

January 9, 2012

## Director's Matters

By H. Frederick Dylla, Executive Director



Looking forward; looking back

Let me start by wishing all readers of *AIP Matters* a happy New Year! Undoubtedly, many of us have already hit the ground running in an effort to make up the work we so gratefully set aside for the holidays. I hope that we are all soon able to get the better of our to-do lists (and credit card bills). But on a higher level, I hope that you have the direction and energy you need in 2012 to accomplish your goals with more ease.

From my perspective as an executive director, one of the most important developments for AIP in 2011 was [clarifying the focus for AIP's publishing activities](#). In June, AIP Executive Committee made the decision that AIP should focus on its original publishing mission: publishing AIP journals and those of AIP Member Societies. I thank the Executive Committee for the clear leadership and support in addressing AIP challenges in the rapidly evolving publishing business. Our publishing staff has been working assiduously to align operations to reflect this clear focus. This year we plan to relaunch a new Scitation platform that will employ new features to help researchers to be more productive, as well as integrate social and professional networking, adding value for our readers, authors, referees, and editors.

AIP has maintained a strong interest—and will continue to be active—in the public policy debate on access to information derived from publically funded research, such as publications and data. The significance of this issue cannot be stressed enough; scholarly publications are our primary form of science communication to serve the research community as well as our primary source of income. AIP was pleased to join Member Societies and a number of other publishers to assist the DOE and NSF in their efforts to map out and implement pilot projects that incorporate recommendations set forth in the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable's 2010 report and subsequent language of the 2011 COMPETES Act.



In March, AIP published its first issue of [AIP Advances](#), a community-style open-access journal focusing on applied research in the physical sciences. The publication continues to grow. Impact factors have climbed for key AIP journals. We have also begun useful discussions with the leadership of the

Member Society journals we publish to help further strengthen their publications. AIP marked its one-year anniversary in Beijing by releasing a version of its [website in Chinese](#).

Last year the Physics Resources

Center was also very productive. We welcomed new leadership and staff members



to our News and Media Services division and relaunched [Inside Science](#) as a multimedia science communication service. Given the increased scrutiny that is being put on all levels of federal spending, science communication is even more important to help show the value of science and science education for the economy and the health of the nation. In fact, we devoted half of last year's Assembly of Society Officers to the topic; AGU hosted two communications summits as well. Working together, scientific societies and their members can positively influence the effective communication of science news and information.

*Physics Today* extended its online presence (PTOL) with more features and more content. We will be encouraging Member Societies to take advantage of PTOL to communicate their relevant society news. The February 2012 issue of *Physics Today* will feature an article on findings from the Global Survey of Physicists, a major study conducted by AIP's Statistical Research Center (SRC). In 2012 the SRC will also be rolling out the results of its most recent PhD+10 study, a two-year project. Industrial Outreach organized two [Industrial Physics Forums](#) in 2011, cohosted by APS and AVS. In 2012 the IPF will take place for the first time overseas—in Trieste, Italy—and will center on building capacity for industrial physics in developing economies.

The Niels Bohr Library and Archives made available online the [Samuel A. Goudsmit papers](#) and added more than 100 [oral history transcripts](#) to its growing web collection. The Center for History of Physics brought together dozens of early-career historians of the physical sciences from around the world for a conference on "[Continuity and Discontinuity in the Physical Sciences since the Enlightenment](#)." Society of Physics Students staff are finalizing preparations for the [2012 Congress of Sigma Pi Sigma](#) to be held at the Kennedy Space Flight Center this fall. Attendance is expected to exceed that of the 2008 Congress, which was easily the largest gathering of undergraduate physics students in US history. In many ways, the Physics Resources Center has raised the bar in 2011, reaching out to more people in more diverse ways to build a stronger community.

With the pace of change we have set for our course, 2012 promises to be a challenging year. Working together, AIP and its Member Societies can navigate the uncertainties of the global economic and political environment and accomplish a great deal.

## Physics Resources Matters

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### SRC staff supports space science studies

One of the ways the Statistical Research Center (SRC) serves the broader physics and allied sciences community is by providing timely surveys on topics of particular concerns to various groups. In the past six months, SRC staff have completed two such studies: the 2011 Survey of Planetary Scientists and the 2011 Survey of Solar, Space, and Upper Atmospheric Physicists (heliophysicists). As part of the planetary science contract, staff also assisted in a survey of planetary science departments.

Since these were contract surveys, AIP does not own the data and cannot provide results. Funded by NASA, the planetary science study examined career outcomes for planetary scientists in the US. More

information about the study and results from the planetary science departmental survey are available [here](#). For the heliophysics study, SRC staff worked with the [Workforce and Education Working Group](#), supporting the National Academies' Decadal Survey of Solar and Space Physics. The results will be referenced in the final Decadal Strategy report.

### Call for entries: 2012 AIP Science Communication Awards

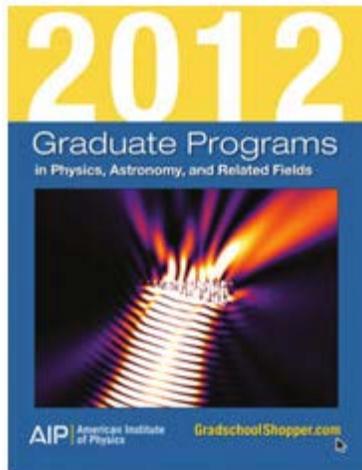
AIP is currently accepting entries for the 2012 AIP Science Communication Awards, which recognize effective science communication in print, broadcast, and new media in order to improve the general public's appreciation of physics, astronomy, and allied science fields. Entrants can compete in three categories: science writing, children's writing, and new media.

Winners will receive a prize of \$3,000, an engraved presentation piece, and a certificate of recognition. The publisher of the winning entries will also receive a certificate of recognition. Consult the [Science Communication Awards webpage](#) for more details. Entries are due on February 17. Please spread the word!

## Off the Press

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### "Graduate Programs" resource improved for 2012



AIP recently introduced the *2012 Graduate Programs in Physics, Astronomy and Related Fields*, a companion print directory to [GradschoolShopper.com](#), and a comprehensive website for researching graduate programs in physics, astronomy, and related fields. The site targets prospective graduate students in physics and related fields in North America. Both the website and directory present comprehensive profiles of the great majority of US physics and astronomy doctoral programs and many master's programs. The physics-related department profiles include fields such as nuclear engineering, electrical engineering, chemical physics, materials science, meteorology, geophysics, medical physics, oceanography, and acoustics.

An improved information-submission process and new directory format ensure that each participating department has better control over its profile and can deliver relevant and standardized information to prospective students. Over the last year, the website has been evolving, now displaying degree requirements, admissions, tuition costs, financial aid and housing, specialties for degree programs, department research specialties, faculty information and specialties, notable alumni, special equipment, facilities, or programs, research funding, department culture, and more.

A complimentary copy of *2012 Graduate Programs in Physics, Astronomy and Related Fields* was sent to the participating departments and to SPS chapters across the United States. The directory is [available for purchase](#) as a soft-cover book. To check out the resource online, visit [GradSchoolShopper.com](#).

## Coming Up

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January 8–12

- AAS 219th Meeting (Austin, TX)

Wednesday, January 11

- Presentation of the 2011 AIP/AAS Dannie Heineman Prize for Astrophysics to Robert P. Kirshner, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

Thursday, January 12

- Presentation of 2011 AIP Science Communications Awards to George Musser, for science writing and Vicki Wittenstein, for children's writing.