

Committee on Membership Annual Report -- 1998

The members of the Committee on Membership for 1998 are: Mary Alberg (Chair), Peter Reynolds (Vice Chair), Donald Cox (Past Chair), Judy Franz (Executive Officer APS), Daniel Grischkowsky, James Maher, Zachary Levine, Thomas O'Neill, Matthew Richter, Erich Vogt

APS and AIP Representatives: Barrie Ripin (APS Liaison), Trish Lettieri and Frances Atkinson (APS Membership Dept.), Ed Goldin and Roman Czjuko (AIP Liaisons)

The charge to this Committee is to suggest to Council means for improving the relationship between the Society and its members, for services the Society provides to its members, and for other activities in the area of membership as delegated to it by the Council. As of 1996, when the Committee on Membership Publications was terminated, this Committee has also assumed the responsibility for oversight of Membership Publications.

The activities of the CoMem can be roughly grouped under two main headings:

- A. **Activities which are mostly informational or information-gathering in character.**
Efforts falling under this heading include periodic member surveys carried out directly by the APS as well as extracting pertinent information from surveys or reports prepared by other organizations (AIP, AAPT, ACS, IEEE, etc.) which may be of interest to or have impact on the APS and its members. This information is then digested and used to make better based and informed recommendations to staff and the Council.

- B. **Activities which directly impact or benefit members or operations.**
Included are recommendations on dues and invoicing, member recruitment campaigns, communications with and to members regarding member benefits and member responsibilities, APS national activities, staff advisory activities, membership publications, and oversight of membership related pages on the APS web site.

The following summarizes the main activities of the Committee on Membership (CoMem) for 1998.

Activities for 1998

FOREIGN MEMBER SURVEY

A survey of non-US resident APS members was carried out to assess the benefits and services provided to these members. About 9100 APS members reside outside the United States; the survey was sent to a random sample of 1632 of these individuals. The response rate was 57%.

The survey and results were compiled by the AIP Statistics Division. Highlights from the survey results follow.

In terms of employment characteristics, the international membership of APS are more homogenous than the domestic membership. The majority of international members are PhD physicists employed in academe. By comparison, the domestic membership includes larger proportions of individuals employed in the private sector, engineers, chemists, students and retired members.

Although the majority of non-US resident APS members already belong to the physical society within the countries in which they reside, most of them also joined the APS to be part of a larger physics community.

Nearly 70% of international members had studied or worked in the US.

Non-US resident APS members cite Physics Today as the most important benefit of APS membership.

In response to a question about receiving fair value for dues, 77% answered 3, 4 or 5, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree."

Two-thirds of international members read the majority of their physics research literature in APS journals. The majority of non-US resident APS members prefer to use paper journals instead of electronic versions of research literature.

The majority of non-US resident APS members regularly attend other physics meetings, but had not attended APS meetings within the past five years.

Overall, a significant proportion of the international APS membership would prefer more international involvement with publications, meetings and committees.

The report will be circulated to the APS Council and other appropriate Committees of the Society.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The CoMem recommended that a discounted life membership (\$100 discount) be offered to APS members during the Centennial year. This offer will serve two purposes: promote the Life membership category and increase member retention.

APS yearly membership dues have not increased since FY96. In keeping with increased costs and services for members, the CoMem recommended a \$5 increase for FY2000 to Council.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

A new benefit for Life members has been established. All Life members have the option of 1) free life membership in one dues-requiring unit; and 2) additional life memberships in such units at a rate 15 times the unit dues rate in effect at the time of payment.

A Subcommittee (Richter, O'Neill and Maher) was created to analyze benefits for members of

different types (e.g. student, junior, senior) and segments of the physics community (e.g. industrial, academic, government). The Subcommittee recommended that APS staff investigate additional technical benefits (workshops, short courses, virtual topical groups) and non-technical benefits (insurance and e-mail aliases). The Subcommittee also helped revise the Free Trial Student Membership poster for the 1998-99 academic year, which was distributed to about 200 graduate and 600 undergraduate departments.

APS WEB SITE

The APS home page is now a very (maybe even the most) important and visible way the Society communicates information to members and the outside community. The CoMem continues to recommend Society resources be committed to improving and updating the home page. It is now clear that members value on-line access and most frequently access (1) BAPS meeting information, (2) APS News, (3) What's New, and (4) careers/employment information. An Amazon.com link has recently been added to the Membership web page to allow members to purchase books online directly from the APS site.

SECTION FORMATION

The Northwest Section has recently been approved and will hold its first meeting in Vancouver, B.C. This is the first section which is explicitly international, drawing members from the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, as well as the Northwestern region of the United States. The CoMem strongly supports the formation of new sections both as a means of enhancing communication among local physicists and as a means of membership retention in the Society.

MID-ATLANTIC SENIORS GROUP

The Mid-Atlantic Seniors Group was formed in October, 1997, with the help of a Maryland Senior member, Dick Strombotne. Current membership for the group is approximately 120. Many of the group's members are interested in assisting APS with Education and Outreach activities and organizing social activities for local Seniors. The CoMem supports the involvement of Senior Members, and has also suggested a possible Congressional Fellowship for Seniors.