

The Bottom Line for U.S. Life Scientists

Although physicists, chemists, and engineers have long had their own salary surveys, no one until recently has tried to keep tabs on the sprawling biological research community. This summer the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which publishes *Science*, filled that gap with the first-ever salary survey of its 70,000 life sciences members in the United States.

Members whose primary discipline is a life science make up 65% of the total U.S. AAAS membership. In addition to polling them on their level of compensation, the survey asked a series of questions about their jobs, their careers, and what guidance would be most helpful to the next generation of scientists.

The questionnaire was developed by the AAAS membership office in consultation with other AAAS staff members, salary survey experts, and Shugoll Research of Bethesda, Maryland. It was mailed in June to a sample of 19,000 members, including those with no discipline listed in the AAAS files. The population was limited to those 80 years or younger who are still active professionally. Some 8692 people completed the six-page questionnaire, including 3556 who responded electronically, for a response rate of 46%.

Self-Employed

- ☒ Private practice
- ☐ Independent consultant
- ☐ Other self-employed

The answers, processed by ReData Inc. of Bethesda and analyzed

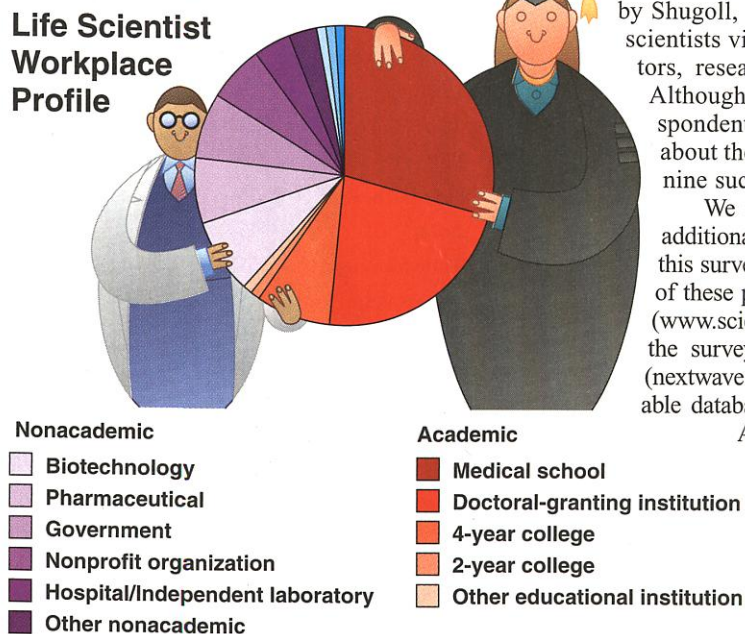
by Shugoll, yield a wealth of information about how scientists view themselves and their duties as educators, researchers, and life sciences professionals. Although the data remain confidential, some respondents graciously agreed to be interviewed about the survey. We offer capsule descriptions of nine such scientists.

We invite your comments and suggestions on additional topics to be covered, as we plan to repeat this survey. A publically available electronic version of these pages is posted on the *Science* Careers site (www.sciencecareers.org); postdoc issues related to the survey are discussed on *Science's* Next Wave (nextwave.sciencemag.org); and a complete, searchable database is available free to members at a new AAAS Web site, AAASMember.org.

—RENUKA CHANDER AND JEFFREY MERVIS

Where life scientists work. Academics make up 61% of the respondent population; one-third of all respondents work at medical schools, hospitals, or independent medical labs. (Figure 1)

Life Scientist Workplace Profile



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M.D. = More Dollars
Happy With His Lot
Adminstrating Can Be Fun
Starved for Research
Forever Young
Biotech Veteran
Life at a Medical Center
Dedicated Postdoc
High-Risk Start-Up

See also Editorial on p. 265.

Science