginia, is the new president of the Materials Research Society. He succeeds Carl V. Thompson of MIT. Robert J. Nemanich, a professor of physics and associate member of the department of materials science and engineering at North Carolina State University, is MRS's new vice president and president-elect.

Anneila Sargent is the new executive director of Caltech's Owens Valley Radio Observatory in Big Pine, California. Sargent, a senior research associate at Caltech, uses millimeter radioastronomy to study star and planet formation. As executive director, she is responsible for both the observatory's scientific program and its administration. OVRO will celebrate its 40th anniversary next year.

Solution to Last Month's Puzzle

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117	L	I	A	R	S					118	O	V	E	R	T					119	P	I	E	R		120	R	E	F	S							
121	E	R	N	S	T					122	N	A	R	Y						123	S	E	R	E		124											