

LETTERS

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Alan Cromer and Christos Zahopoulos and are partly supported by NSF. More details can be found at <http://www.reseed.neu.edu>.

CLAUDE KACSER

(claud_kacser@umail.umd.edu)
University of Maryland
College Park

DAVID W. WEISS

(daveweiss@erols.com)
Silver Spring, Maryland

prising until one notices that the standard deviation is largest for this test. Overall, the scores are so uniformly high that they provide little discrimination.

The situation is somewhat different with the subject matter test: The correlation with first-year graduate grades is 0.27, about the same as for undergraduate grades, where the correlation is 0.28.

J. D. MEMORY

(jmemory@nc.rr.com)
North Carolina State University
Raleigh

Physics Intentions and the GRE

In the early 1980s, three coauthors and I published a letter (PHYSICS TODAY, April 1984, page 15) stating that the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) aptitude tests showed that those students taking the tests and indicating physics as their intended area of study had the highest combined quantitative and verbal scores of the 98 disciplines listed. In view of evolving trends in graduate education, it seemed of interest to reexamine the quality of students planning to go to graduate school in physics, as measured by the GRE aptitude tests.

The data given here appear in the *GRE Guide to the Use of Scores*, available online at <ftp://ftp.ets.org/pub/gre/992362.pdf>, and are based on exams taken between 1 October 1997 and 30 September 2000. Test takers were grouped into 50 broad fields by intended graduate major, and mean scores are reported for each of the three aptitude tests, verbal, quantitative, and analytical.

For the physics and astronomy category, the mean score ranked first in quantitative aptitude, first in analytical, and tied for sixth in verbal (students who listed philosophy as their intended course of study ranked first in verbal aptitude). When the means are aggregated, students intending to study physics and astronomy easily rank first among the 50 categories.

Physics graduate programs are still getting good students—so good, in fact, that the aptitude tests are of limited value in predicting first-year grades in graduate school, the one outcome for which complete data are published. The correlation of first-year graduate grades with the aggregate aptitude score is only 0.20. Moreover, the best correlation is with the verbal score, which is a little sur-

Turn Down the Lights

While PHYSICS TODAY's April 2002 cover photo of Earth at night is impressive, I would urge readers to note that the lights seen in this image represent billions of dollars per year of energy wasted on upward-directed outdoor lighting. That issue of the magazine, devoted to the energy situation, appears to address only the need for increased energy production, with conservation barely mentioned. Ernest Moniz and Melanie Kenderdine do point out that efficiency improvements "represent the most effective opportunity for meeting energy and environmental goals in the near to intermediate term" (page 45). How effective is it to use light fixtures that waste up to a third of their light by directing it upward?

Physics can help with efforts to increase energy reserves; it can also be applied to conservation. The quality of outdoor lighting techniques and fixtures is generally poor worldwide, the US included. Proper outdoor lighting, with fixtures that direct no light upward and that provide nonglaring illumination at appropriate brightness levels, can provide safe nighttime spaces while conserving energy and preserving the wonders of the starry skies.

Part of California's response to its recent energy crisis (see http://www.energy.ca.gov/outdoor_lighting/index.html) was the creation of an innovative project to examine the nature of existing outdoor lighting. The initial results are not surprising: Most facilities are poorly lighted and often at unnecessarily high levels.¹ Such lighting does little to help with safety or security, or to improve the nighttime ambiance of our communities. It is obtrusive to many and wastes a lot of energy. By reducing

glare, we can lower the overall levels of outdoor lighting, increase safety, and save energy.

Readers interested in learning more about outdoor lighting issues are invited to spend some time at <http://www.darksky.org>, the Web site of the International Dark-Sky Association.

Reference

1. Nancy Clanton, lighting specialist, presented initial results at the International Dark-Sky Association's annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona, in March 2002. Final results are expected to be published later this summer at <http://newbuildings.org/pier/> (click on "Outdoor Lighting").

DANIEL B. CATON
(catondb@appstate.edu)
Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina

Another Look at Science in Spain Under Franco

Physicists working at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid were unpleasantly surprised by the letter of our colleague, Julio Gonzalo, about the development of physics in Spain under the Franco regime (PHYSICS TODAY, March 2002, page 14). Although we respect each person's right to express his opinion (a highly risky activity in Franco's time!), we deeply disagree with Gonzalo's statements about physics and strongly reject his view of the last years of the dictator's regime.

