

Committee on International Scientific Affairs (CISA)

Annual Report

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Scientific Freedom and National Security

These are issues that the committee believes are of the utmost importance and merit a constant monitoring by the APS. FIP and others have been active in organizing sessions that are strongly related to these topics, something CISA has encouraged and continues to do so. Specific concerns are access to government laboratories by foreign scientists and reasonable and timely processing of visa requests by scientists wishing to come to the US. The focus of CISA's concern changed from access to government laboratories, motivated by the Wen Ho Lee affair, last year, to concerns that the aftermath of the Sept. 11 incident will negatively affect the issuance of visas for visiting scientists. An increase in denials and delays for the issuance of visas to Chinese students occurred last summer. Some restrictions on travel to foreign meetings, particularly China, by DOE laboratory scientists were noticed. A partial solution to the problem of scientists being permitted to visit here lies in the concept of a science visa, but a push to create it needs to wait for better timing. CISA realizes that these concerns extend well beyond the Office of International Affairs at the APS and decided that the best approach for CISA was to continue monitoring the situation and to continue providing information and advice.

Economic and political dimensions of S&T for Development

CISA has recently focused principally on the developing countries. A question that is of broad interest to many CISA members is what is the relation of a country's abilities in science and technology to the capability of that country to develop economically and socially. There are many dimensions to this question? The one of particular import to physicists is what is an optimal level of investment in basic sciences for a particular developing country and how best can these investments be made? CISA was very pleased to see that the APS has actively engaged AAAS and ACS in a coordinated examination of these questions. A meeting was held in October at the AAAS headquarters and another is being planned for early spring. Continued meetings and symposia are important as they are an effective means for creating a dialogue on the subject and for introducing interested parties from very diverse backgrounds to each other. This is, however, a first step as this seems to be an area where extensive new academic study is needed. From the APS viewpoint, a way of transmitting the information from these meetings, symposia, and future studies to the many interested APS members needs to be developed. Further, the information will need to be in a format where it can be used by the scientists to lobby with governments and foundations.

Journals for developing countries

CISA continues to be impressed by the efforts of Martin Blume and Tom McIlrath to make APS journals available to scientists in countries who cannot afford regular subscriptions. The rapidly changing situation in Russia and the Former Soviet States is a particular challenge as it involves very large numbers. The joint program with ICTP for Africa appears largely to be working, although some inquiries by CISA members are being done. The program with Cuba to provide journals on CD has been successful. Discussions need to continue on the possible expansion of this effort to include internet access. CISA has made contacts with scientists in other developing countries, particularly Latin America, to see if there are needs there. CISA is keenly aware that a balance must be maintained between the financial side and the availability of the journals. The role of CISA is only to facilitate contact between those who may have a need but very limited resources and the appropriate APS officials.

African initiative

Kennedy Reed, with the support and encouragement of CISA and the APS, has been leading an effort to expand the interactions between African physicists and the US. He continued this year to attend the Edward A. Bouchet International Conference in Physics, held in August at the National University of Benin. Previous efforts have led to real exchanges between scientists and students in both directions. These exchanges are ongoing and received much attention. Discussions are also underway on the possible creation of a laser center in Senegal or perhaps the addition of an international component to a center being built in South Africa. CISA remains very supportive and encourages efforts to expand faculty and student exchanges. The APS can also play an appropriately supportive role in any new international centers that may be developed in Africa. Since this effort depends critically on Kennedy Reed, a mechanism needs to be developed that will enable the coupling of Kennedy to the APS and CISA now that he will be leaving the committee.

Latin American Initiative

CISA together with FIP decided a few years ago to develop a focus on interactions with Latin America.

The APS assisted with and endorsed the Inter-American Workshop on the Use of Synchrotron Radiation for Research and the Symposium on Nanotechnologies that was held at the LNLS in Campinas, Brazil. The workshop was a great success -well attended, there were many graduate students and postdocs involved, the science was excellent and a large amount of informal interaction. CISA liked the idea of holding international meetings that showcased major research centers in Latin America and strongly encourages other centers to hold large and broad international meetings with significant student and postdoc participation.

Two years ago the chair of CISA, Lynn Boatner, initiated an online directory which would list physicists working in the US who had a particular interest in collaborating with Latin America. The directory is now operating at <http://www.aps.org/intaff/collab.html>. Several hundred have

enrolled so far. The directory has been announced twice in the FIP Newsletter and in Physics News. However, links from the CISA page and the FIP page need to be installed.

Irving Lerch, David Ernst, and William Brinkman attended the meeting of the Inter-American-Iberian Working Group in Morelia, Mexico, in October. The presence of William Brinkman, the Vice President of APS, made a strong statement of the interest held by the US physics community in working with Latin America. The Working Group consists of representatives of the physical societies from throughout the Western hemisphere including the Federation of Latin American Physical Societies (FeLaSoFi), and the societies of Spain and Portugal. At this meeting, the French Physical Society was also represented. Continued good will for working together was expressed, ongoing projects described elsewhere in this report are to be continued, and several projects were moved forward in quiet behind the scenes discussions. However, no new projects emerged.

One of the ongoing projects is to open exchanges between Cuba and the US. Two workshops are being planned. The first is an international workshop in medical physics to be held in Havana in April. The APS initiated this effort and then turned over the planning to the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), which is the more appropriate organization. APS remains actively involved. Members are providing input on the program and Irving Lerch announced that some funds have been located which can be used to support US participants. This is particularly critical as US government funds cannot be used. A second workshop on physics education is being planned for 2003. The American Association of Physics Teachers is taking the lead role in the planning of this workshop.

An agreement exists to hold a joint meeting between the Canadian, American, and Mexican Physical Societies, or CAM meetings as they have come to be known. The next of these meetings is to be in 2003 in Mexico. These meetings have been general meetings covering all of physics. Attendance at a meeting this broad is problematic and there is a feeling among many that this meeting competes with the annual meetings of the individual societies. A suggestion emerged from the Morelia meeting to make the CAM meeting a very student oriented meeting. The new Forum on Graduate Student Affairs will be asked to take a lead role in the organization of the meeting. The Canadian Society already holds an annual meeting that is completely organized by students. The Board of the Mexican Physical Society voted at the Morelia meeting to endorse this idea. A request from CISA has been sent to the Council requesting their endorsement. The Canadian representative as well as David Lockwood, present member of CISA and chair of FIP, will move to get a formal endorsement. The International Division of the APS will request funds from the NSF to support the student participation in such a meeting.

ICTP session at the upcoming April meeting

FIP, lead by Bruce Barrett, is organizing a session at the upcoming April meeting on the impact of ICTP on physics throughout the world. This is being coordinated with CISA as it also provides a forum for Miquel Villasoro to present the Beller Lecture. As part of this session, Pervez Hoodboy, a noted Pakistani physicist, has been invited to attend the April APS meeting with support from both FIP and CISA. Given the present importance of Pakistan to the US and the stature of Prof. Hoodboy, CISA and FIP will work together to arrange for the appropriate

APS officials to meet with Prof. Hoodboy during his visit. Due sensitivity will be employed to ensure a proper representation by India in these discussions.