

Report of Special Committee to Study the UT-AEC Project

The committee spent November 26, 27, and until about 2 o'clock on November 28 in conferring with administrative officials of the University of Tennessee, in visiting the UT laboratory, and in conferring with various people at Oak Ridge.

We had ample conferences with President Brehm, Dean McLeod, Assistant Dean Ewing, Drs. Chance and Winters at the University of Tennessee. We also had a fairly long conference with Dr. Patrick at the UT laboratory and with a number of his associates and assistants and with several of the members of the UT staff who are doing some work at the laboratory. In addition, we had a special conference with Drs. Sapierie, Roth, and Shoup, and had individual conferences with Drs. Roth, Shoup, K. Z. Morgan, and Hollaender. We saw a number of other individuals and had opportunity to discuss matters informally with them, but those mentioned are the key individuals.

The committee proceeded on the assumption that it was their function to make suggestions for the improvement of the UT-AEC project and not to raise anew the question as to whether the project should be transferred to Oak Ridge. Pertinent to this is the attitudes expressed within the University and by the various people at Oak Ridge and the relations between the two groups.

It is a fair conclusion that both within the University of Tennessee and among the various groups and agencies at Oak Ridge there is a sincere desire that the UT project succeed. The UT personnel were appreciative of the help and cooperativeness of the AEC personnel at Oak Ridge. Similarly all of those at Oak Ridge with whom we talked agreed that the University of Tennessee is trying to do a good job and that they should be helped and encouraged. All of them expressed willingness to help if and when called upon. Scientifically, this

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applies particularly, perhaps, to Dr. Hollaender, who expressed the opinion that the UT project had a certain field to investigate, and that there not only was no conflict between his organization and the UT project but that there could be closer association. But he was inclined to wait until the UT people asked him for suggestions and availed themselves of the opportunities furnished by seminars and certain other types of values that they might receive by closer association with him and the people in his laboratory. It can be definitely stated, however, that the suspicion and distrust that once existed has been removed to a considerable extent, that there are fairly good mutual understandings, and at least a willingness to be mutually helpful. There still is a real aloofness, each organization waiting for the other to take the initiative, but there was very little evidence of antagonism such as once existed.

As concerns the attitude of the University of Tennessee administrators, all of them agreed on several basic facts:

1. The UT-AEC project is a major enterprise of the University.
2. It has not functioned with maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the past.
3. There has, however, been considerable improvement.
4. Certain specific actions must be taken in order to improve the laboratory and make it as effective as it can be.
5. With all due respect to Dr. Patrick, it was the consensus that he might function better, all things considered, as an individual investigator in charge of his project, with a small group of assistants, than as the director of the laboratory.
6. The principal requisite for improvement is to obtain the services of a highly competent director, whose competence and character are commensurate with the magnitude of the enterprise and the complexities of the situation. In order

to obtain the services of such a director, it was agreed by the President of the University and others that the salary schedule of the University should not limit the major objective of getting the right kind of man as director. The President stated that they were prepared to pay what was necessary in order to get a good director. Dean McLeod and Dr. Ewing expressed themselves explicitly on this subject, and Drs. Winters and Chance agreed tacitly when they were present at a conference.

7. It was also recognized that the relations between the AEC and the University of Tennessee might well be made closer.

8. There was recognition of the fact that there should be clear definition of the major objectives, fairly explicit projects, and explicit understandings regarding relationships between the University and the UT-AEC project and within the laboratory itself.

Summarizing the attitudes, therefore, the conclusion is justified that those people in the University of Tennessee who have immediate responsibility recognize past failures and present limitations and are willing and anxious to do whatever they can to improve the situation. It seemed evident also that the administrators at Oak Ridge who are concerned with the project are willing to be as helpful as they can. This creates a good atmosphere in which improvement can be made.

The principal conclusions of the committee are the following. At least the chairman, who made a visit to the project some time ago, is convinced that there has been great improvement but that still further improvement is needed. The requisites for this improvement are the following:

1. A high grade man should be selected as director with a salary commensurate with his abilities and responsibilities. The UT authorities are thoroughly in agreement with this concept.

2. The University would like the help of the AEC in selecting a good man. With this the committee also agreed.

3. Specific suggestions regarding improvements in the relationships between the University of Tennessee and the laboratory might well wait until a new director is selected, as he should have a voice in making the decisions.

4. All members of the committee are agreed that neither the director of the laboratory nor the people working in it can function best unless the following conditions are met:

a) The University of Tennessee must recognize the importance of the laboratory and must arrange the administrative relations in such a way as to make the laboratory a major and semi-autonomous enterprise within the University.

b) The understandings with respect to administrative relationships must be carefully thought out, must be explicitly stated, and must be adhered to until plans are changed.

c) Within the laboratory itself there should be more full-time men who devote themselves exclusively to the research projects.

d) The long-time objectives and the field of operation of the laboratory should be explicitly defined. The individual projects should be carefully thought out, and each project leader should be given a high degree of autonomy for prosecuting the researches for which he and his assistants are responsible.

e) Scientifically and administratively it would be desirable that there be somewhat closer liaison with the Division of Biology and Medicine of the AEC in Washington without in any way going above the heads of the responsible administrators in Oak Ridge. To accomplish this it was suggested by the administrators at the University of Tennessee that the director of the laboratory might well visit the Washington office at intervals, possibly once a quarter; and second, that a small

advisory committee of the AEC visit the laboratory at stated intervals, possibly once a quarter. The ad hoc committee agreed with these suggestions.

f) It was agreed by the committee that administrators should facilitate the work of the laboratory rather than to hamper it. The procedures should be arranged in such a way as to attain the optimum results with the least amount of red tape that is compatible with the responsibilities that the University has toward the AEC. It is recognized of course that no blueprint on paper will guarantee the sort of administrative and scientific relationships that are desirable. Human beings are always involved, and despite any rules or regulations with respect to procedures, there must be an attempt at understanding, compromise, and conciliation when this becomes necessary. Dr. Ewing apparently has decided to remain at the University as Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. If this is true, it seems probable that the problems of human relations will be minimized.

The actions suggested are, first, that the AEC help the University of Tennessee to select a list of candidates for director; second, that they accede to Dr. McLeod's request--as expressed in his letter of December 10 to Dr. Pearson--that an advisory committee visit the UT-AEC laboratory at least once each quarter. It would be an impropriety, of course, for the committee to suggest that the ad hoc committee be continued, as is implied in Dean McLeod's letter. We do recommend, however, that this committee, or a similar one, be appointed. Moreover, the chairman thinks that, except for the Chairman, it would be hard to get a better committee.

E. C. Stakman (Signed)

James H. Jensen (Signed)

Harry A. Kornberg (Signed)

January 16, 1957