

technology “raises important ethical, safety, and environmental issues, [and] possible negative applications are threatening mankind’s own future.”

Bruce Alberts, president of the NAS, said the forum will take on a handful of problems each year. Its goals will include having small, issue-oriented working groups make specific proposals and policy recommendations. “It’s important that we do more than just talk,” Alberts said. The NAS is a founding sponsor of the forum.

MIT physicist Jerome Friedman, a member of the US group supporting the forum, said the idea is to create a venue where “the scientists don’t only speak to themselves, they speak to a broader society, to industry people, policymakers, the people who really take positions on these issues. There haven’t been many vehicles for this because people really just speak at one another in most situations and never really discuss the issues. The idea here is to try to listen to everybody and try to understand what the points of view are, and try to have the best science that can be brought to the discussion.”

The scientists must also listen, Friedman said. “There are always policy issues which go beyond science. Scientists have no better handle on policy decisions than anybody else. I mean, after all, we’re just citizens.” The first meeting of the forum is set for 14 November 2004 in Kyoto, Japan. Omi wants the invitees to “participate not as representatives of their country or organization, but as individuals to express their own views.”

Jim Dawson

Retired General to Tighten Sandia Security

Retired US Air Force General Thomas Neary has been appointed to oversee a tightening of security at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico as part of a wider effort by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to stop the security lapses that have plagued Sandia and the two other nuclear weapons laboratories. The six-month appointment of Neary, who has managed several nuclear weapons programs, comes in the wake of a classified Department of Energy report that concluded that “additional steps” were needed to bring Sandia’s security up to DOE standards.

“The best way to achieve our objective in a timely fashion is to bring in a topflight manager whose sole re-

Physics Salaries Rise

Despite the slump in the economy, the salaries of PhD physicists in the US grew significantly faster than inflation from 2000 to 2002, according to the American Institute of Physics, which biennially polls physicists and other scientists who belong to its 10 member societies.

In 2002, the median salary for PhD survey respondents was \$87 000, up 11.5% from 2000. Those working in hospitals and medical services had the highest median salary, \$108 000, followed by \$104 000 for physicists at federally funded R&D centers. Remaining at the low end of the income spectrum were physicists employed at four-year colleges. Those physicists earned a median nine-month salary of \$55 000—up 10% from two years earlier.

Academic physicists who earned their PhD up to five years before the survey and were not in postdoctoral positions reported median salaries for 9- to 10-month university contracts that were 17% higher than people in similar positions two years earlier.

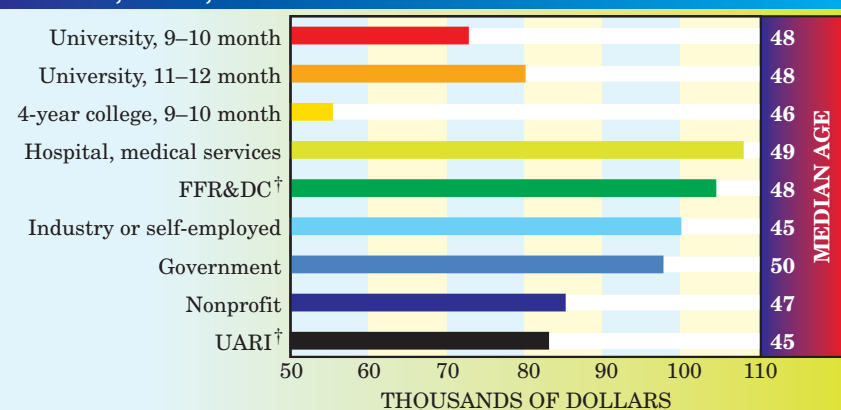
Broken down by geographical region, the highest median salary for PhD physicists across all sectors of employment was \$96 000, in the Pacific region—Alaska, Hawaii, California, Oregon, and Washington. The lowest median salary was \$70 000, in the West North Central states—Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota—where the highest proportion of PhD physicists in the country, 70%, work in academe.

More than a third of the survey respondents added about \$11 000 to their annual pay through consulting, summer research and teaching, and other sources of supplemental income. Unemployment among PhD physics society members increased slightly from 2000 to 2002, but at 1.2%, it remained lower than 1.6%, the nationwide unemployment rate for PhDs across all fields.

Additional salary and employment information may be purchased online at <http://store.aip.org/salaries/>. Twelve tables break down salary data by employment sector and years of experience. The tables may be purchased individually (\$4 apiece for members of AIP member societies and \$5 for nonmembers) or as a set (\$20 for members and \$25 for nonmembers).

Toni Feder

Median Salary and Age for Major Employment Sectors, PhDs, 2002.*



*Employed US resident members only, postdocs excluded.

†FFR&DC = Federally-funded research and development center. UARI = University-affiliated research institute or observatory.

sponsibility is to make sure this important job is done well and completely,” said NNSA Administrator Linton Brooks in announcing Neary’s appointment. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham endorsed the need for an outside administrator to clean up the lab’s security problems. “We must ensure that the laboratory focuses on implementing the necessary security improvements promptly even as it works to fulfill its national security mission,” Abraham said.

Sandia, like nearby Los Alamos Na-

tional Laboratory and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, has suffered in recent years from security breaches that have included stolen computers, missing keys to restricted areas, and sleeping guards. In one incident, someone stole a van from a restricted area at Sandia by crashing it through a fence. The van was recovered in the parking lot of a Home Depot store in Albuquerque.

Sandia Director C. Paul Robinson replaced the head of security in June after the Government Accounting Of-