Science in Spain did begin to develop in the last years of Francisco Franco's life, but it really progressed only after the establishment of a democratic regime. Credit for that development is due to the invaluable work of scientists who fought against a hostile environment and to the relative economic growth in the years preceding Franco's death.

Contrary to Gonzalo's opinion, Franco was ultimately responsible for a devastating war in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed, for a drastic stunting of Spain's economic and scientific growth, and for a 40-year period of political oppression.

In the last five years of Franco's life, several professors were banned from the physics department of our university because of their political opinions. Others, who came to Spain in the late 1960s and early 1970s after physicist Nicolas Cabrera was invited to return from exile, soon

had to leave the country because of political pressure and an atmosphere hostile to science. And what is much worse, university students and political prisoners were killed by the police or sentenced to death by the courts up until a few months before Franco's death.

Those activities were by no means signs of a "benign elder statesman," but hallmarks of one of the most notorious fascist dictators of the last century, a fact that should not be forgotten or disguised.

ENRIQUE ALVAREZ
(enrique.alvarez@uam.es)

JOSÉ M. CALLEJA
(jose.calleja@uam.es)

CAYETANO LOPEZ
(cayetano.lopez@uam.es)
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
Madrid, Spain

Julio Gonzalo credits Francisco Franco with "a decisive victory over communism." Franco overthrew Spain's democratically elected government that was supported by republicans and socialists; at that time, there were very few communists in the country. His victory in the civil war was achieved with the crucial military help of Nazi Germany (remember Guernica?) and Fascist Italy, and cost 600 000 lives. Of Franco's opponents, 50 000 were executed after the war and 400 000 were exiled. But Gonzalo was right—although not in the way that he meant it—when he wrote that Franco's victory was "decisive for his country and for Western Europe." The evident reluctance of European democracies, primarily France and the United Kingdom, to confront that aggression and help Spain's legal government paved the way for Hitler's strategy and the catastrophe of World War II.

ALEXANDER TENENBAUM
(tenenbaum@roma1.infn.it)
University of Rome I ("La Sapienza")

We were very disappointed by the publication of Julio Gonzalo's letter, a mixture of half truths and distorted reality. Gonzalo wrote about communism, but he forgot to mention how Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini helped Francisco Franco, and how Spain suffered the dictator for 40 years without help from the "free world." He also mentioned Texaco's president and the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), but he forgot about the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas (Study

Extension and Science Research Board), created in 1907. Santiago Ramón y Cajal, the 1906 Nobel laureate in medicine, was its president until his death in 1934. Within this group, the Instituto Nacional de Física y Química, (National Institute of Physics and Chemistry), established with grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, attained international recognition. In fact, the first third of the 20th century is known as the Silver Age of Spanish science.

The Junta para Ampliación de Estudios was dismantled by Franco's new regime in 1939. Gonzalo mentioned several Spanish scientists, but he forgot the names of those who suffered repression or were exiled by the regime and, in many cases, were replaced by incompetent ones whose only scientific value was to be Franco's henchmen. At least one of the people he cited, Julio Palacios, had been sent to interior exile after Spain's civil war. He died in 1970, in fact several years before Gonzalo returned to Spain.

Here are some figures to show how Franco's regime supported science: Spain's spending for R&D was 0.29% of GNP in 1967 and 0.3% in 1975, if we are to believe the figures given by Spain to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. We are sure that if science in Spain during Franco's regime had been carried out in the same way as it was in the rest of the world at the time, PHYSICS TODAY would have known about it, and would never have published such a letter.

CRISTÓBAL FERNÁNDEZ-PINEDA
(fdezpine@fis.ucm.es)

JOSÉ M. GUERRA
(jmg Guerra@fis.ucm.es)

JULIO SERNA
(fipt01@sis.ucm.es)
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Madrid, Spain

Historical Note on the 'Flying Tigers'

My father is an Army Air Corps veteran, so I was very happy to see the terrific article, "A Physicist with the Air Force in World War II," by Alex E. S. Green, in the August 2001 issue of PHYSICS TODAY (page 40). During my perusal, I noticed an unintentionally misleading statement concerning the Flying Tigers. The article states that, in March 1945, Green's plane landed "at a field in Xian. This field was actually used by the Flying Tigers, American