

at the University of Texas at Austin who were either currently tenure-track or considered for tenure between 1984 and 1994. Of the 100 (out of 220) people who responded, 33 were tenure-track, 47 had been granted tenure, and 20 had been denied tenure.

The study compared people's predictions of how happy (or unhappy) they would be both in the short term (up to five years after being granted or denied tenure) and in the longer term (from five to ten years after the tenure decision) with how happy (or unhappy) other people in these categories actually were.

Gilbert and company found that people accurately forecasted their longer-term happiness, but overestimated their emotions in the short term: They expected to be happier when they achieved tenure than they turned out to be, and being denied tenure turned out not to be as devastating as people anticipated. Explains Gilbert, "People forget that they are darned good rationalizers. It's the psychological equivalent of white blood cells for a physical illness."

And, five to ten years down the road, the researchers found, the tenure-track person is likely to be equally happy whether tenured or not. **TONI FEDER**

IN BRIEF

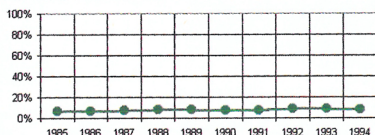
Physics degree production in the US continues to drop, according to the latest *Enrollments and Degrees Report* issued by the American Institute of Physics. In 1997, there were 3826 physics bachelor's degrees awarded, the fewest in four decades; over the same time period, the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded in the US grew fourfold. The number of incoming physics graduate students leveled off in 1997–98, following a five-year, 27% decline; however, the number of US citizens in that group was the lowest in the report's 30-year history. Degree production in astronomy has also fallen off, the report found, with the first-year graduate student body down by one-third since 1991. The number of students taking introductory physics courses remained stable in 1997, at 368 000, while introductory astronomy enrollments grew by 10% over the previous year, to 168 000. Single copies of the 1997 *Enrollments and Degrees Report* are available free of charge from AIP, Education and Employment Statistics Division, 1 Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740; e-mail stats@aip.org; Web <http://www.aip.org/statistics/trends/undtrends.htm>. ■



Web Watch

<http://web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html>

The main findings of A Study on the Status of Women Faculty in Science at MIT are that women at senior levels are underrepresented, and are paid less and allocated less lab space than their male colleagues. Based on the study's early findings, MIT raised women's salaries and research support, among others things. In March, MIT president Charles Vest pledged that "our remarkably diverse student body must be matched by an equally diverse faculty."



Percentage of Women Faculty in MIT's School of Science, 1985–94

http://www.usafa.af.mil/dfp/cockpit-phys/cp_home.htm

Believing that physics-savvy cadets make better pilots, the US Air Force Academy's physics department has produced Cockpit Physics, a series of on-line tutorials that cover such topics as the physics of ejection, "pulling G's," and munitions delivery. In the words of the home page, "Now strap on your jet and take off!"



<http://www.tat.physik.uni-tuebingen.de/~weiskopf/gallery>

Graduate student Daniel Weiskopf, who studies theoretical astrophysics at the University of Tübingen in Germany, can help you visualize special relativity. His brief animated cartoons demonstrate what you'd see when whizzing at close to light speed past Saturn's rings, through a salt crystal lattice, past the Eiffel Tower, and through the central arch of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.



To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please contact ptwww@aip.org by e-mail. Compiled by **CHARLES DAY**

Multichannel Analyzer World's Smallest 'Pocket MCA'

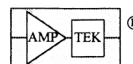


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