Director’s Matters

Amid recession, federal science funding looks promising

Like many of us, Congress goes on vacation in August. The House and Senate have accomplished quite a bit during the past few months on the bills that will provide federal funding for physics research in the new fiscal year (FY). Much work also remains to be done when Congress returns after Labor Day to settle differences in House and Senate legislation.

Twelve bills to provide funding for federal departments and agencies are supposed to be signed by the President before the new fiscal year starts on October 1. It has been a long time since this has happened—typically, Congress finds it necessary to pass short-term funding legislation, and frequently winds up putting many of the 12 bills into a single bill thousands of pages long. Congress and the White House want to avoid that scenario this year.

Several of the funding (appropriations) bills are of particular interest to the physics community. The Department of Energy’s Office of Science supports physics research in its laboratories and through grants. A Senate bill recommends an increase of 3% over the FY2009 budget; the House proposes 3.9% for these activities. The National Science Foundation provides significant support for academic physical sciences research, with the Senate and House bills containing increases of 6.6% and 6.9%, respectively. However, the outlook for NASA is not as promising; the two bills under consideration would keep space science funding relatively flat.

It's important to remember that earlier this year Congress and the Obama administration enacted an economic stimulus bill providing billions of additional research dollars for FY2009-10. Decisions on how that money will be allocated during the next few years are now being made. As expected, the research community has shown much interest, with one new program at the Department of Energy attracting 3,500 applications. Given the acrimony that has erupted in Washington over the summer on such controversial issues as health care reform, it is reassuring to see strong support for science from the White House and both sides of Congress.

Sincerely,

Fred

Publishing Matters

Catching the universal spirit
The Council of Engineering and Scientific Society Executives convened its 2009 annual meeting from July 21–24 in Orlando, FL. CESSE 2009 provided an opportunity for association leaders to exchange ideas on all aspects of the industry, including finances, human resources, public affairs, information technology, marketing, membership, and publications. The theme of this year's meeting was "Catch the Universal Spirit; Creative Approaches for Changing Times." In addition to the typical program tracks covering the major areas of associations, three institutes were offered, on topics related to leadership, information technology, and international outreach. AIP staff members from the Physics Resources Center and the Publishing Center took a prominent role in CESSE 2009, as session moderators, speakers, and program track chairs. The host city is home to The Laser Institute of America, an AIP publishing partner. LIA executive director Peter M. Baker served as the meeting's host. Colleagues from AAS, AGU, APS, ASCE, ASME, LIA, SIAM, and our newest client—NACE International—also played active roles at the meeting. For his years of dedication to CESSE, Fred Spilhaus, recently retired as executive director of the AGU, was acknowledged with a special award and a lengthy standing ovation. Visit CESSE online to learn more about how this vibrant organization helps society leaders better serve their constituencies.

Physics Resource Center Matters

Reengineered ISNS reaches mainstream news

AIP's Inside Science News Service is having great success in reaching mainstream news media. Since science journalists are no longer employed in many newsrooms, ISNS targets news editors with the science behind current affairs, the latest in research news, and science angles for news topics in entertainment, sports, and consumer issues. The service aims to fill the holes left in news coverage as newsrooms shrink, and provide trusted, newsworthy science in a ready-to-use format. Like Discoveries and Breakthroughs Inside Science (DBIS), the revamped ISNS is a multi-society effort. APS, ISNS's original cofounder, contributes to the effort with the physics behind the news. AIP is also reaching out for content to DBIS partners such as the American Mathematical Society. A sprinkling of ISNS's recent success: Research from the journal Chaos was picked up in USA Today, several articles have run on ABCnews.com, and ISNS content continues to run in several newspapers' print and online editions. ISNS coverage of AIP journal articles can be found at AIP in the News.

Student fellows tackle timely societal issues
From combating pseudoscience to controlling carbon emissions, recipients of the 2009 Student Fellowships in Physics and Society are engaged in fascinating research aimed at impacting society at large. The 2009 fellows—SPS members Kevin Thomas, University of Central Florida (left), and Zhenyuan Zhao, University of Miami (right)—recently completed progress reports on their respective projects; you can read those reports on the SPS website. The Fellowships are granted by the APS Forum on Physics and Society, in partnership with the Society of Physics Students and the APS Forum on Graduate Student Affairs.

**Around AIP**

**Just a phone call away**

Balancing the demands of life and work can be challenging, especially in difficult economic times. Thanks to the confidential services provided by Inova Employee Assistance and Work Life Services, you don’t have to do it alone. A number of things may affect your stress level: preparing for children to go off to school, child care or eldercare issues, workplace stress, personal growth, grief and loss, addictions, career development, financial pressures, and more. Inova provides a broad array of services including short-term counseling, work-life referral services, elder care resources, college planning, and many convenience services. Any family member residing in your household may use this program. To contact Inova, call 800-346-0110 or TDD# (for the hearing impaired) 877-845-6465, or visit their website.

We invite your feedback to this newsletter via e-mail to aipmatters@aip.org.

For past issues of this newsletter, visit the AIP Matters archives.