

Who Are the Handicapped Scientists?

Who are the handicapped scientists? They include the head of a worldwide allergy research division of a large pharmaceutical company who is deaf, the professor of psychology who is blind, and the manager of a department in a computer firm who is quadriplegic. The AAAS Office of Opportunities in Science will undertake a systematic survey of this group later this year in order to produce a profile of the handicapped scientist. This profile will be instructive in developing programs and resources to help overcome the problems such scientists face.

The Office has already heard from more than a hundred scientists who are deaf, blind, or orthopedically or neurologically

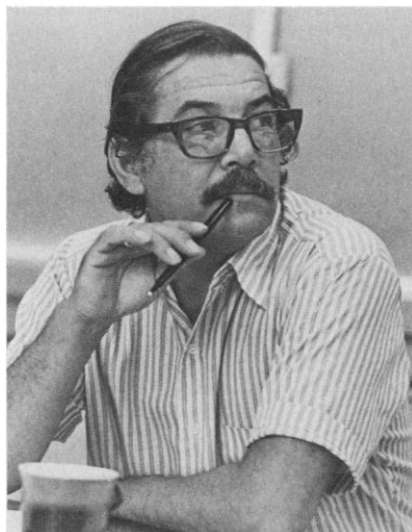
handicapped—in most cases as the result of an accident or illness. Some generalizations about these scientists are possible. They are to be found in all fields of science, working in research, teaching, and administration. Most of them were handicapped after their education was begun, assuring the acquisition of basic communication skills and recognition of their intellectual prowess. Most have supportive families, but had to struggle through educational institutions that were anything but supportive.

These successful handicapped scientists have required extraordinary, almost unbelievable, perseverance to acquire an education. The obstacles placed in their way

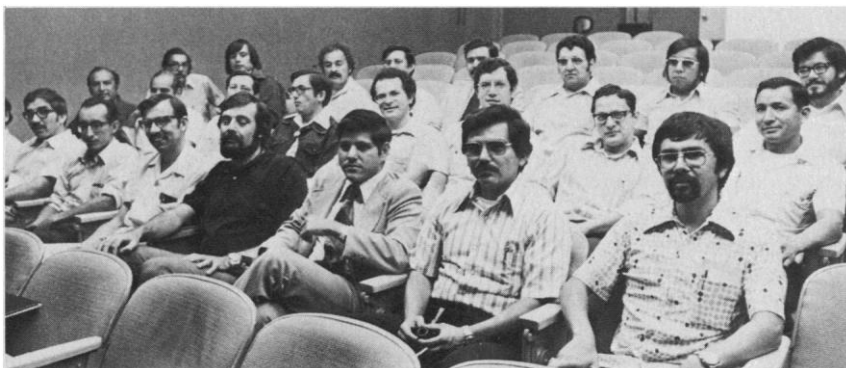
by educational institutions were both physical and attitudinal. In a 1974 survey of ACE-accredited 4-year colleges and universities, 22 percent of the respondents reported that they would reject deaf applicants (1). Although there are now some happy exceptions, such as the University of Texas and the University of Illinois, most campuses are unnegotiable for the severely orthopedically handicapped. Nor do most offer any of the counseling and other services necessary to assure the handicapped an equal chance of success.

The psychological hurdles are also great; these people have had to prove themselves over and over again. All of them can tell stories of the professor who, having no experience with the handicapped, routinely dismissed their abilities on the assumption that these students "would not be able to keep up with the reading" because they

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Chicano and Native American Scientists Meet



The Society for the Advancement of Chicano and Native American Scientists (SACNAS) held its third annual meeting in Albuquerque in August. At the meeting, members elected Alonzo C. Atencio (above left), of the University of New Mexico as president, Richard Tapia, mathematics professor at Rice University as vice-president, and Miguel Rios, physicist from Sandia Laboratories as secretary-treasurer. All of the new 1975 officers are members of the AAAS. Four of the six board members are also AAAS members.

Dr. Atencio has served on the AAAS Committee on Science and the Promotion of Human Welfare and, with three other SACNAS members, is presently on an advisory panel to the Office of Opportunities in Science.

The objective of the SACNAS is to increase the participation of Chicanos and Native Americans in science. The Society works with the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation to that end. Individual members, most of whom are Ph.D.'s in the natural sciences, are all committed, either through personal endeavor or through established programs, to improving the scientific training and counseling that is available to Chicano students. At the meeting which was held in August, members approved the Articles of Incorporation and planned activities for the coming year that will increase the number of Chicanos entering science and the visibility of their accomplishments.

—JANET WELSH BROWN