cist Steven Koonin, provost at Caltech and chairman of JASON. The agreement with DDR&E, signed on 10 May and running through the end of the year, will be managed by the MITRE Corp, as was the organization's previous contract.

JASON is an independent group of about 50 top scientists from a variety of fields, all tenured professors from major research universities, who meet for several weeks each summer to tackle difficult scientific problems posed for them by several federal agencies. The organization began as an elite advisory group for the government in the early days of the cold war.

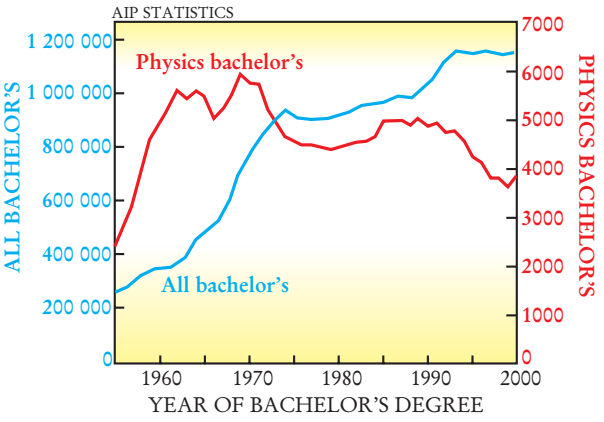
Late last year, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which had held the JASON contract for many years, insisted that two executives from Silicon Valley high-tech companies and an engineer be granted membership to JASON. The organization balked, saying the three did not meet the rigorous membership standards. DARPA officials then charged that JASON was too physics-oriented, and canceled the contract (see PHYSICS TODAY, May 2002, page 29.)

Although JASON will work through DDR&E, initially on aerospace and fuel-cell technology problems, the organization will also study issues for the Department of Energy and other agencies, Koonin said, including some related to counterterrorism. "We have about 15 studies to work on right now," he said, "and about 50% of our work is classified." As they have for many years, JASON scientists will meet in La Jolla, California, from mid-June through early August. **JIM DAWSON**

# Physics Bachelor's Degree Production Rose in 2000

In 2000, the number of physics bachelor's degrees conferred in the US was 7% higher than during the previous year, the first increase in nearly a decade. Similar increases are expected for 2001 and 2002, for which data are not yet available, according to a recent report from the American Institute of Physics. The report also cites growing enrollments in high-school physics classes as boding well for future undergraduate physics enrollments.

The total number of physics bachelor's degrees awarded nationwide in 1999 and 2000 was 3646 and 3849, respectively, representing about 0.3% of the bachelor's degrees awarded across all fields during those years. The increase in 2000 was mostly in large physics departments that also offer graduate degrees—the same departments that saw the biggest losses in the 1990s, when physics bachelor's degree production fell by 27%.




Women earned 21% of physics bachelor's degrees in the combined classes of 1999 and 2000, 6% more than a decade earlier. Of the 94% of 1999 and 2000 physics bachelor's degree recipients who were US citizens, 14% were members of a minority group: 5% were African American; 5% Asian American; 2% Hispanic; and 2% Other. Nearly three-quarters of physics bachelor's recipients participated in research during their undergraduate years.

The percentage of physics bachelors proceeding directly to graduate studies in physics was 35% for the combined classes of 1999 and 2000, slightly higher than in previous years. Of those, a striking 62% say they want to pursue an academic career.

In astronomy, that fraction is even higher: 81% of 1999 and 2000 baccalaureates who are pursuing advanced degrees in physics or astronomy have their eye on an academic career. In 1999 and 2000, universities awarded 195 and 202 astronomy bachelor's degrees, respectively; one-third went to women.

These and other data can be found in the *Physics and Astronomy Senior Report: Classes of 1999 and 2000*, available free of charge from AIP, Statistical Research Center, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740; e-mail stats@aip.org; Web site http://www.aip.org/statistics/trends/undtrends.htm.

# NEWS NOTES

**Four ITER sites.** With plans for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor accelerating, bids to host it are piling up. The latest site bid came on 4 June from Japan, which chose Rokkasho, on the northern tip of the island of Honshu, from three possible sites. Europe, meanwhile, must decide whether to put forward for consideration a site in Spain, south of Barcelona, or one in southern France, at the Cadarache nuclear research center, near Aix-en-Provence. Canada, too, is keen to host the $4 billion project, which is being developed by Europe, Japan, Russia, and Canada and is intended to demonstrate the feasibility of fusion energy. The negotiations on ITER's site, organizational structure, and costs are progressing well and are supposed to be completed within the year, according to a physicist close to the issue, "but there's a lot to be done to meet the deadline." —TF

**New directors at NIH.** Roderic Pettigrew has been tapped as the first permanent director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering, the newest addition to the National Institutes of Health (see PHYSICS TODAY, September 2001, page 25).

