

EPS

LECTURER EXCHANGE SCHEME

As a contribution to international understanding of the problems of physics education and to the spread of good teaching practice in physics, Council agreed that an international Lecturer Exchange Scheme be set up under the aegis of the Society. Under this Scheme, physicists working in various institutions will exchange duties for periods of a term, semester or year in order to take part in the teaching, administration and research in their host department during the period of the exchange.

Background

The exchange between countries of scientists (as visiting professors, guest scientists, on lecture tours, etc.) and students (study abroad) is a well established aspect of the international character of science. It is, however, abundantly clear that the main purpose or motivation of such exchanges has always in the past been cross-fertilization in research. A visiting professor will give some lectures before the students of his host institution, but usually in an advanced subject related to his research specialization. A visiting professor is rarely asked to give undergraduate courses, and the number of visiting professors who are invited for their renown as teachers is vanishingly small. The object of the Lecturer Exchange Scheme is to redress the balance and to give some prominence to excellence and innovation in University physics teaching.

The Scheme is sufficiently flexible to allow for different conditions of law and administration which prevail in different countries and where formal bilateral and multilateral exchange agreements already exist, EPS would work in the context of those agreements wherever possible. The role of EPS is mainly that of catalyst.

Who ?

The Scheme applies to staff members of all levels, from Demonstrator to Head of Department, who engage regularly in teaching duties within their department. As far as is possible, exchanges will be between individuals of comparable experience and authority so that major adjustments will not be necessary when taking up the lecturing schedules of the exchange colleague. It is emphasized that the exchanges are seen as *working* exchanges; operation of the

Scheme should neither call for additional staffing in host departments nor should it place undue additional loads on colleagues in these departments.

How ?

In general, it is expected that the exchanges will involve the direct exchange of individuals between two institutions. Because some countries may have difficulty in obtaining lecturers capable of teaching in their national language and because the lengths of lecture courses vary from one country to another (semester versus term for example) the Scheme will also allow the possibility of indirect exchange. The Scheme therefore incorporates the possibility of ring exchanges, which could help the language problem, and non-contemporaneous exchanges, which could resolve the semester-term problem.

Remuneration

Physicists who take part in the Scheme will expect to leave behind their normal salary to cover home commitments. We envisage two basic variations on the Scheme. In one, lecturers are provided with accommodation and receive a local allowance raised to the level of bachelor life appropriate to a colleague in the host country. In the other, there is a complete direct exchange: the lecturers and their families exchange positions and living accommodation and the lecturer receives a local allowance. In any event, a grant is made to cover the cost of travel.

Involvement

The lecturers, the host Universities, the ministries of education, the national physical societies and EPS all have essential roles to play in the Scheme. Co-operation between these groups is a central feature since even at the most modest level of operation, the overall cost is beyond the resources that EPS itself could commit to the project. The EPS contribution takes the form of initiation and organization and its first task is to convince the various funding and contributing bodies that it is worthy of their support.

One way of looking at the Scheme is in terms of the duties of the different groups taking part in it; in the following, are set down the essential obligations and benefits as seen

by an exchange lecturer and his host institution.

Exchange Lecturer

The exchange lecturer undertakes: — to teach for one complete session — term, semester or year — in his host country, in a language acceptable to his hosts;

— to undertake a specified teaching load, comparable in principle with that of his host colleagues;

The lecturer expects:

— to enlarge his teaching experience and his awareness of cultural activities through his participation in the life of the host University;

— to receive his regular salary at home, which will serve largely to cover continuing home commitments, plus a suitable cash allowance;

— to have office accommodation and secretarial services comparable to those of his host colleagues;

— to have suitable living accommodation provided by his host University.

Host Institution

The host institution receives:

— the teaching effort of a highly competent lecturer for one full teaching period (semester, term or year as appropriate);

— an influx of ideas and abilities outside its normal experience.

The host institution undertakes:

— where possible, the assignment of one of its own staff members to the exchange scheme and maintains for this departing academic his salary, social security, pension rights, etc.

— to provide suitable office accommodation and secretarial services and pay a suitable allowance to the visiting lecturer and arrange accommodation for him;

— to appoint a named colleague, in collaboration with the national society, as a host for the visiting lecturer.

When ?

Even if some of the detailed mechanisms remain to be worked out (and some evolution in the system can be expected as experience is gained) the EPS Secretariat is able to accept from now on, applications from lecturers wishing to participate, recommendations as to potential participants, and notification from institutions that they are interested in taking part. Council endorsed the comments of the President that this was one of the most important initiatives to be taken by the Society and it was highly desirable that arrangements for the first exchanges were completed in time for the beginning of the academic year of 1980/1981.