

China has become the second most prolific contributor, behind the US. That is up from 14th place just 10 years earlier. Measured by the number of articles appearing in high-impact journals, however, China still lags well behind the US and European Union in terms of quality, noted NSB member Jose-Marie Griffiths. And China's S&T growth has yet to change what has been a near-absence of Chinese researchers who are awarded patents in the US and Europe.

The NSB, the governing board of NSF, has been charged since its inception in 1950 with the role of advising the president on broad science policy issues, though in practice it has rarely done so. This year, however, the board will issue a companion report offering policy recommendations to the White House on the topic of globalization in science and engineering. Louis Lanza-rotti, who chairs the NSB committee in charge of *S&E Indicators*, said the policy report, scheduled for release after PHYSICS TODAY went to press, will address the challenges and opportunities that are presented by increased globalization, including greater opportunities for international S&T collaboration.

David Kramer

## news notes

### New boost for nuclear.

President Obama has requested a tripling of the amount of federal loan guarantees available to spur the construction of new nuclear generating plants. The White House included \$54 billion in loan guarantees in its fiscal year 2011 budget request, compared with the \$18.5 billion that is currently available. The administration announced on 16 February the first loan guarantees, to Southern Co, which plans to add two reactors to a plant in Georgia.

In a separate action, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu announced the formation of an independent commission to come up with a solution to the nation's nuclear waste disposal problem. He told reporters on 29 January that nuclear energy "must play a role" in meeting the need for carbon-free base-load electricity generation. The 15-member commission is to be cochaired by Lee Hamilton, former Indiana Democratic representative, and Brent Scowcroft, former national security adviser to presidents George H. W. Bush and Gerald Ford. The bipartisan commission includes former Nuclear Regulatory Commission chairman Richard Meserve, MIT physicist Ernest Moniz, retired senators Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE), utility industry executives, and environmentalists.

DK, PKG

## web watch

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

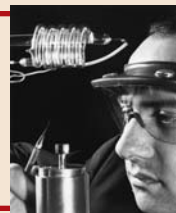


### <http://haitigps.wordpress.com>

A team of geophysicists went to Haiti to conduct a GPS survey of ground deformation following the calamitous 12 January earthquake. The scientists recounted their experiences in the blog **NSF Geophysicists in Haiti**.

### <http://www.aip.org/history/exhibits/laser>

**Bright Idea: The First Lasers** is the newest online exhibition from the Center for History of Physics of the American Institute of Physics. Created by the center's former director Spencer Weart, the exhibition combines text, image, and sound clips to tell the story of one of the 20th century's most important inventions.



### <http://aipsurveys.aip.org/global>

To better understand the international physics community, the American Institute of Physics is conducting a **Global Survey of Physicists**. The questions, which are available in 10 languages, range over physicists' education, career, and family lives.

**NSF chief to resign.** Arden Bement, director of NSF since 2004, announced on 4 February that he will step down in May to lead a newly created global policy research institute at Purdue University. His six-year term was set to end in November. Bement was first appointed by President George W. Bush in 2001 to head NIST, then was

tapped in 2004 to succeed Rita Colwell at NSF. He was a member of the National Science Board from 1989 to 1995. Bement held multiple senior positions in industry and government prior to taking a faculty position at Purdue in 1992; he has retained tenure while serving with the federal government. **DK**

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