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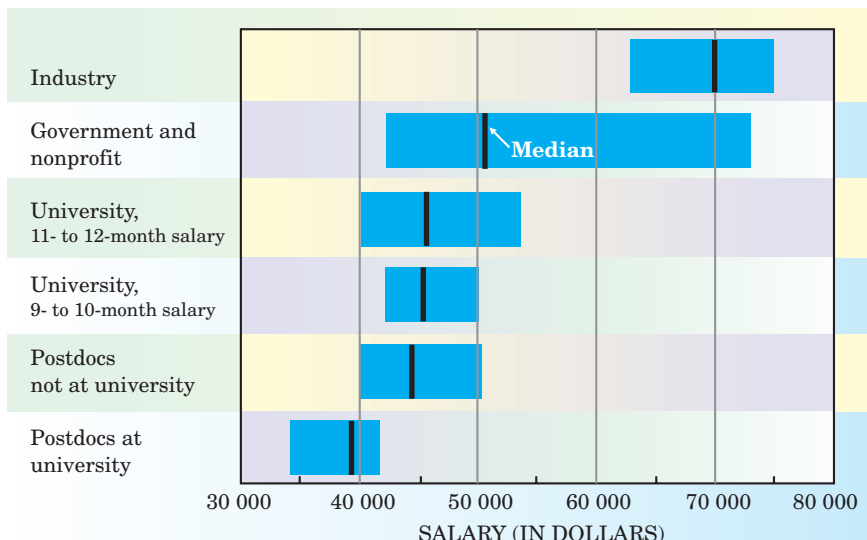
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Starting salaries for Earth and space science PhDs, classes of 2001 and 2002.

physics and astronomy are 30 years old on average. The delay is at least partly due to geoscientists' working both before they begin graduate studies and before they complete their PhD degrees, according to the report.

Over the past five years, about 8% of PhD recipients in Earth and space sciences "regularly or constantly" considered dropping out, the report says. The reasons cited most often by men were family responsibilities and concerns about the job market. By contrast, women attributed their doubts to loneliness, their advisers, and not feeling "up to par intellectually."

Although women continue to be underrepresented at the PhD level in Earth and space sciences, the only sciences doing better are chemistry and life sciences. Remarkably, in the subfield of atmospheric science, the proportion of PhDs awarded to women (25%) in 2000 exceeded the proportion at the undergraduate level (23%).

The *Earth & Space Science PhDs, Class of 2002* report may be downloaded from the Web at <http://www.aip.org/statistics/trends/reports/agu02.pdf>. 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. **Toni Feder**

were narrowly voted in by the British government on 27 January. UK universities began charging tuition just a few years ago. The new hikes, of up to £3000 a year, will vary by campus and department.

"Physics is not the most popular subject," says Philip Diamond, IOP's assistant director for higher education and science. "We have a rather fragile undergraduate population. You need 40 to 50 undergraduates per year to be viable. A number of departments have been forced to close. The fee element is an enormous worry for our subject."

Over the past 20 years, the number of physics students in the UK has remained steady—and become a shrinking portion of the overall university population, which has swelled by 50%. Says IOP president David Wallace, "The institute hopes that by offering serious cash, it can help reverse this trend as well as ensure that the brightest students are able to study what they are good at, not just what they can afford."

The IOP is setting aside at least £800 000 for the grants and is talking about raising more. The grants will be handed out based on need as determined by the government. They—and the raised tuition—will commence in the 2006–07 academic year. **TF**

News Notes

Cash for UK students. In an attempt to counter a growing barrier to studying physics, the UK's Institute of Physics (IOP) plans to give £1000 (roughly \$1800) a year to needy undergrads.

The grants would partially defray across-the-board tuition hikes that

SPEAR3 pierces brightly. The latest incarnation of the Stanford Positron Electron Asymmetric Ring was unveiled on 29 January. A hefty beefing up of a machine that began life as a particle collider more than 30 years ago led to SPEAR3, a top-of-the-line x-ray radiation source for intermediate energies (500–15000 eV), says director Keith Hodgson.