Science and the Law

The National Conference of Lawyers and Scientists (NCLS), jointly sponsored by the AAAS and the American Bar Association, was formed in 1974 to promote greater communication and cooperation among members of the two professions. Subjects of past projects have included “Assessment of Technological Risk,” “Cross Education of Lawyers and Scientists,” and “Weather Modification: Technology and Law.”

Plans are now being formulated for the Conference to assess the problems scientists and lawyers have encountered in working with each other on a professional basis in preparing for litigation and in providing expert testimony.

Scientists and lawyers who would like to share their experiences, favorable or unfavorable, are encouraged to write Albert H. Teich, NCLS staff representative, at the AAAS address. Please provide a brief description of the subject, a short narrative of how you became involved, and an account of those experiences you feel might be of interest to others. Requests for anonymity will, of course, be respected.

AAAS Travelers

The AAAS has been invited to send a representative to the 99th annual meeting of the French Association for the Advancement of Science to be held 8-12 September 1980 in Amiens. The theme of the meeting will be “Scientific Bases for the Improvement of Food Resources.”

AAAS members who plan to be in the area at that time and/or who know of colleagues on sabbatical in the region who might be able to attend should contact Denise Weiner, Office of International Science, at the AAAS address. Please include a curriculum vitae. No travel funds are available; however, partial support (per diem only) will be provided.

About Section X—General

Most members of AAAS are identified with one of the 21 disciplinary Sections, through which they participate in the voting process. (Members can affiliate with several Sections but are eligible to vote in only one, their “electorate.”)

While most Sections are identified with one or another of the disciplines, Section X-General is a special case. In 1979 the Section Committee made a survey to learn something about its members and their reasons for choosing to identify with it. Forty-three percent of those surveyed responded.

The majority are nonminority males with a degree beyond the baccalaureate. Their educational background is mainly science, mathematics, or engineering, and they are employed for the most part in applied science, engineering, business, industry, and administration. Asked what subjects they favored for symposia at the annual meeting, the majority lined up behind communication of science, world resources, and energy prospects in the United States, while others urged a wide spectrum of topics including law-science dilemmas, comparative economic problems, nuclear hazards, risk in socio-technical systems, and appropriate technology.

As to why members joined Section X, the most frequent answer was a generalized or interdisciplinary interest in science. Others reported interests in science policy or the interaction of science with society.

Though its numbers include less than 2 percent of AAAS membership, Section X is quite active in generating perspectives on the domestic and global impacts of science and technology, and in examining the implications of scientific and technological change for values and institutions.

Chautauqua Short Courses

A wide variety of intensive short courses for undergraduate faculty in the sciences is being arranged by the Office of Science Education. The National Science Foundation recently announced the sites for the 1980-1981 Chautauqua Short Courses for College Teachers; 12 colleges and universities throughout the United States will act as hosts for the courses, which are aimed at helping undergraduate faculty keep their teaching up-to-date with recent scientific advances.

The field centers will be the Oregon Graduate Center, Santa Ana College (California), the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Utah, Christian Brothers College (Tennessee), Parkland College (Illinois), the University of Iowa, the University of Dayton, Hampshire College, Polytechnic Institute of New York, Temple University, and the University of Georgia.

Approximately ten short courses will be offered at each field center. Courses will address areas such as energy, earth science, nutrition, immunobiology, risk-benefit analysis, economics, modern chemical dynamics, cosmology, and microcomputers.

A brochure with courses, schedules, and application forms will be available this summer from the Office of Science Education at the AAAS address.

For more information about the activities and publications described in AAAS News, write to the appropriate office, AAAS, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, unless otherwise indicated.
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