

JAN 9 1965

LETTER REPORT TO CHAIRMAN FOLLOWING 107th ACBM MEETING, AEC,
 "H" ST., JANUARY 8-9, 1965

Dear Dr. Seaborg:

On August 7, 1964, Mr. John G. Palfrey, Acting Chairman, wrote me about the reduction by the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the 1965 budget of the Division of Biology and Medicine by \$1 million and sent me the Committee's statement in support of this action. He also asked the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine to review the offsite research program of the Division. A copy of Mr. Palfrey's letter is attached.

The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine herewith submits its report in response to Mr. Palfrey's request for a review of the Division's offsite research program.

Procedure of Committee

The ACBM reviewed the content and the decision-making processes with respect to the offsite research program by discussions with Dr. Charles L. Dunham and Dr. John R. Totter on September 25, 1964, in Washington, D. C., by studying several individual contract proposals and staff review sheets, by examining several summaries of contract actions in FY 1964, by reviewing published summaries of both the onsite and offsite research programs of DBM, by arranging for two ACBM members to attend meetings of the Division's research committee, and by discussing our findings as a group on November 12, 1964, and January 8, 1965. The attached detailed report was written after the ACBM had assembled and studied as many facts and opinions as it could manage.

Findings

The ACBM found that the Division's procedure for receiving, reviewing, deciding upon, and following up offsite contract proposals is basically sound. Although there are undoubtedly many alternative methods of reviewing and acting upon contract proposals, the ACBM believes the Division's system is highly effective for a mission-oriented program. It can and will evolve as changed and unknown future circumstances may dictate.

US DOE ARCHIVES	
326 US ATOMIC ENERGY	
RG	COMMISSION
Collection	<i>Biology of Medicine</i>
Box	<i>2</i>
Folder	<i>5</i>

1070545

The ACBM inquired carefully into the question of how the program relevance of a given proposal is ascertained and, indeed, how the concept of the Commission program itself has developed. The ACBM found no reason to believe that judgments about program relevance could be improved by changing the review system in any substantial respect.

The ACBM found that the task of reviewing 903 contract proposals resulting in 643 active contracts with obligations of \$23,384,906 in FY 1964 placed a heavy but not excessive burden upon the present staff and that, if the program continues to grow as it should, the staff must soon be expanded.

Summary and Recommendations

The Committee's full report accompanying this letter consists of four parts and six appendices. The following statements summarize the Committee's findings and recommendations.

1. Through five or more meetings each year at AEC Headquarters or in the field, the ACBM is steadily informed of over-all planning and development of the research program. It is not concerned with approval or disapproval of specific contract applications.

2. The Committee is impressed with the scientific merit of the research being supported, by the competence of the offsite scientists engaged in this work, and by the relevance of the research contracts to AEC's mission. (See Part I of the Report)

3. Relevance to the objectives of AEC is a major criterion used in judging the acceptability of offsite research proposals. Any tightening of the relevance criteria now in use would be contrary to the best interests of the program. (Part I)

4. It is desirable that basic areas of research, such as molecular biology and genetics, be supported by more than one mission-oriented agency using procedures appropriate to each agency. To have multiple sources of support of a basic area of research is the only way to insure development of the basic knowledge directly relevant to the mission of each supporting agency. We find no evidence of undesirable duplication of effort within the Division's program, nor are we aware of any undesirable duplication between the biomedical research programs of AEC and of other agencies. (Part I)

5. The scientific administration of both the onsite and offsite research programs by the same staff is a highly effective means of coordinating the two parts of the Division's program. (Part II)

6. The ACBM has high regard for the competence of the personnel of the Division of Biology and Medicine. Staffing practices of the Division effectively meet the need for continuity of emphasis as well as for the continuous infusion of new ideas. (Part II)

7. The regular use of outside reviewers adds objectivity and breadth to the contract review procedures. (Part II)

8. The present management of the offsite research program is efficient, well balanced, and critical. (Part II)

9. The present workload of staff members is heavy but not excessive. Continuing growth will require additional staffing, particularly in the fields of immunology, cell biology, and population genetics. (Part II)

10. A great saving of effort for both applicants and DBM staff and a relatively high approval rate of proposals results from preliminary correspondence and conversations between staff members and prospective contract applicants. The Committee believes that this preliminary screening is a sound practice. (Part III)

11. The Division has achieved desirable long-term support of productive investigators while maintaining the necessary flexibility for the introduction of new projects. (Part IV)

The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine expresses its appreciation to the staff of the Division of Biology and Medicine for its invaluable assistance and cooperation in providing the documents and information necessary for the preparation of this report.

Respectfully submitted.

Sincerely yours,

Fred J. Hodges, M.D.
Chairman, Advisory Committee
for Biology and Medicine

Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg
Chairman
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D. C.