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Young Scientists and the AAAS

Young scientists, including committed undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows, are the principal consumers of science education. They also do a significant portion of the university-based teaching and research in science. Raised in the post-Hiroshima era, they want to know how to act responsibly and how to avoid becoming the passive technical instruments of others' policies. They expect to inherit the demands of a misled public for magical solutions to unforeseen as well as ancient problems. They see that the structure of science reflects that of society and is therefore deficient in matters such as the full inclusion of minority-group members and women at all levels and the rational and humane allocation of resources. As younger citizens, they will suffer longer the irreversible effects of public (and of private industrial) policies significantly influenced by science or by a lack of science's insights.

The Committee of Young Scientists attempted last spring to find ways in which the AAAS might serve these and other needs of young scientists. The committee grew out of a significant innovation of the AAAS Board of Directors, which invited a group of young scientists to meet with it in October 1969. The young scientists requested the opportunity to report to the Board on matters of major concern to young scientists. Their work culminated in a report containing specific recommendations for a variety of programmatic and institutional changes in the AAAS. Informing the report were the beliefs that the unique multi- and interdisciplinary resources of the AAAS should be extended to science institutions and education; that local organization, meaningful membership which structures and elicits member activity, and a democratic organization would enhance the purposes of the AAAS; and that active participation of members is necessary to render the AAAS potent in effecting public policy and in promoting better understanding of science by the public.

Accordingly, the Committee of Young Scientists recommended that regional AAAS offices catalyze and support multiple experiments in education concerning the responsibility of scientists, their varied roles in society, and interdisciplinary approaches to major problems. They urged structural changes in the AAAS to make its governing council less cumbersome and to make the Board of Directors even more responsive than it is now, by direct election of members. They recommended continued involvement of young people at all levels of the AAAS. They suggested expansion of debate in *Science* on controversial matters of science and society, and creation of a new type of newspaper column of science controversy. They urged formation of a committee of minority-group scientists. They made many suggestions designed to increase the interest of young scientists in the AAAS. Finally, they urged that the issues they raised be actively debated in the pages of *Science*.

The Board of Directors acted promptly on several of the recommendations. They formed a committee of minority-group scientists. They created a council of young scientists and assigned each to a significant AAAS committee. They then referred most of the other recommendations to various AAAS committees. They also shifted their approach from one of asking for consultation with the young scientists to requests for their active participation in specific projects.

The Youth Council now plans to present its coordinated goals to diverse committees and hopes to get action through these channels. Its members will participate actively in the annual meetings. But further progress will depend on the initiative demonstrated by other young scientists as well as by AAAS members (readers of *Science*).

—MACK LIPKIN, JR., AAAS Youth Council