

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE  
TO THE  
UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

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REPOSITORY ENERGY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

COLLECTION BIOLOGY & MEDICINE

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BOX No. 2

FOLDER 10

Dear Dr. Seaborg:

The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine met in Washington on January 13-14, 1967, with all members but one present. Dr. James B. Wyngaarden and Dr. A. J. Haagen-Smit were attending their first ACBM meeting.

The following matters were extensively discussed:

Successor to Dr. Dunham. The ACBM discussed the problem of finding a successor for Dr. Dunham with Commissioners Nabrit and Ramey and Dr. English. The ACBM's thoughts are being transmitted separately in a letter from me to Dr. English.

Lawrence Award. The ACBM reviewed the nominees for the Lawrence Award and is transmitting its recommendations in a letter from Dr. Philip Cohen to Dr. L. R. Hafstad.

Budgetary Position. Dr. Dunham sought the ACBM's advice on where to cut and what to hold in check during a period, such as the present, when the demands for funds exceed the available supply. It is too easy to say support the good, reject the poor.

The ACBM feels that the steady application of the dual criteria -- scientific excellence and program relevance -- is the only way to meet budgetary limitations and build a more and more vigorous research and development program for the future. The application of these criteria presupposes a clear concept of the goals of the program. These have been set forth in considerable detail by Dr. Dunham and his staff on many occasions over several years. The goals have evolved with time, as they must, but there is no lack of understanding what the goals are at any moment. Applying these criteria also presupposes that there is a good mechanism for ascertaining scientific merit. The DBM uses two chief mechanisms. It personally reviews and passes judgment upon contract applications received from investigators in universities and research institutions (offsite). It relies somewhat on the judgments of the program directors for proposed expenditures at the National Laboratories and at the several university-based AEC projects (onsite). The onsite program, being the direct and often solely the responsibility

of the AEC, appears to some to have first claim upon any funds available. The ACBM, while acknowledging this responsibility, nonetheless took the view, as it has consistently over many past years, that the onsite program should not be favored at the expense of the offsite program. The ACBM recognizes the offsite and onsite programs tend to be different in several ways, but thinks that at times of budgetary limitations each part of each component should be re-examined for program relevance and scientific excellence and decisions reached so that neither component suffers in favoring the other. This is scarcely more than a restatement of the view of the ACBM over many years and a reaffirmation of the policies of Dr. Dunham and the DBM staff.

In this connection, the ACBM heard a description of the Planning, Programming, and Budgetary System (PPBS). It foresees some difficulties in applying the principles to non-applied research. Instituting such a new plan is almost certain to create some difficulties, but the ACBM was impressed by the vigor and thought the DBM has put and is putting into accomplishing the objectives of PPBS.

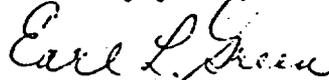
Food Irradiation. The ACBM heard a progress report on the food irradiation problem and feels that the staff is making a laudable effort in meeting and surmounting the difficulties involved in dealing with this problem.

High Altitude Sampling. The ACBM was made aware of the desire to keep the capability for high altitude sampling in a state of readiness, but senses that agencies and groups other than AEC might have great interest in such sampling, both by balloons and aircraft. The ACBM suggests that AEC call a conference of representatives of the interested agencies and groups with a view to ascertaining the degree of interest and their readiness to share in the considerable financial burden.

Artificial Heart. The ACBM learned of the progress toward developing nuclear-powered pacemakers and artificial pumps for patients with heart disease. Although several technical problems remain to be solved, this development, if successful, may be a significant use of nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind.

The next meeting of the ACBM is to be held at the Donner Lab, LRL, Berkeley, March 9-11, 1967.

Sincerely yours,



Earl L. Green, Chairman  
Advisory Committee for Biology  
and Medicine

Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg  
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