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# EDITORIAL

## Future Imperfect and Tense

Recruiting, training, and retaining new scientists in contributory roles in our society has been at the top of the agenda of issues discussed by *Science's* editor-in-chief for the past 2 years. Our main avenue of communication with those entering scientific careers is *Science's* Next Wave (SNW, now at the URL [www.nextwave.org](http://www.nextwave.org)). Since its inception in October 1995 [see *Science* **270**, 11 (1995)], this online-only publication has concentrated on discussing the concerns of young scientists and helping increase their awareness about the choices they have in developing and changing their career trajectory.

Under the leadership of Editor John Benditt, now assisted by Associate Editors Nicole Ruediger and Wendy Yee, SNW has recently done a major redesign of its site and added three new features. "Tooling Up" is a monthly interactive column (edited by Peter Fiske) that focuses on the nuts-and-bolts aspects of science job-hunting (such as how to write a winning résumé). "Signposts" is a new department that will lead browsers to other career-related information on the Web, including staff reviews of Web sites deemed to be especially worthy of your clicks. "In the Loop" contains revamped and expanded coverage of career- and training-related news items generated by the worldwide network of SNW's young scientist correspondents. In addition, SNW has continued to offer online discussion forums. The latest of these, "Balancing Career and Family," will likely prove to be as popular as its seven predecessor forums, all of which can still be accessed at the Web site. SNW has already logged in several thousand registrants for its totally free online features since mandatory (but brief) registration began in 1997. Your willingness to complete this short registration form will help us to know better who our readers are and what concerns and hopes top their lists.

*Science* and SNW have received the full support of the AAAS board of directors, who have their own concerns about the ferment and unrest they sense among young scientists and among senior colleagues who are concerned for their welfare and for the future health of U.S. research [see A. G. Kraut, *Science* **273**, 1027 (1996)]. Several months ago, the board created a AAAS Task Force on Careers for Young Scientists to develop recommendations for specific actions that could further address the concerns of young doctoral scientists preparing for uncertain careers. That report (available on e-mail request to [rrich@aaas.org](mailto:rrich@aaas.org)) reaffirms the board's support for SNW and advocates, among other suggestions, the creation of a new AAAS unit dealing with young scientists' transition from training to the workplace.

With all this effort, are there any indications that progress has been made in meeting young scientists' concerns? Recent events suggest that we have a long way to go. A guest editorial in *Current Biology* [6, 1539 (1996)] describes how students at the University of California—San Francisco, dissatisfied with what they saw as one-dimensional training (that is, training aimed at research projects only), organized their faculty to create a "Practice of Science" course to deal with the other aspects of becoming a successful research professional (such as how to write proposals, hire people, and abide by budgets). In November 1996, significant numbers of young scientists in training at three University of California campuses, recent recruits to the United Auto Workers union, went on strike to pressure the university to deal with their demands (for pay equity, benefits, workload reduction, and grievance procedures) through the union. According to *The Scientist* [11 (no. 1), 1 (1997)], the strike took place amid a national surge in union activism among graduate student employees.

Also in November 1996, at the annual meeting of a major national scientific society, this editor experienced firsthand the intense frustration of people who have been trained but face the prospects of the unemployed and unfunded. They were unable to share in the excitement of discovery that flourished around them and wondered whether they had been misused by those with whom they trained; they were en route to being not only disgruntled but disenfranchised. Clearly, our efforts here must continue in full force. As Mark Twain said, "There is no sadder sight than a young pessimist."

Floyd E. Bloom