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by Raymond Y. Chu **November 2004**

Salaries for PhD Physicists and Related Scientists during Spring 2004: Summary Report

This is a summary of the latest salary data for physicists and related scientists. It is based on a biennial survey of a sample of U.S.-resident members of the American Institute of Physics (AIP) Member Societies conducted by the Statistical Research Center of AIP. For the past 24 years, this report series has documented the salary, employment and demographic characteristics of the U.S. members of the AIP's ten Member Societies. This year, the trends include:

- The median annual salary for respondents with PhDs rose to $90,000 in 2004 from $87,000 in 2002.
- The highest median salaries were reported by society members with PhDs employed in hospitals or medical services, at $120,000. The median salary for those working in 4-year colleges with 9-10 month contracts has remained stagnant at $56,000.
- The highest typical salaries ($77,000 to $124,000) are found in the Pacific states. The lowest are in the West North Central states ($55,000 to $100,000). Most society members reside and work on the East and West coasts. These regions also tend to have the most competitive salaries.
- Ph.D.'s working in industry and who are society members reported a median salary of $104,000 in 2004, up from $100,000 in the 2002 survey. The percentage growth in salaries for industrial Ph.D.'s was slightly above the 3.3% inflation rate measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) during the period between the two surveys. Although the increase in median salary outpaced the inflation rate, the momentum of growth dropped off.

Typical salaries and median age for major employment sectors, PhDs 2004. (a)

Academic sector	Typical salaries (in thousands)	Median Age
University		
9-10 month salary	$60 to 96	48
11-12 month salary	$59 to 110	48
4-Year college		
9-10 month salary	$49 to 68	46
Non-Academic sector		
Hospital, medical services	$92 to 150	48
FFR&DC (b)	$96 to 130	49
Industry, self-employed	$85 to 127	47
Government	$86 to 125	51
Nonprofit	$67 to 108	47
UARI (b)	$60 to 100	46

(a) Employed U.S. resident members only. Postdoctorates excluded.
(b) FFR&DC=Federally-Funded Research and Development Center
UARI=University-Affiliated Research Institute or Observatory

- Members with postdoctorate appointments at universities who earned their PhDs within the past two years reported typical salaries of $35,000 to $42,000.

- The unemployment rate (1.7%) among society members with PhDs has risen slightly since 2000. However

Typical salaries for selected university ranks, PhDs, 2002. (a)

Academic rank	Typical salaries (in thousands)
Professor	
9-10 month salary	**$78 to 112**
11-12 month salary	**$100 to 150**
Associate professor	
9-10 month salary	**$58 to 78**
11-12 month salary	**$71 to 100**
Assistant professor	
9-10 month salary	**$48 to 62**
11-12 month salary	**$50 to 70**
Research faculty (11 to 12 mos)	
Postdocs 0-2 years since PhD	**$35 to 42**
Postdocs 3-4 years since PhD	**$36 to 45**
Other research faculty	**$50 to 76**

(a) Employed U.S. resident members only.

Methodology

The AIP Membership Sample Survey is the largest survey conducted by AIP's Statistical Research Center (SRC). More than 21,600 individuals, approximately one-fourth of the U.S. members of AIP's Member Societies were selected on the basis of a stratified random sample and asked to report their salary and employment data as of March 2004. Nearly 12,300 responded after three e-mail requests for an overall response rate of 57%.

The data represent responses from members of the American Physical Society, Optical Society of America, Acoustical Society of America, The Society of Rheology, American Association of Physics Teachers, American Crystallographic Association, American Astronomical Society, American Association of Physicists in Medicine, AVS The Science and Technology Society, and American Geophysical Union. Within the research portion of its mission, the SRC collects, analyzes, and disseminates data on education and employment in physics and related fields.

Detailed salary data from this survey are currently available for purchase on the AIP Store on the web. The salary data are presented in twelve tables that each focus on different aspects of PhD salaries and can be found on the AIP Store.