

REPORT OF
THE VISITING COMMITTEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE
BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

June 13, 1955

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

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Dear Dr. Berkner:

The Visiting Committee for the Medical Department met at the Brookhaven National Laboratory on June 6 and 7, 1955. The members present were Failla, Hastings, Horsfall, Morgan and Wearn. The program for the two days, prepared by Dr. Farr, is enclosed herewith.

Dr. Haworth brought the Committee up to date on the status of the Laboratory as a whole and on the plans for the new hospital building and medical reactor. The Committee was greatly pleased to hear that construction of these facilities has been approved and that rapid progress is being made in the preparation of designs and contract specifications.

Matters of policy on staff appointments and tenure were presented by Dr. Haworth and Dr. Farr. The Committee considers the present procedures satisfactory and adequate. In this connection the Committee wishes to commend the wisdom and appropriateness of providing tenure appointments for Dr. Cronkite and Dr. Cotzias.

In discussing the affairs of the Medical Department with Dr. Farr the Committee went over the comments made in last year's committee report and learned what action had been taken. It is gratifying to report that notable progress has been made. Therefore, only a few items need be mentioned at this time.

Division of Pathology. At present there is no pathologist in charge of this division. The addition of Dr. Cronkite to the staff will strengthen this division and will extend its activities along experimental lines. However, there is still need for experimental pathologists. The question of a full fledged pathologist to be put in charge of this division might be left in abeyance pending the construction of the new hospital. Nevertheless, careful consideration should be given to the needs for a pathologist in view of the expected larger patient population in the new hospital.

Division of Microbiology. The appointment of Dr. W. L. Hughes to this division is particularly favorable. Further strengthening is needed but should take place gradually.

Division of Medical Physics. It is gratifying to find that Dr. Robertson has returned to Brookhaven as chief of this division after his service in the Navy. The addition of Dr. Bond to the staff insures greater activity in radiobiology. The work in radiological physics should progress more rapidly with the recent addition of Dr. Weller to the staff. However, the planning of the laboratory facilities for the medical reactor and the new hospital building will take up much of Dr. Stickley's time for the next year or two. Therefore, the solution of urgent dosimetry problems will be unduly retarded. It may be expected that the demands

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on the two physicists in this division will increase considerably even before the new hospital is in operation. Accordingly, the Committee strongly recommends that more physicists be added to the staff of this division as soon as possible.

Relations with Board of Trustees and Department of Biology. The Committee wishes to call attention again to the desirability of closer contacts between the Visiting Committee and the Board of Trustees of AUI. Also, closer contacts and more interchange of information should be promoted between the Departments of Medicine and Biology.

Education Travel. It seems eminently desirable to encourage members of the staff to visit other institutions and to attend scientific meetings in order to keep abreast of new developments not only in their respective fields of interest but in medical science in general. Similarly, visits to Brookhaven by outside scientists should be encouraged. The Committee recommends that funds for these purposes be made available.

Clinicians on Staff. According to present practise senior medical investigators find it necessary to devote about 50% of their time to the care of patients. The Committee is of the opinion that this imposes too great a routine burden on them and materially reduces their effectiveness as investigators. To improve the situation it is recommended that each senior investigator be assigned a junior physician to whom he can delegate much of the routine work required in the normal care of hospital patients. It may be well, also, to make provisions for the appointment of one physician of the mature resident type, whose prime interest would be in all patients in the hospital rather than in research.

Legal Matters. It is not clear whether federal or state laws apply to the hospital at Brookhaven National Laboratory. The Committee is of the opinion that the operation of the hospital is subject to New York State laws, which are quite strict as to licensing of all physicians, etc. Legal advice should be sought to establish the true status of the hospital as soon as possible.

Matters of policy as to the administration of radioactive isotopes to patients should be discussed with the Division of Biology and Medicine of the AEC and a definite procedure should be established to avoid possible criticism and legal complications if anything should go wrong. Realizing that in the radiation treatment of cancer it is often necessary to use doses approaching the danger level, the Committee recommends that therapeutic procedures in this category or studies involving the use of radioactive isotopes in quantities greater than tracer doses be reviewed carefully and approved not only by the local staff but also by an external advisory committee of recognized experts.

The Committee further recommends that a statement of the kind and amount of radioisotope administered to a patient, as well as the reason therefor, be incorporated in the patient's record in all instances.

Term of Service and Meetings of Visiting Committee. The present Committee feels that a period of service longer than three years is highly desirable. With one meeting a year there is hardly time in three years for a member to acquire the grasp of the problems of the department required to serve the best interests of the

Laboratory. Therefore, the Committee recommends that future members be appointed for longer terms. If the present number of six is retained the term might be extended to six years, with one member being replaced each year.

In view of the many problems that are likely to come up in connection with the proposed expansion of the facilities, program and staff, it appears desirable to have two meetings of the Committee a year instead of one.

In conclusion the Committee wishes to report that gratifying progress has been made during the last year in all divisions of the Medical Department. The prospect of the new facilities has further strengthened the morale of the staff, which was already high.

We are particularly appreciative of the time given to us by Dr. Haworth and Dr. Farr and the arrangements made to facilitate our travel and stay in Brookhaven.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ A. B. Hastings
F. L. Horsfall, Jr.
R. H. Morgan
J. T. Wearn
G. Failla, Chairman