

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS
Loomis Laboratory of Physics
Urbana, Illinois 61801

January 28, 1980

TO: Members of the Ad Hoc Committee Concerning the Division of the
History of Physics

FROM: A. Wattenberg

The Council of the APS accepted our report with some rather minor modifications that were fixed up at the meeting, mainly by Willy Fowler and Norman Ramsey. Basically, it concerned substituting the word "scholarly activity" instead of "professionalism" and making sure that the Committee would be available should there be comments from the Divisions that we should consider. The report, as modified by the Council, is appended. The Council specifically approved the four recommendations at the end of the report. If, after reading the report, you have some serious objections which I should bring to the attention of the Council, in the form of an addendum letter, please let me know. If I do not hear from you within about three weeks, I will assume that the report is satisfactory in its present form.

During the discussion, Bill Havens pointed out that there were three things that needed to be done before the establishment of a Division. The first one is for him to receive a petition requesting the formation of a Division. As of the Council meeting, he still had not received such petitions. He was rather irritated about this. I understand that this will be rectified in the near future. The second thing is getting the comments from other Divisions, and that is being done. The last thing is the preparation and submission of bylaws for approval or disapproval by the Council. Havens said he will be writing to Laurie Brown concerning this.

I want to thank you very much for your contributions that made this report possible. I hope the results of your efforts will be the formation of a Division of the History of Physics this spring. Thanks again.

AW/ds
Enclosure

Report to the Council of the American Physical Society from the
Ad Hoc Committee Concerned with the Formation of a
Division of the History of Physics

This report has been approved in a conference telephone call. A signed copy for the records will be sent shortly.

I. Members of the Committee consider that the needs and purposes for a Division of the History of Physics are covered to a great extent in the original proposal submitted by Laurie Brown and others. (The original proposal is appended.) Some of the points covered include:

(1) It would be desirable to have regularly scheduled invited sessions devoted to the history of physics.

(2) There should be a coordination of sessions on the history of physics with other Divisions so that those interested in this field will have an opportunity to get together with one another.

(3) A division could encourage the scheduling of special conferences or joint sessions on the history of physics.

(4) A list of members of a division on the history of physics would provide the Center for the History of Physics and others interested in the field with a way to contact one another.

(5) A division could provide periodically a newsletter to keep members of the division informed of meetings, conferences, and work that may be of interest.

As well as the points in the original proposal, two additional reasons for forming a division have come to our attention: One is that in recent years there has been an increased interest shown by industrial and national laboratories in preserving the documentation and in supporting historical research. This has involved an increasing number of physicists devoting themselves professionally to this effort. The other is that the contributions of professional historians of physics sometimes are highly technical in the physics sense, and in such cases they are inappropriate for sessions of the History of Science Society, but they would be appropriate for sessions of the APS. The sessions of a division on the history of physics would provide the professional historians of physics with an appropriate opportunity that is now lacking.

II. In regard to the interaction of such a division with other organizations: The members of the Committee have contacted the AAPT, the History of Science Society,

the American Astronomical Society, and Spencer Weart of the Center for the History of Physics. A report to the Committee from G. Holton is appended as well as letters from S. Weart, and O. Gingerich of the American Astronomical Society. Those contacted expressed support for the formation of a history division in the APS. There was interest on the part of the AAPT and the AAS in the possibility of joint sessions with such a division of the APS. At the present time, the APS has no group to coordinate such joint meetings, and a division would offer that possibility. The Center for the History of Physics would like to have a list of interested members of the APS. The members of the Council also should be aware that other scientific societies have the equivalent of a division on history in their fields, specifically: the American Chemical Society, the American Astronomical Society, and the American Geological Society. It therefore seems very appropriate that the American Physical Society have such a division.

- III. In regard to whether the APS should specify a division or a forum: The members of the Ad Hoc Committee feel that it should be a division, and the APS should encourage high standards of scholarship in this field. Comments on the desirability of scholarly activity in history of sciences are in the letter of Owen Gingerich.
- IV. In regard to the question of whether the APS should anticipate a request from a division on history for a new publication: The members of the Ad Hoc Committee do not feel that there is a need for such a new publication by the APS. The American Journal of Physics has expressed an interest in having more articles in the field of the history of physics written by members of the APS. David Pines, of the Reviews of Modern Physics, has expressed a continuing interest in the publication of articles on the history of physics such as that by A. Pais.
- V. (The APS Councillors should be aware of Article X, Section 1, of the APS Constitution which is appended.)

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee therefore wish to make the following recommendations:

(1) That the Council of the APS approve the principle of the formation of a Division of the History of Physics subject to the constitutional (Article X) requirement of comment from the other Divisions of the APS and provided that the comments do not raise substantive objections.

