

Because of the number of institutions involved and the seriousness of the issues, the New Orleans investigation was the AAUP's largest ever. The previous record holder was from the post-McCarthy era, Kreiser says, "and that one is dwarfed by this one." At present, 47 institutions nationwide are under AAUP censure.

In a statement, Tulane calls the AAUP report "deeply flawed," "factually inaccurate," and "riddled with erroneous information and contradictions that do not support its own conclusions or AAUP doctrine."

Toni Feder

news notes

Money for education.

Citing the "call to action" in the 2005 National Academies *Gathering Storm* report to improve US math and science education (see PHYSICS TODAY, December 2005, page 25), the ExxonMobil Foundation has committed \$125 million to expand two existing K-12 education programs. The pledge will establish the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), whose aim is to broaden the national Advanced Placement program and the UTeach program at the University of Texas at Austin.

The AP program includes training for teachers, "identification and cultivation of lead teachers," and financial incentives, according to an ExxonMobil statement. The UTeach program encourages math and science majors to become teachers by offering integrated degree plans and financial assistance to promising undergraduates in those fields. The NMSI will award grants in up to 10 states for AP training and incentive programs and up to 10 grants to colleges and universities that want to replicate the UTeach program.

The 14-member board of directors for the NMSI includes Norman Augustine, the retired chairman of Lockheed Martin Corp who chaired the *Gathering Storm* report; Bruce Alberts, former president of the National Academy of Sciences; Steven Chu, director of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory; and Charles Vest, former president of MIT.

JLD

Flemish physics is tops. A review of Flemish physics programs at the pre-PhD level found them to be internationally competitive. Requested by the semi-autonomous government of Flanders, the review assessed physics at the five Flemish universities; the counterpart French-language universities are over-

seen by a different government body. The results of the review are being used in accreditation decisions, a new requirement for Flemish universities.

In addition to high praise, the review also dished out recommendations for improvements. Chief among them was more regional and international exchange of students. This would be helped, the review says, by using English in master's degree programs.

The low number of incoming physics students—an average of 59 a year from 1999 through 2004—has been "a very serious problem," and the number of female faculty is "depressingly low," says Jan Sengers of the University of Maryland, College Park, who chaired the review. He notes that the recent switch by Flemish universities to the bachelor's-master's system, in accord with the Bologna Declaration (see PHYSICS TODAY, May 2001, page 21), is likely to attract more students, as occurred in both Denmark and the Netherlands.

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Yerkes sale fails. Local opposition has scuttled the planned sale of Yerkes Observatory. The University of Chicago had arranged to sell the historic observatory

and surrounding land to a developer, who was going to build a resort; room taxes would have been used to support science education programs at the observatory (see PHYSICS TODAY, July 2006, page 24). But the buyer, Mirbeau Co, withdrew early this year after it became clear that the Village of Williams Bay, Wisconsin, was unlikely to rezone lake-front property for commercial use or make other changes in its zoning and tax laws to facilitate the plan.

"We're starting from scratch," says University of Chicago astronomer Richard Kron, who chairs an official study group on the future of the observatory. The group includes representatives of Williams Bay and nearby educational institutions. "Everyone shares a vision that public outreach, teacher development, and summer camps is the direction we'd like to go, but it's a matter of getting our hands around this more specifically," says Kron. "You have to know what you are asking other institutions to buy into."

The aim is to find a way to fund the observatory for the long term while developing the area in a manner acceptable to Williams Bay. Kron hopes to present a proposal to the university this fall.

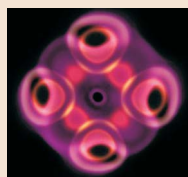
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web watch

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

<http://www.raiseproject.org>

Boosting the status of women in engineering, mathematics, medicine, and science is the aim of the **RAISE project**. The project maintains a database of professional awards to attract what the founders hope will become successful applications and nominations.



<http://www.nanohub.org>

The NSF-funded Network for Computational Nanotechnology has created **nanoHUB**, an online resource center for software related to nanoscience. Tutorials and seminars are also available, including Supriyo Datta's four lectures "Concepts of Quantum Transport."

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