

Random Samples:

What Are You Worth?

Those of you toiling away in academia probably got a slightly better raise this school year than last, but not much better.

The annual salary survey by the American Association of University Professors shows an average increase of 5.8%, slightly better than last year's 4.9%. When adjusted for inflation, the real increase is held to 1.3%. Last year's real increase was 0.9%.

The largest average increase was at private independent institutions, 6.3%, compared with a 5.7% increase for public institutions. Faculty at major

research universities—most of them on the East or West Coast—also got a bigger increase than average. For example, full professors at Yale got 7.2%; at Duke, 6.0%; at MIT, 6.6%; and at University of Southern California, 7.6%.

The average salary overall is \$39,410. Full professors average \$50,420, associates \$37,530, assistants \$31,160, and instructors \$23,660.

A companion survey of members of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges ranks average salaries by discipline. For full professors, law professors top the list (\$74,544), followed by computer information (\$63,348), business (\$62,538), and engineering (\$61,862). Professors of physical science (\$55,892) and mathematics

"I often tell my students, when they are depressed by the world, that there are two things that make my life worth living: Mozart and quantum mechanics"

—Victor F. Weisskopf, professor emeritus of physics at MIT, from his book *The Privilege of Being a Physicist* (W. H. Freeman & Co.).

(\$54,318) do fairly well, but biologists (\$50,554) fall in the bottom third of the list, below even library (\$53,329), public affairs (\$52,700), and interdisciplinary studies (\$54,086).

Copies of the report are available from AAUP, 1012 14th Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005 for \$27. That's \$2 (8%) more than last year's report cost.

Counting Heads

Just how many scientists and engineers were there in the United States in 1986? The National Science Foundation says 4,626,500. The Bureau of Labor Statistics says 3,287,000. And when it comes to individual categories, the two are even farther apart. NSF, for example, counts 411,800 biologists and life scientists, while BLS says only 65,000. Given the current panic over a predicted shortage of scientists and engineers, these differences matter.

The National Academy of Sciences, at NSF's request, has conducted a study of the latter's data-gathering system. The resulting report, called *Surveying the Nation's Scientists and Engineers: A Data System for the 1990s*, suggests the BLS data are closer to the mark. The NSF data, the academy says, "turn out to be ambiguous, subject to misinterpretation by users, and very difficult to relate to estimates produced by other data systems." In short, no good.

One problem is in the definitions NSF uses, the report says. Its count excludes people working as scientists and engineers but who were trained in other disciplines. And it includes people with scientific or engineering training who work as managers, administrators, or in some other occupation. The NSF system also fails to catch many immigrant scientists.

The academy's recommendations to NSF? Straighten out the definitions, ask more detailed questions and spend more money on the data collection. ■ GREGORY BYRNE

Cold Fusion Couture

The University of Utah has been accused of trying to dress up its science image with the cold fusion prowess of Stanley Pons and Martin Fleischmann. Now students there are dressing themselves up in cold fusion couture.

The university bookstore is finding that cold fusion is a hot boutique item. It currently stocks five different T-shirt designs that are moving fast, says bookstore merchandise manager Dave Husted. The shirts, which sell for about \$12 a pop, have come in from free-lance designers across the state and from a high school English teacher in Coral Gables, Florida. The store sells 20 to 50 shirts a day, Husted says.

The biggest seller to date, Husted says, is

the original design: the word FUSION in black block letters, except for a red block U. The store sold four dozen of those in 2 days.

The schoolteacher-designed shirt features a smiling yellow sun rising from a beaker awash

with a blue ocean wave; drawings of Pons and Fleischmann look on, smiling. The caption reads: "FUSION, March 23, 1989. The imagination and persistence of two chemists unleash the energy of the sun... from seawater!"

A newcomer that's proving popular is a take-off on a beer advertising campaign, touting "Utah's Original Cold Fusion Draft" on a beer label. The reverse displays a blender and the promise that cold fusion is "as real as it gets."

The cold fusion shirts make up only a small percentage of the overall T-shirt sales, Husted says. But the shirts "are a great novelty item," he says, and sales show no sign of falling off.

Now, what about the experiments?