JACK KEARSE/EMORY U.

PETTIGREW

Known for his work on dynamic, three-dimensional imaging of the heart, Pettigrew holds an MD from the University of Miami and a PhD in applied radiation physics from MIT. He will move to NIBIB at the end of the summer from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where he heads the Emory Center for Magnetic Resonance Research.

More than two years after Harold Varmus stepped down, NIH's top job has also been filled: On 20 May, Elias Zerhouni of Johns Hopkins University took the reins from acting director Ruth Kirschstein. —TF

**Maryland theory center.** Condensed matter theory at the University of Maryland, College Park, just got a shot in the arm: The university's College of Computer, Mathematical and Physical

Sciences, provost's office, physics department, and Laboratory for Physical Sciences are jointly pledging $240 000 a year, indefinitely and with no overhead, to launch the Condensed Matter Theory Center. The money will be used to bring in scientists and to hold occasional workshops. This fall, the new center will welcome five postdocs and a senior visiting researcher, says center director Sankar Das Sarma. For more information, visit the center's Web site at http://www.physics.umd.edu/cmtc. —TF

**Sakharov in DC.** Andrei Sakharov's head and hands grace the entrance of the Russia House at 1800 Connecticut Avenue in Washington, DC. Dedicated on 29 April, this statue of the Russian nuclear physicist whose human rights activities won him the Nobel Peace Prize was a gift from Russian–American sculptor Peter Shapiro to the Russia House, an umbrella organization for activities involving US–Russian business, education, science, and cultural cooperation. —TF

ERIN WATERS

**Societies win fraud settlement.** The Los Angeles-based journal subscription service Eastwood Books and its manager Jung Shin have paid the American Institute of Physics and four other scientific societies $250 000 in a settlement of a civil action fraud claim; the Los Angles Police Department and District Attorney are continuing a separate criminal investigation.

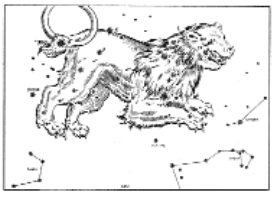
The company and Shin allegedly joined the societies under false pretenses to get individual rates on journal subscriptions and then resold them at higher prices to institutions in Korea. Because institutional rates can be up to 10 times the individual rate, the scheme cost the societies more than $1 million in lost revenue.

The fraud came to light two years ago when a former Eastwood Books employee e-mailed 40 society publishers with details of the scheme. "We're the only one who noticed the e-mail," says AIP Executive Director Marc Brodsky, who contacted the other publishers about the claims. AIP, the American Physical Society, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and the American Chemical Society then sued Eastwood Books and Shin. "We are more concerned with stopping this alleged activity than with lost revenue," says Brodsky, "and we hope that this expensive settlement will discourage others from considering similar tactics, which we now will keep watch for and vigorously pursue." —PKG ■

## WEB WATCH

**http://aer.noao.edu**

The inaugural issue of the online journal **Astronomy Education Review** is now available. Supported financially by the National Optical Astronomy Observatory (NOAO), the journal intends to become a lively electronic compendium of research, news, resources, and opinion. Its editors, Andrew Fraknoi of Foothill College and Sidney Wolff of NOAO, welcome articles and news announcements—and avid readers.



**http://physics.nist.gov/cuu/Constants**

If you need the value of a physical constant, then consult NIST's **Reference on Constants, Units, and Uncertainty.** The online reference has several search and display options and includes a handy converter for energy units.

**http://foia.fbi.gov/room.htm**

In its original version, the 1966 Freedom of Information Act exempted FBI files from public access. But in 1975, amendments to the act, in combination with the 1974 Privacy Act, allowed the public to examine investigatory files compiled for law enforcement purposes. Now, many of those FBI files, including those on Albert Einstein and Nikola Tesla, are available online in the electronic reading room of the bureau's **Freedom of Information Act** Web site.

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please e-mail us at ptwww@aip.org.

*Compiled by* CHARLES DAY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NEW

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