

# Physics Policy Committee Annual Report -- 1998

## Introduction

The Physics Policy Committee (PPC) works with the officers and members of the American Physical Society to address issues of science policy that affect the physics community. Activities of the PPC are coordinated by the American Physical Society (APS) Office of Public Affairs. PPC also works closely with the Panel on Public Affairs (POPA) which serves in both an advisory and review capacity. The PPC meets as needed but averages approximately three meetings per year, roughly equally spaced in time during the calendar year. Indeed three such meetings were held in 1998; March 5, June 15 and Oct. 28, 1998. These meetings provided the occasion for discussions with representatives of the administration, the Congress, and other agencies and societies. This report will cover the PPC activities for this calendar year.

## Overview

The committee addressed a variety of issues, new and old, and met with a spectrum of individuals holding administrative and policy making positions. These included M. Telson from DOE, A. Bienenstock from OSTP and Hans Mark from DOE, all from the administration. In addition, we met with M. Champness from the House Science Staff, Peter Rooney, APS Congressional Fellow to Senator Lieberman, R. Simon, Senior Policy Advisor to Senator Bingaman and Alex Fling, Chief of Staff of Senate Appropriations Committee on Water and Energy, all congressional staffs and G. Leventhal of the Association of American Universities, quite a group.

Although many subjects were broached the primary issues continued to be the science budget, the out year outlook and projections as well as the immediate prospects for FY'99 and to a less extent FY'00. It is gratifying to note that where a few years ago we were debating on the depth of the science cuts in the out years -- 10-20%, now we are discussing the magnitude of possible increases. This turnaround has been due to many factors, the balancing of the Federal budget and projected surpluses, the joining together of the scientific societies to promote all of science and the day by day interactions with the agencies, congress and advisors promoting and protecting the science budget. The committee's interactions with members of the administration and congressional sections was an important ingredient (Telson, Bienenstock, Flint) in sustaining this momentum. In fact the latest interaction (Flint) was rather optimistic on the future so long as one adopts a balanced, well thought out and reasonable program. The recent release of the FY'99 budget from the congress should certainly be pleasing to most of science (especially NIH) even though there are indeed pockets of difficulty. Progress on the high level Congressional front, Gramm-Lieberman, Frist Rockefeller bill is indeed noteworthy, indicating substantial support for science. This has to be sustained in the years ahead. Interactions on the Ehler's report were beneficial--it may not be all we wanted but it certainly is a positive statement for science. The committee spent an appreciable amount of time on the DOD research, namely budget categories 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and their ramifications. It is clear that this is a long term problem in that the total budget is very likely to decrease further and that the emphasis will be more to project funding for

more applied subjects and away from single investigator, pure research. This topic will need further attention.

POPA interactions and activities continued on a positive note. A variety of issues were examined and several reports issued. A report on the performance of the Patriot missiles during the Persian Gulf War is to be issued as well as a statement on what is good science. Intellectual property rights and the fair use provision in proposed legislation was considered at some length by POPA, and their activities were influential in attaining reasonable legislative language that protected the interests of the scientific community.

Other topics that were discussed included the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA), education and substandard performance of U.S students in math and science, the status of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a possible Response Panel and FY2000 APS plans with regard to Presidential and Congressional budgets.

I would characterize this as a fruitful year with much done, much started and much yet to be done.

## **Physics Policy Meetings 1998**

### **Meeting March 5, 1998**

**Guests:** M. Champness - House  
Science Staff  
M. Telson - DOE  
A. Bienenstock - OSTP

**Topics:** Budget  
POPA  
DOD  
House Science Committee  
DOE Perspective  
OSTO Perspective

### **Meeting June 15, 1998**

**Guests:** P. Rooney - APS  
Congressional Fellow  
R. Simon - Staff - U.S. Senate  
G. Leventhal - AAU

**Topics:** Update 1999 Budget  
Gramm-Lieberman Bill  
CTBT  
POPA Science Statement  
DOD Funding for Research  
Ehler's Report  
Response Panel

**Meeting October 28, 1988**

**Guests:** H. Mark - DOD  
A. Flint - Staff - U.S. Senate

**Topics:** DOD Policy on Research  
Budget  
DOE View for Senate  
Congressional Matters  
POPA Science Statement  
Response Team