

AIP Sponsors Dufty in the State Department

"I am in the middle of a steep learning curve. My days are full," says James Dufty, the American Institute of Physics' eighth State Department fellow.

Dufty is working for a year in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, where he serves as a liaison between the US government and the natural sciences and social and human sciences sectors of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). A theoretical physicist who has been on the faculty of the University of Florida for 35 years, Dufty says he chose the bureau because "it was an opportunity to come in where there was a vacuum. I have come to an office where I am the only person with a science background."

UNESCO is in the process of reviewing its two science sectors and drafting a strategy for the next six years. One aim is to organize the science sectors in a more interdisciplinary way. "My role is to help communicate what US policy would be, and to make sure that the restructuring is consistent with US objectives," says Dufty. For example, "there could be a resolution on having an ethical policy developed by UNESCO for science." Such a resolution could provide guidance for safety and commercialization standards in areas such as nanoscience. Ethics is not an easy issue, says Dufty. "We want to bring potential problems under control, but we don't want to stifle research."

Not surprisingly, liaising between the US government and UNESCO doesn't involve the kinds of condensed-matter calculations Dufty usually does. But, he says, "I think the point is that someone in the sciences has a perspective that is different from someone who came up in the foreign or civil service."

"I wanted to contribute to the State Department," continues Dufty. "But I also want to go home and talk to my colleagues who, I think, have very little understanding of how policy is made."



Dufty

gressional fellows have stayed in policy, a third have returned to academia, and a third have struck out in new directions. Most of last year's fellows have stayed in the Washington area, at least for now.

Two 2005–06 congressional fellows—Jamie Link, sponsored by OSA and SPIE, and Vivek Mohta, sponsored by APS—have jobs at the Science and Technology Policy Institute in Alexandria, Virginia, doing research related to US competitiveness and innovation and the effective allocation of federal R&D spending. Josh Trapani, last year's AGU fellow, has a fellowship as a policy analyst at the USDA Forest Service. Trapani says he may still return to academia. Being a congressional fellow, he says, "is an intense educational experience. Everything moves fast. Getting things done by deadline was more important than getting them done perfectly. And I learned that science has an important role to play in policy, but it's just one piece. It's about negotiating between a whole lot of things, and to have science trump everything else doesn't make sense."

Benjamin Gross, last year's fellow for OSA and MRS, is the only one of the bunch to have left Washington. Now job hunting in San Francisco, he says he would like to work in the technology sector doing product management or consulting. "One of the blessings and curses of the congressional experience is that I have almost too many options in terms of career paths I could pursue." Science policy and politics, Gross adds, are "addictive. People talk about Potomac fever. It's hard to put down."

Toni Feder ■



Edson

Harvard University, she says, "I realized I wanted to have a career that addressed the big picture of numerous scientific issues—as opposed to the minutiae of one particular research area." As a Clinton staffer, Edson's purview is

aging, substance abuse, mental health, and military health issues. "I meet with constituents. I attend meetings and seminars. And a lot of my job is to find support for legislation that is still pending and to work on new legislation ideas," she says.

Alex Saltman is working on arms control, energy, and the environment in the office of Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) and, like Engel, is sponsored by APS. Saltman earned his PhD in string theory this past summer from Stanford Uni-

versity. He came to Washington "to do something socially useful" and says he is "undecided about whether to go back to academia or stay in policy." But, he adds, "it seems that we scientists are in big demand here [in Washington]."

Potomac fever

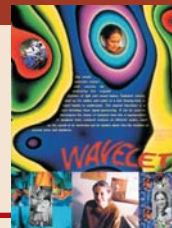
Over the years, roughly a third of con-

web watch

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please visit <http://www.physicstoday.org/suggestwebwatch.html>. Compiled and edited by Charles Day

<http://www.pdksciart.com>

The PDK Poster Project portrays women scientists and their work in a series of dramatic yet personal posters. Designed by Pam Davis Kivelson and Inga Dorosz, the posters aim to encourage women and girls to pursue careers in the physical sciences and mathematics.



<http://www.sound101.org>

The physics and physiology of sound perception is the topic of **BadVibes: The Hunt for the Worst Sound in the World**. The interactive website, which has been put together by Trevor Cox, accompanies a major acoustics exhibition at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, England.



http://www.oeb.harvard.edu/cfs/media_frame.html

Harvard University's Andrew Biewener and his colleagues study the mechanics of animal locomotion, including how wallabies hop, emus run, and cockatiels fly. To view Biewener's experimental subjects in action, visit **Movies and Media from the Concord Field Station**.

Applications for congressional fellowships are due early in 2007. For details, visit http://fellowships.aas.org/02_Areas/02_Congressional.shtml, which has links to the various sponsoring professional societies.