

COMMITTEE ON BIOPHYSICS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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CHICAGO 37 • ILLINOIS

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Novels

Dear Josh,

It was nice indeed to come back from the East to find your interesting letter. (I gave a seminar at Bernie's).

I'll try to answer your questions below, but I can't resist for the moment making comment about your decisions. I find the Berkeley and Stanford offers very exciting; and naturally want to advise you. I vote for Stanford on the grounds that in the long run it is a nicer place to live, although I think Berkeley almost ideal. More important you guys do not need the stimulation that Berkeley has over Stanford. On the contrary I think you would be happier in the more relaxed atmosphere at Stanford. Also Stanford is free of the problems large state schools often present. In any event both are highly desirable places, Madison has agreed with you, and so you must be out of your minds trying to reach a decision in the few weeks left before you leave for Europe. My sympathies as I find such decision making very unsettling. Happily any choice will be a good one.

Regarding my own relations with U/W, I was not upset by the delay as the Xmas holidays generally stop such proceedings. I am a little concerned about the fact that I would be in two departments, neither of which can properly claim me. That this creates administrative difficulties in hiring me does not surprise me. I have been concerned however about the difficulties that might arise later. These concerns I allayed by seeing the highly informal relationships that seem possible at Madison and also by talking with Jim who felt that this might not be troublesome. But perhaps he does not understand the problem a physics department faces hiring someone who is not a physicist. All I can say at present is the success of such an arrangement depends on the personal relationships that would be established with the people in the physics department, and zoology dept. I certainly do not need a connection with the physics department to be happy. Not only am I more confused than anyone as to what a biophysicist is, but I often *like to* think of myself as a biologist - which I much prefer. I think biophysics is a racket that in the long run should be discouraged. It has no set of principles, methods, or subject matter of its own. Everything done in its name can readily be done in established depts. I can only justify it as an expedient to hire people when other means are unavailable.

I should also say that one of the principal attractions of Madison is you. If you should leave I would no doubt try to start negotiations with your new employer. I am enormously flattered and pleased that you are interested in knowing my feelings about Madison in making your decision. I would very much like to talk through with you my own feelings and problems, and I dislike ~~the necessity of~~ doing it my writing. I fear the misimpressions that are so easily made. So I am very glad that we shall have a chance to talk Feb 23, if you will be able to come to NW. If not maybe I'll come up to Madison to see you. I will certainly not make any definite decisions without consulting you. We would be delighted if you and Esther could come down here for a visit, but I suspect you are somewhat pre-occupied with preparations for the trip.

In any event let me say the following: ~~at the risk of being mis~~

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At present I am not sure that Madison would be the right place for me. Not only am I somewhat unsure that it is wise to be a biophysicist, but I am somewhat concerned about the proposed administrative arrangements. Moreover, one of the strongest inducements to UW is you, and you will probably leave if not now next year. Should I go there it must be in the light of such realities, and I confess to finding such realities discouraging.

I believe that it would be wrong for me to discourage the advances of UW if they should be made, because it is hard to decide what one really wants until one has some specific proposal as a basis on which to start. So my feeling is to let happen what will.

We have been having some puzzling variability in the inducibility of cultures on successive transfers. I hope we have this worked out soon as this has made for serious variability in what is a "maintenance" concentration. As a result our crosses have yielded meager - and tantalizing - results. By the way could you return that duplicon ms when you are finished with it.

Many thanks again for the warm letter.

Best to Esther,



Aaron Novick