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- **SCIENCE** is published weekly on Friday, except the last week in December, and with an extra issue in February by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Second-class postage (publication No. 484460) paid at Washington, DC, and at an additional entry. Now combined with *The Scientific Monthly* © Copyright © 1989 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The title **SCIENCE** is a registered trademark of the AAAS. Domestic individual membership and subscription (51 issues): \$70. Domestic institutional subscription (51 issues): \$110. Foreign postage extra: Canada \$32, other (surface mail) \$32, air-surface via Amsterdam \$85. First class, airmail, school-year, and student rates on request. **Single copy sales:** Current issue, \$3.50; back issues, \$5.00; Biotechnology issue, \$6.00 (for postage and handling, add per copy \$0.50 U.S., \$1.00 all foreign); Guide to Biotechnology Products and Instruments, \$18 (for postage and handling add per copy \$1.00 U.S., \$1.50 Canada, \$2.00 other foreign). Bulk rates on request. **Change of address:** allow 6 weeks, giving old and new addresses and 11-digit account number. Authorization to photocopy material for internal or personal use under circumstances not falling within the fair use provisions of the Copyright Act is granted by AAAS to libraries and other users registered with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) Transactional Reporting Service, provided that the base fee of \$1 per copy plus \$0.10 per page is paid directly to CCC, 21 Congress Street, Salem, Massachusetts 01970. The identification code for *Science* is 0036-8075/83 \$1 + .10. **Postmaster:** Send Form 3579 to *Science*, P.O. Box 1722, Riverton, NJ 08077. *Science* is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in several specialized indexes.
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**COVER** The rose sea anemone (*Tealia piscivora*) exemplifies the beauty of many cnidarians, the simplest animals having a nervous system. Tentacles of the cosmopolitan anemone (*Haliplanella luciae*) have mechanoreceptors on the surface that tune to the movements of prey identified by chemodetection. See page 1589. [Photograph by George Grall, National Aquarium, Baltimore, MD 21202]

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**Information for contributors** appears on page XI of the 23 December 1988 issue. Editorial correspondence, including requests for permission to reprint and reprint orders, should be sent to 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Telephone: 202-326-6500.

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## A New Approach to Faculty Salaries

**T**he situation of faculty salaries is becoming desperate. During the past 10 years salaries have not increased as much as the consumer price index, in distinct contrast to salaries of baseball players and to tuition for college.

The traditional answer to such a problem is unionization, but unions have not worked in academia. Scientists, and other academics, tend to be individualists, and the enjoyment of doing basic research provides so many eager applicants that a university administration could in most cases replace a striking faculty in something less than a few milliseconds. At present, competition for star researchers raises salaries, but the process is too slow. Obviously, some different approach will be needed.

Although it will pain some souls dedicated to purity, one effective solution might be the creation of a phantom chair at each institution—one that is never filled but is used solely to raise salaries. Professor I. M. Pecunious at University X, with a clearly inadequate salary, will tell faculty friends at University Y that he is in distress. These friends at University Y will then offer the impoverished professor the Gaston P. Mirage Chair, which supplies a fantastic salary, laboratory space that is slightly smaller than Australia, and a reserved parking place with his name in large gold letters. Notice of the offer should then be leaked to generate a conditioned reflex in colleagues at University X, who will raise a large hue and cry, pointing out that the loss of Professor Pecunious will create irreparable damage to the university. Once Professor Pecunious has indeed been secured once again by University X at a price, other members of the faculty can rush in and claim that they are every bit as able as the professor and that he is being grossly overpaid. Only by giving other professors equivalent increases will the esprit de corps of the institution be maintained. Thus, faculties can receive raises without filling chairs or going through such painfully plebeian activities as strikes.

A similar principle can be used to increase the outside income of faculty members. At present, faculty members are invited to give speeches with the usual promise of a "modest honorarium." It is extremely poor form to ask for the actual dollar amount, but it is almost invariably discovered that the adjective is accurate. In the future, professors would be well advised to designate a colleague as their "scheduling agent." When an invitation is received, the faculty member should never negotiate directly, but should immediately say "Professor P. T. Barnum is in charge of my schedule, and you will have to speak to him." Such inquiries should be answered by Professor Barnum in terms such as, "What were you thinking of giving Professor Schmelzpunkt for an honorarium?" followed by satirical laughter, regardless of the figure mentioned. After the laughter, the professorial agent will state, "There is no possible way that I could book the distinguished Professor S. for such a modest honorarium." He will then explain that Professor S. is in such great demand that he could only consider visiting Pinnacle University for three times the amount offered; he also should be met at the airport with a chauffeured limousine and requires a guaranteed audience of at least 500 people. If each professor had such a designated colleague-agent, it would soon raise the prices for all and provide a basis for faculty total income approaching that of congressmen.

There is good reason to be concerned about faculty and graduate salaries. It is the conventional wisdom that the diminishing pool of scientists is the result of poor teaching, demographic shifts, and the growing reluctance of students to choose difficult courses. It is time to give serious consideration to the hypothesis that students may see science as a career of high competition and anxiety, with low pay compared to that of doctors or lawyers. Furthermore, even those devoted to science may lose heart when they enter graduate school and find that stipends put them below the poverty line. Moreover, postdoctoral work is becoming a requirement as science becomes more complex, and that only extends the period of asceticism into the early family-raising years.

Although this problem may solve itself in the distant future, as projections indicate severe shortages in a number of professions in the late 1990s, it would be prudent to start adjusting salaries now so that more young people will be attracted to scientific and engineering careers. In that way the faculty will have, as the saying goes, a salary level the football coach can be proud of.—DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR.