

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE FOR THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, 1954

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
in the City of New York
(New York 32, N. Y.)

718260

Department of Radiology
Radiological Research Laboratory
630 West 168th Street

June 16, 1954

Dr. Lloyd V. Berkner, President
Associated Universities, Inc.
Brookhaven National Laboratory
Upton, L. I., New York

Dear Dr. Berkner:

The members of the Visiting Committee for the Medical Department of the Brookhaven National Laboratory met at the Laboratory on June 7 and 8, 1954. Those present were Drs. Failla, Hastings, MacLeod, Morgan and Wearn.

The first meeting of the visit was devoted to a discussion of administrative and personnel matters with Dr. Farr. In the afternoon of the first day reports by seven members of the scientific staff were presented to the Committee. In the evening a dinner was held which permitted informal discussions between members of the Committee and members of the scientific staff of the department and members of the administrative staff of the Laboratory.

The morning of the second day was devoted to individual conferences between members of the scientific staff and committee members. At lunch, the Committee discussed problems of the Department of Medicine with Dr. Haworth and Dr. Farr. In the afternoon the Committee held a final conference with Dr. Farr, followed by an executive session at which the subjects detailed below were discussed and the following conclusions reached.

I - General Comments.

1. The present hospital and laboratory facilities are being well utilized, but are quite inadequate for the medical research responsibilities with which the Medical Department is charged.

The Committee commends the plans for new and adequate hospital and laboratory facilities and urges the administration to take all necessary steps to bring them to fruition as soon as possible.

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2. The Committee is particularly impressed with the pioneering efforts to investigate the effects of neutron capture therapy on certain brain tumors and regards the providing of a reactor for medical research purposes as justified and desirable. This would greatly expedite experiments designed to provide a firmer basis for the clinical work.
3. The present personnel of about 25 scientists are an able and diligent group of investigators. With the present hospital and laboratory facilities, their number could be profitably and gradually increased by about 12 to 15 additional appointees.

When new facilities are available, their number might be increased to approximately 50 scientists. However, this should be done gradually, and additional staff added only when able and enthusiastic medical scientists become available.

4. The research programs under way are regarded as appropriate to the purposes and facilities of the Brookhaven National Laboratory. The quality is, on the whole, excellent. Publications so far are satisfactory in number and substantial in content.
5. The Committee is impressed with the high morale of the members of the Department, and the enthusiasm with which they are attacking the problems.

II - Specific Comments.

1. Division of Industrial Medicine. This Division should and will be strengthened in the future.
2. Division of Hospital Research. This Division is soundly set up and seems to be functioning satisfactorily.
3. Division of Pathology. It is fortunate that Dr. Godwin has elected to remain at the Laboratory. This Division needs strengthening by the addition of one or two experimental pathologists - but this should await the availability of suitable men.
4. Division of Microbiology. This Division is regarded as very important and needs additional personnel, qualified particularly in the area of tissue culture techniques.
5. Division of Biochemistry. This is well staffed and needs no additions at the present time.
6. Division of Medical Physics. This Division could profitably be increased considerably, if suitable personnel can be found.

7. Division of Physiology. This is a very strong Division and needs no additions at the present time.
8. In regard to student training, the Department of Medicine expects to have 12 students in residence this summer, drawn from various universities, both within and without AUI.
9. Research equipment is adequate for all the Divisions of the Department, except that of Medical Physics.
10. The relations between the scientific staff and the administration of the Brookhaven Laboratory seem to be excellent.

The Committee notes with pleasure the keen interest which Dr. Francis Wood, a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, has taken in the activities of the Department.

It continues to regard, as essential for the healthy development of the medical research activities at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, the continuing representation of medical knowledge and wisdom at the highest administrative level of AUI.

III - Specific Suggestions.

1. In the interest of providing more direct contact between the scientists and the administration, it has been suggested that a medical science representative of the Board of Trustees meet with the Visiting Committee for the Medical Department at its annual meeting. Dr. Wood was invited this year but could not attend. However, Dr. Wood had spent two days at Brookhaven in April discussing problems of the Medical Department with Dr. Farr, and this may be regarded to have accomplished the purpose of the Committee's suggestion. It is suggested that if agreeable to Dr. Wood, next year he might arrange his visit to the Medical Department to coincide with the meeting of the Visiting Committee.
2. Efforts to provide more contacts and greater interchange of information between the Departments of Biology and Medicine should be continued, in order to provide mutual catalysis and to avoid duplication of effort and facilities.

Whether this should take the form of joint seminars, or of regular conferences between the Director of the Laboratory and the heads of the departments involved or of both should be left to the personnel involved. However, closer coordination is indicated and highly desirable.

It is realized that the distance between the laboratories is a serious handicap, which may be removed when the projected medical facility becomes available, but a conscious effort should be made at the present time to prevent crystallization into two entirely separate scientific compartments. The aim should be to bring about spontaneous coordination of research programs and cooperation.

3. It is suggested that the chairman (or some other member) of the Visiting Committee for the Biology Department be invited to the next meeting of the Visiting Committee for the Medical Department and vice versa. This might prove to be an effective step in bringing about closer contacts between the two departments.
4. The Division of Medical Physics lacks both personnel and equipment to carry out its functions. Since some of these functions are essential to the work of other divisions, this forms a bottleneck that should be removed as soon as possible. Provisions of some machine shop equipment in the Medical Department would be of great help.
5. The Committee does not consider it desirable to have two stated meetings a year, but the individual members of the Committee have assured Dr. Farr that he may call on them as occasion arises, and each member will try to make at least one trip a year to the Laboratory in addition to his attendance at an annual meeting.

It was the impression of the Committee that the Medical Department is growing gradually and soundly; that one should not expect immediate and dramatic results in this field of medical research; and that with continued careful selection of personnel and continued wise support by the administration, the scientific accomplishment of the Medical Department will be distinguished in quality and quantity.

The Committee takes this occasion to thank Dr. Haworth and Dr. Farr for giving so freely of their time for two days and for the excellent arrangements that made the meeting both profitable and pleasurable.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) A. B. Hastings
C. MacLeod
H. Morgan
J. T. Wearn
G. Failla, Chairman