

April 3, 1970

Dr. Arthur Kornberg
18 Croft Lodge
Barton Road
Cambridge, England

Dear Arthur,

I feel guilty about having taken so long to write, but a great many things have been happening and I kept putting off writing so I would be able to keep you up to date on what was current. That approach, however, is no more tenable for letter-writing than it is for paper-writing and so at this point in time I will try to bring you up to date on what has happened and what we are doing.

By now, I gather you are back from your trip to Spain. No doubt it was marvelous to get away, particularly to the warmer climate. I suppose by now Spring is beginning to make its appearance in Cambridge and by mid-April it will probably look like Palo Alto did two months ago. We have had an extremely beautiful Spring - much less rain than in previous years that I can remember - but more importantly the air has been unusually clear, sometimes with visibility of over 100 miles. The hills are a fantastic downy green and with everything in bloom it is difficult to want to go elsewhere. This is not meant to make you envious, just to make you want to come back as soon as possible.

We have completed our selection of graduate students. It was unusually difficult this year, I thought, because of the very large number of first-rate candidates. We ended up interviewing a total of 15 students and accepted six, including Jazwinski. We have received acceptance notices from five, to date, and only one is still outstanding. The number six was based on our estimates of who wanted how many students and so on. I think they are a very bright group; many of them have had extensive research experience and all of them are eager to conquer the world! The only concern I have is what will happen to these people four to five years hence. If there is in fact a constriction in the opportunities for biochemically trained people at that time, we shall have on our hands the responsibility of trying to figure out what to do with them and how to place them. This doesn't even take into account the problem of what will happen if the Training Grant funds are eliminated (more about that later).

The grant situation seems to be deteriorating rapidly. There are all kinds of rumors - many of which are hard to believe - but the gist of the story is that both the level of support and the type of work that will be supported by, for example NIH is undergoing serious review. One of the rumors is that NIH is taking a very hard look at the question of whether work on E. coli and its bacterial phages is within the mission of the NIH - unbelievable! I believe Karl has already told you that your NASA grant will not be renewed for lack of funds. Apparently, with the big cutback

* Stanislaw Jazwinski - Univ. of Warsaw
Janet Mertz MIT
Barry Nall UC, San Diego

Steven Reed Yale
Randy Schekman UCLA
Paul Schedl Univ. of Chicago
(Schedl is still uncommitted)

in space funds they will support only the engineering and mission-oriented features of their program and not any of the biochemically-oriented aspects. As you know, that cuts out some \$22,000 from our yearly budget. Another recent blow was the news that George Stark did not have his NSF grant renewed. As you may know, he applied for an additional two years of roughly \$45,000 per year and it was this request that was not approved. He has been encouraged to resubmit his proposal and I think on resubmission it will probably be a stronger application. In addition, he will submit it to the NIH and several other granting agencies as back-up. If he is unable to obtain support of this request, we will lose roughly another \$45,000 from our yearly budget.

I am sending along to you the most recent monthly statement (do you still remember how to read these?) plus an analysis of the problem posed by the loss of your NASA and George's NSF grants. As you can see, if we correct for that loss we will still have in our projected budget for next year an amount which could accommodate a monthly expenditure (supplies and equipment) of approximately \$40,000. Karl's memo shows that, in fact, in the last year we spent at an average rate of \$45,000 per month if we include the very large capital equipment purchases we made last Summer (~\$95,000). Without any capital equipment expenditures, we would average about \$20,000 per month, but with our usual level of equipment purchases, the average is closer to say \$35,000 per month. This doesn't leave us much room for using any grant funds for renovation, major items of equipment (for example, as you will recall, last year much of our equipment purchases were financed out of the unused supply funds) or for helping a new person get set up if his grant is delayed. More serious, however, is the possibility that there will be further cuts, in which case the total amount of funds available to us will even be more constricted. Hopefully, this will not happen but how can one be sure? I suppose the one thing that could hurt us most deeply is if they cut off our Training Grant. Apparently, around the first of the year, the Training Grant program came very close to being arbitrarily terminated. There were some frantic last minute efforts which saved it, but I gather that the pressures on the Training Grant program are quite strong and its survival is only a matter of time. Quite possibly the support of graduate students will be managed in another way, but if we were to suffer some period in which the Training Grant support was lost, we would really be in bad straits to find ways to support many of our students and fellows. Frankly, that's what worries me most, particularly if we keep taking more students and fellows.