(2) That the Executive Secretary of the APS suggest to the original proposers* of this Division that they draft a set of bylaws for a Division of the History of Physics to be submitted to the APS Council for review and approval.

(3) That this report be brought to the attention of the Executive Committees of the Divisions by Divisional Councillors (from those Divisions that have not as yet commented on the proposal for the formation of this new Division).

(4) Prior to the Council considering specific bylaws for this new Division, comments from other Divisions may raise substantive questions not covered in this report. The Ad Hoc Committee will continue to be available in order to report to the Council on such questions if they arise.

*Proposers: Laurie Brown - Northwestern University
Stephen Brush - University of Maryland
Max Dresden - SUNY-Stony Brook
Gerald Holton - Harvard University
Martin J. Klein - Yale University
Gertrude Scharff-Goldhaber - Brookhaven National Laboratory
Roger Steuwer - University of Minnesota
K. C. Wali - Syracuse University



A. Wattenberg

Members of Ad Hoc Committee:

Laurie Brown
Willie Fowler
Gerald Holton
Martin Klein
Gertrude Scharff-Goldhaber
Al Wattenberg (Chairperson)

AW/ds

ARTICLE X - ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIVISION OR FORUM

1. Organization. -- The Council may, upon petition by members of the Society, form a Division or Forum within the Society. A Division shall have as its object the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of a specific subject or subjects in physics. A Forum shall have as its object the advancement and diffusion of knowledge regarding the interrelation of physics and other subjects not specifically in physics. The Council shall distribute to the Chairperson and Secretary-Treasurer of each existing Division and Forum a statement of the areas of interest of the proposed Division or Forum for review and comment. The Council shall then review and approve or disapprove the bylaws for the proposed Division or Forum.

For Talkat 12:00 DIPLOMAT ROOMS 4/28/80

There are certain formalities that need to be carried out by the APS Council in order to form a Division. I want to cover these and tell what has been done. They are spelled out in the Constitution of the APS. ~~Basically~~ in article X

Read Article X

~~Due to the efforts of~~ Laurie Brown ^{at Northwestern} in association with
and Stephen Brush ^{at Maryland}
Max Dresden ^{SONY STONY BROOK}
Gerald Holton ^{Harvard}
Martin Klein ^{Yale} Roger Stevens ^{Minnesota}
K.C. Wali ^{Syracuse}
Gertrude Goldhaber
were brought to the attention of the Council
by Tracy Goldhaber of BNL.

The Council set up an ad hoc committee to advise them on the purpose, need, and appropriateness of the APS establishing a Division on Forum on the History of Physics.

~~The members of the Ad Hoc comm~~

Law Brascoumb instructed the Ad Hoc committee in a letter. Part of which I quote

**READ
BRASCOUMB**

The members of the Ad Hoc comm

William Fowler ^{at Cal Tech}
Gerald Holton ^{at Harvard}
Gertrude Goldhaber ^{BNL}
Laurie Brown ^{WEL}
M. Klein ^{Yale}

~~The~~ Various members of the Committee contacted the RAPT, The History of Science Society, the Center for the History of Physics, and the American Astronomical Society. ~~the~~ Contact was also made with people working in the field - History Projects at Bell Tel, Fermi Lab, Rogerson Atmospheric Lab, &

P.S. Write to Laurie Brown if you wish to make input on what such a Division should be doing. ~~You are~~ A Division is not limited to the activities spelled out in into Bylaws. EG History of PP at the Forum last year

& some younger professional historians at science in at universities. ~~These~~ Based on these the ^{ad hoc} committee issued the following report.

READ REPORT

Council ~~to report~~ ~~accepted~~ the passed the resolutions in the report. They also spent a good deal of time on the question of a Division or Forum & voted ~~too~~ ~~forum~~ ended up in favor of Forum.

~~Minutes~~ ~~from~~ except from Greenwich Letter if you want. He alerts us to "Amateur-professional" activity ~~instead~~ instead of scholarly work on the History

Present Status - Bill Haven has contacted all the required Division Officers - He has received responses from many of the Divisions. - NONE HAVE RAISED substantive objections.

What remains to be done is to submit to the APS Council a set of Bylaws for their approval or disapproval.

Laurie Brown is leading up a committee taking ~~responsibility~~ planning with the other members of the original group to prepare these by-laws for submission to the next APS Council meeting.

When the Council approves a set of By-Laws - it will be announced in the bulletin & other places - then you should inform the APS

It is important if you wish such a Division to let the APS know if you wish to become a member of the Division. The dues for all Divisions is currently \$2.00. However the APS does not collect it from you. They credit each division with 2.00 per member.