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Mr. Eugene Garfield
Institute for Scientific Information
1122 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia 23, Pennsylvania

Dear Gene:

I just remembered a discussion that quite conceivably may have been the item that first reminded me of your paper on SCI five years ago. At a briefing of the Genetics Study Section at the NIH, there was some discussion of an evaluation study that the NIH administration was interested in making to evaluate the actual impact of NIH support for biological and medical research in this country. The NIH administration was considering a number of rather fancy and inefficient schemes for doing this. It should take little imagination to see how SCI could accomplish the purpose at a negligible additional cost. In the first place the type of acknowledged support with more or less detail could be one of the keys in the index. Perhaps even more important, along lines you have already stressed, the impact of NIH supported work could be measured in terms of the frequency of citation to it. I have little doubt that in one generation you would reach an impact figure of perhaps 99% but it probably would help the NIH very much in its presentation to Congress if it could document a statement of this kind. I have the impression that the NIH was considering spending rather more money for this boondoggle than it would take to support SCI properly so this may be a tack well worth mentioning. I suggest that you bring up the point with Dr. Wilson if there is a congenial opportunity as it may well represent another lever for obtaining Federal support. Quite seriously with so many agencies anxious to know just what their real effect is, a quantitative measure such as SCI would very readily furnish would be a very valuable tool for them.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics