

AIP Engagement: International or Domestic



“INTERNATIONAL WHITE PAPER”

To: Strategic Planning Task Force

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Introduction

The mission of the American Institute of Physics is to advance, promote, and serve the physical sciences for the benefit of humanity. The white paper team on international engagement was tasked to explore whether that mission would be furthered by growing the association’s programs, products and services beyond their current domestic focus. This paper summarizes the issues identified by the white paper team when considering AIP’s pursuing a domestic or international focus.

Through its wholly owned subsidiary, AIP Publishing, AIP already has a small international footprint, having established an editorial office in Beijing, China, in 2010. Also, some 27 percent of Physics Today’s total circulation is outside the United States, and 26 percent of ad revenues are from international clients. AIP’s publishing arm is strongly international and touches 268,000 authors, reviewers, and subscribers, of whom approximately 200,000 are located outside the United States. Syndicated Inside Science stories reach 2.5 million Mandarin readers each month and bring tens of thousands of dollars a year to AIP in revenue.

AIP is a federation of professional Member Societies (MS), many of which already have a substantial international footprint. As such, any actions by AIP to grow geographically would need to consider the aspirations of its own MS. However, nothing in the bylaws of AIP precludes an international posture, and international societies are eligible for membership in the Institute.

This paper reports on a set of SWOT analyses of the potential impacts on AIP and the MS that could result from the Institute’s adopting a strongly global focus or a strongly domestic focus. The analysis is presented in four parts:

1. AIP internationally focused, impacts on AIP,
2. AIP internationally focused, impacts on MS,
3. AIP domestically focused, impacts on AIP,

4. AIP domestically focused, impacts on MS.

Summary of Findings

INTERNATIONAL. The advantages to AIP of an international focus would be the opportunity to extend its reach to the global physics community, collaboration with new scientific societies, and the development of new products. AIP's existing staff expertise and strong base of existing products, programs, and services could be drawn upon in building an international focus

The downside of such focus, however, would be a dilution and diffusion of existing resources without a significant reprioritization of AIP budgets and programs. Also, AIP currently lacks the expertise for product development and would be forced to compete with several scientific/publishing organizations that already operate globally.

Shifting to a greater international focus could also have ramifications for the MS. Although it could bring both MS and AIP increased global presence and recognition, societies that wish to remain domestically focused could feel excluded from AIP's new direction, resources, and key services. There would also be certain governance issues to navigate, such as board composition and focus.

DOMESTIC. Among reasons for AIP maintaining a domestic focus is an existing stable of well received programs, products and services serving primarily a domestic audience. AIP's programs, products and services are among the best in the fields of physical sciences and would continue to grow. There are strong business operations and organization in place, and there are still opportunities to be had domestically in terms of collaborations, products, and outreach. Also, maintaining a domestic focus would not preclude exploring international opportunities as they present themselves.

Nevertheless, by maintaining a domestic focus, AIP would be reliant on its current revenue streams, which while solid now are subject to change. Further, the organization operates in mature markets, and as global markets grow and develop, AIP would cede these opportunities to others.

By remaining domestically focused, AIP's current programs, products, and services would continue to be supportive of MS missions and efforts. The needs of the MS would continue to be met, and there could be opportunities for growth through tailored programs, products, and services for MS and their memberships.

For those Member Societies seeking to grow globally, however, a domestically focused AIP could have little to offer in terms of assistance and expertise in global strategies and the Institute could as a result become less relevant to them. A less relevant AIP would certainly strain those MS relationships.

The strategic considerations revolving around a domestic versus an international focus are considerable, with many obvious and not-so-obvious ramifications. As an organization whose mission is to advance, promote, and serve the physical sciences for all, AIP could certainly consider expanding its reach to

other parts of the world. However, because the US has been and will continue to be a world leader in the physical sciences, AIP would continue as a dominant influence by retaining its domestic focus.

This white paper was intended to start the discussion and raise key and critical issues about AIP's future direction and focus. The White Paper Team wrestled with the critical points of how decisions would impact AIP, the MS, and of the relationships between them. How AIP can best serve its MS, how resources will be allocated, and what is best for AIP, are also critical considerations. Clearly, much more work and research need to be done.

SWOT Analysis

AIP MOVES TO AN INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

AIP moves to an international focus – Impact on AIP

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIP would benefit from drawing upon internal staff expertise as well as relationships with international experts in the physical sciences.• U.S. is regarded as a world leader in the physical sciences.• There is a strong core of existing products, programs and services, many already suited for the international market such as <i>Physics Today</i>, <i>Inside Science</i> and <i>SRC</i>.	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIP could engage in a larger marketplace for existing programs, products and services.• New programs, products and services can be launched for the global marketplace.• Possible collaboration with scientific societies outside of current Member Societies.• Increased opportunities for current staff to broaden their scope, experience and knowledge.• Further the mission of physical sciences for all humanity.• The ability to partner with MS as they expand globally.
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIP currently lacks international business expertise for product development, marketing and operations.• Language barriers for the staff would need to be addressed.• Significant changes in resources would be necessary.• Not all current products have a significant international audience.	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well-established competitors, such as IOP, are already operating globally.• Shifting political considerations and vagaries can upset business operations and plans.• Some MS may want AIP to maintain a domestic focus.

AIP moves to an international focus – Impact on Member Societies

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing AIP products such as Niels Bohr Library and SRC's Global Survey could support MS international expansion.• The limited AIP experience in partnering with international bodies on collaborative efforts would be a foundation to build on.	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIP's increased global presence and brand recognition will benefit MS.• Increasing collaboration with existing MS, especially those on global expansion tracts.• Creating increased global exposure and opportunities to new and existing MS members.• AIP resources, such as office space, meetings, and infrastructure, could be of shared benefit to MS.• AIP's efforts would introduce potential new MS to the federation.
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not all MS are seeking global footprints, creating a disconnect in objectives for geographic scope.• AIP committees and task forces currently lack international orientation.	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AIP could be distracted from providing traditional services to MS.• Potential conflicts between AIP and MS.• International expansion could introduce internal governance issues/gaps.• Increased confusion in the marketplace between AIP and MS, much the way some members are unsure of which products come from AIP and which from MS.

AIP MAINTAINS A DOMESTIC FOCUS

AIP maintains a domestic focus – Impact on AIP

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geographic scope is focused and well understood.• Domestic focus has been well established, with staff possessing wide experience and expertise in serving a domestic audience.• The domestic focus of AIP’s current suite of programs, products and services enables AIP to concentrate on quality and to be considered a respected source.• Well-established business operations in the U.S.• Domestic focus enables a strong diversity of programs.	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner with domestic organizations outside of MS.• Go deeper with existing programs, products, and services.• Continued limited international opportunities as they present themselves.• Explore new products and new revenue.• Improve outreach and deepen interactions with MS.• Strengthen AIP’s support of the broader US physical sciences community.
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits opportunities to diversify AIP revenue streams.• Missed opportunities for growth in mature markets.• AIP is out of step with a globalized physics community	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less relevant to MS whose futures include an increased global presence.• Shrunk foothold in physical sciences discipline.• Diminished competitive advantage.• Cede international market to competitors.

AIP maintains a domestic focus – Impact on Member Societies

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing workable governance relationship between MS and AIP.• Current AIP programs, products and services support MS missions and efforts.• AIP can respond to the many needs of MS that want to concentrate efforts on the domestic audience.	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased collaboration between AIP and MS on shared issues.• Deeper and more tailored programs, products and services for MS and MS membership.
<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The MS benefit for belonging to the federation is limited to US activity; AIP is less relevant for globally oriented MS.• Unable to assist MS that wish to expand globally.	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Globally minded MS become disenchanted and leave the federation.• Foreign-based organizations seeking expansion in the U.S. encroach on AIP and MS sphere of influence.

Suggestions for Future Topics

Before any decisions can be made regarding the better strategic global/domestic posture for AIP in pursuit of its mission, considerable research and work remain. Key topics for consideration include gaining a better understanding of the physical sciences discipline and markets, and an improved understanding of the impact on individual Member Societies. Other examples include:

- An analysis of our federation based on surveys or interviews with key people in the Member Societies regarding their own global/domestic goals.
- An in-depth look at the physical science community by country/region.
- An analysis of competing federations/societies, organizations, and publishing companies.
- An implementation plan for moving to either the increased domestic or international focus options.
- An intensive resource analysis of what either expansion would include.

