

More Jobs, Less Security in Academic Physics

US physics and astronomy departments employed 5% more physicists in 2002 than in 2000, the biggest increase since 1986, when the American Institute of Physics began carrying out biannual studies of the physics academic work force. Most of the growth, however, was in temporary and part-time positions.

In 2002, a total of 8800 full-time equivalent positions were filled by physicists in the nation's nearly 800 physics and astronomy faculties. Some 5100 of those positions were in PhD-granting departments, for which the median number of faculty members rose from 22 in 2000 to 24 in 2002.

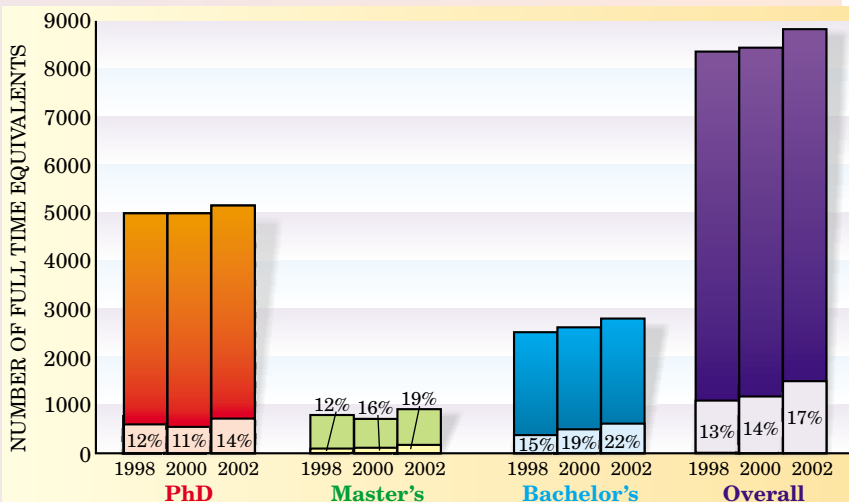
Women are found on an increasing fraction of physics faculties. In 2002, more than 60% of physics departments had at least one woman on their faculty, and 19 PhD-granting departments had five or more female faculty members. The fraction of PhD-granting departments that had no female faculty members was 14%, compared with 55% in 1985.

Turnover in physics and astronomy departments remained steady at about 5%, including job changes, tenure denials, retirements, and deaths. In 2002, 42% of physics departments recruited for 512 tenured or tenure-track openings.

But much of the growth in physics faculties was in temporary, part-time, and nontenure-track positions, a trend AIP expects will continue, owing to state budget crises. From 2000 to 2002, for example, the fraction of such positions in PhD-granting departments rose from 11% to 14%. Across bachelor's-, master's-, and PhD-granting schools, women were hired disproportionately often for insecure jobs.

These and other data are available in the 2002 *Physics Academic Workforce Report*. Single copies may be obtained free of charge from AIP, Statistical Research Center, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740; e-mail stats@aip.org; Web <http://www.aip.org/statistics/trends/emp trends.htm>.

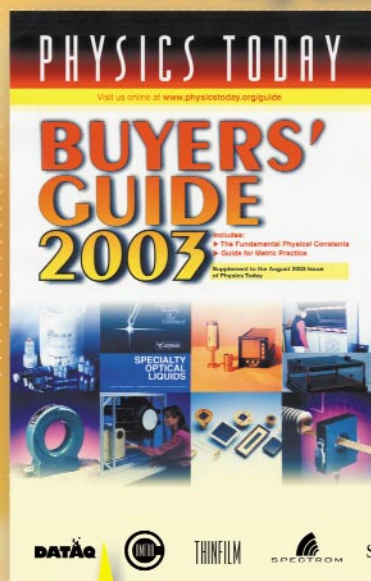
Toni Feder



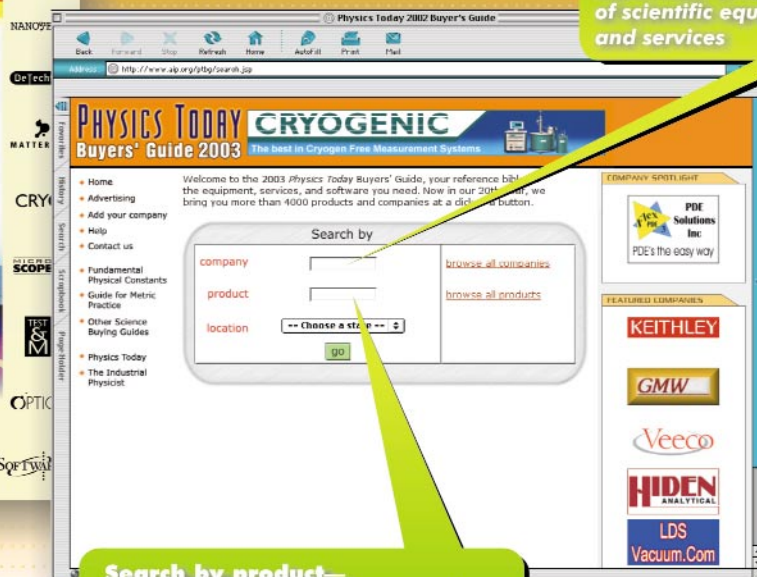
Lightly shaded regions show percentages of temporary, part-time, and nontenure-track jobs at PhD-, master's-, and bachelor's-granting schools.

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