

From Teachers to Teaching—A Stronger AAPT

Organizations, like organisms, must adapt to their evolving environment. This is especially true in today's socio-political, technological, and academic setting. With the prospect of significant changes in funding support for science education, in electronic publishing, and in global competition, AAPT must constantly review its priorities and initiate actions that reflect its core beliefs.

Our tradition gives us a rich heritage as an association that values the teaching of physics, and knows how to do it. AAPT must remain a vibrant membership-based association, serving the professional needs of its members, while at the same time increasing its role as a dynamic resource for all physics educators and becoming a leading voice of physics education. Motivated by our passion for physics, our experience in teaching, and our knowledge of physics education, we will find new ways to expand the reach of our programs and services. We must be a strong contributor—and soon the leader—in a national effort to improve physics education.

Together we must work to broaden and deepen the impact of AAPT and the influence of its members on physics education. To this end:

- We must analyze the effect of our many significant initiatives, programs, and publications and disseminate widely the most successful among them.
- We must continue to support the new ideas and techniques in teaching that our members have produced and work to combine these best practices in ways that could precipitate systemic change in the nation's schools and universities.
- We must increase the effectiveness of communications to and among our members while reaching out to a much larger community of scientists, educators, administrators, and policymakers.
- We must facilitate public dialogues on science education that lead to meaningful conversations on issues of regional and national significance.

To realize this vision, AAPT is embarking on Phase II of a comprehensive planning process that, when completed, will establish AAPT's strategic directions and refine its agenda to effectively address them. AAPT will establish ambitious goals and develop the appropriate infrastructure to meet them. All stages of this planning process will engage the membership and leadership of the Association.

Our AAPT of the twenty-first century will build on the strengths that characterize its growth through the twentieth century. It may become larger and more international. It may have new types of members and turn some of its attention to national policy. It will surely engage in fundraising and be widely recognized by scientists and educators as the voice of physics education. Above all, AAPT will continue to be anchored in our knowledge that good physics is at the core of effective physics teaching. In turn, effective

physics teaching is critical to advancing physics research and development, as well as the physics literacy of our entire population so necessary for survival in an increasingly technological world.

Your Board at its October meeting embraced this vision. A number of key decisions were made (see the upcoming AAPT News) which will help shape AAPT into a stronger organization that provides tangible benefits to those teaching physics, while advancing the “cause” of physics education.

As you will see, your Board addressed issues in communications and publications, governance, meetings, development, teacher preparation, awards, and programs for new teachers. The minutes of the meeting will soon be posted on AAPT.org. We urge you to review these areas of emphasis, let us know your ideas, and consider where you would like to contribute.

We are moving toward a vision of AAPT as a leading voice for physics education and a leading resource for physics educators. We invite you to join us on this journey that promises to be exciting and challenging. The rewards for AAPT are significant. The rewards for physics education are greater. We can only get there if we work together. After all, the dedication of our members who rise to a challenge is a hallmark of AAPT—a characteristic that the national office will wholeheartedly support.

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