

Searle

21 January 1956

Professor D. M. Dennison, Chairman  
Department of Physics  
The Harrison M. Randall Laboratory  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dear Dave:

I believe I can report to you more effectively now in answer to your question about personnel than I could have done if I had answered back in November.

I am much impressed with your desire to get the best men. I know you and I feel that that is the only way to get a good department.

The most able man who will be getting his degree before fall is Charles Misner. However, we hope to keep him here next year on a combination of half time instructing and half time Higgins money. He is the most able man I have seen here since Feynman. He is working in field theory.

Another exceedingly good man is Hugh Everett. He has a great deal of originality and ability and in addition expresses himself well. His thesis topic is original with him. The other day he brought me the second draft of it. I think it will be an important piece of work. He calls it "Quantum mechanics by the method of the universal wave function." He faces the issue of what to do in a world where several observers are at work making measurements. He shows that a wave function that includes the observers as well as the objects under study develops continuously in time. He establishes the connection between this description and the usual one where the wave function changes discontinuously after each act of observation. Everett is interested not only in mathematical physics but also in the theory of games. He published an original paper in this field. Professor A. W. Tucker, Chairman of our mathematics department, is a leader in this field of research and shares with me a high respect for Everett's abilities.

Eric Vogt, who got his degree with Eugene Wigner last year in theoretical nuclear physics (level width studies, etc.), is now with Peierls at Birmingham. He is not so original as either but is closer to the active region between experimental and theoretical physics. Neither is he so good as Everett at expressing himself, but he also has a fine personality.

66/PY

Professor Dennison

-2-

21 January 1956

Instead of trying to add comments myself on an outstanding young experimentalist who should make a good instructor, let me quote Professor Dicke who says: "Edward B. D. Lambe is very good. Would make a good teacher and researcher. Thesis exp g factor of electron in ground state of atomic hydrogen," and Professor Hamilton who says: "John W. McClain does not meet criterion 1., ("creative"), but would be an excellent teacher."

If you might be considering somebody at the next higher academic level I would like to suggest for your consideration Kenneth Ford, assistant professor at Indiana now and Fulbright fellow at Göttingen; and Lawrence Wilets who was two years in Copenhagen and is now at Los Alamos. He turned down an assistant professorship at M. I. T. but might now consider coming back into academic work. These men are original and have a great deal of research drive and ability. I would be happy to write more about them if you wish.

I am leaving in less than a week for Leiden so let me now extend all good wishes for the New Year.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

John A. Wheeler

JAW:mbp