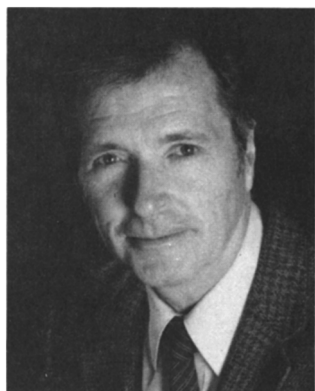


COMMENTS



This issue of *Fusion Technology (FT)* is the first of three issues in a series devoted to the special topic “Plasma Control Issues for Tokamaks,” arranged by guest editor Dr. David Humphreys of General Atomics. This series easily sets a new record for length of a special topic issue. Its outstanding success is due to a combination of the enthusiastic effort by Dr. Humphreys in identifying and inviting papers and the timeliness of the topic. Indeed, in the Guest Editor’s Comments, he attributes the overwhelming response to the call for papers as “a measure of the progress . . . along the path of fusion engineering, toward commercial reactor design.” I fully agree with this conclusion, but I must add that much more work is needed.

The end of the path has not yet been achieved, and regrettably, the recent funding cut suffered by the U.S. Department of Energy Fusion Office hits strongly at fusion engineering. Momentum is very important in any research and development (R&D) program. Once lost, momentum is difficult to regain because the program requires a core of experts who have the experience and background to interact and build on each other’s advances. Once key scientists leave, if the decision is made to again accelerate R&D, considerable time is required for new personnel to come in and gain sufficient experience to rebuild momentum. Both workers and project administrators will have to work hard to preserve core groups and enthusiasm in key areas so that reasonable momentum can be retained in fusion engineering despite the reduction in the U.S. fusion budget. One bright spot is that internationally, funding for fusion engineering remains strong. Consequently, increased international collaboration becomes one of the important elements in a program designed to maintain momentum.

Returning to the current special issue, clearly Dr. Humphreys has done an outstanding job as guest editor. We are all deeply indebted to him and to others at General Atomics who assisted him with this most important collection of preeminent papers on plasma control.

In closing, I must report a change in *FT*’s editorial staff. Ms. Celia Elliott, editorial assistant for over four years, recently accepted a new position at the University of Illinois. Ms. Laura Perez has now taken on the editorial assistant’s job, and she will be ably assisted by Carolyn Petersen. Celia has done an outstanding job for *FT*, as many authors can attest, and we wish her well in her new position. She can still be contacted at cm Elliott@uiuc.edu if you would like to send her personal “well wishes.” I am confident that Laura will follow in this tradition of helpful and authoritative interaction with authors and reviewers. Both she and Carolyn look forward to getting to know people involved with *FT* as time goes on. They can be contacted at fsl@uiuc.edu or by phone/fax at 217-333-3772/333-2906 should you have questions or need assistance. Please continue to feel free to contact me directly at the above phone and fax numbers or at gmiley@uiuc.edu.

George Miley