Just as an addendum to the finance problem, I have been in contact with Tom Jovin and we have finalized his visit to Stanford this year. He is coming for the months of June, July and perhaps part of August. As per our earlier discussion, I have offered to provide him with an honorarium of \$4,500 to cover travel and living costs for him and his family. Although we have talked about it as a long-term arrangement, I am not sure now that we are going to be able to manage it and we will certainly have to discuss it amongst ourselves and with Tom when he is here.

We have had a heavy schedule of visitors since you left. Leon Heppel was here yesterday and created the usual havoc that his appearance often makes. It was great fun to see him and hear of his work on the amino acid binding proteins. Peter and Dagmar Reichard were here on March 26 and Peter told us of his work on deoxy-nucleotide synthesis. We had a nice visit and dinner that evening. Charlie Thomas was here the day before Peter's visit and that led also to several evenings of

entertaining and "bull sessions". A week earlier Maxine Singer visited and gave a wonderful talk on polynucleotide phosphorylase. It was her first visit to Stanford and she was almost overwhelmed by the change in scenery from Washington of mid-March to the Bay Area at that time. We have had visits from a number of prospective candidates for positions, as well as from George Popjak, Lubert Stryer, Jack Strominger, Norton Zinder and Herman Kalckar; you name them and they have been here! Konrad Bloch was here to visit his children and we had dinner one night with the Djerassi's. Fred Sanger is coming next week, Bill Wood two weeks later and by the time Summer comes, we will all collapse in a heap! The student symposium is April 25 and will virtually wind up this year's seminar program. I am not sure we will be able to support as ambitious a program next year, but we will have to see about that then.

As you probably know, Dick Russell notified us that he has accepted a job at Caltech. I was really quite unhappy about his procrastination and somewhere about the 20th of March I wrote telling him that we had to have an answer by April 1. He didn't cite any particular reason for choosing Caltech, but he did say he would be starting there in September and I wonder whether there was any pressure on him from Cambridge to leave by then (he had hinted at that). If so, he surely knew that we couldn't accommodate him until at least the first of January, and more likely sometime later in the Spring. Perhaps he couldn't wait that long, but surely the large commitment Caltech has made to Neurobiology, both in new faculty and space, must have played a role in his choice. That leaves us now with the job of moving on to the next choices and at our staff meeting next week we hope to decide how to go about that. We have not yet received any recommendations of potential candidates that could fill the role of Lubert Stryer. I don't think it is a useful argument to debate whether we should have a physical chemist versus a cell biologist. I think we will proceed much more effectively if people will identify candidates who fill the criterion of what we should get and then we can debate their relative merits based on their past accomplishments and what they propose to do in the future. For example, some would identify Lubert as a physical chemist, but judging from what he intends to do, he and I could call him a cell biologist. If we get the right guy, i. e. one who can bring a chemical and molecular outlook and experience to biological problems, then I don't believe there will be any differences of opinion. If you can identify any people that you think we should be considering, please do so as soon as you can since neither Buzz nor Dale, who share your views most strongly, have come up with any concrete suggestions. Even Lubert was hard put to try and name anybody who he thought was of the caliber we would want to fill his vacancy and who was doing interesting things. Some of the other people who have been here have been most impressive; there seems to be no lack of people to choose from, since there is an increasing number of good people looking for an ever-decreasing number of good jobs.

As you know, Bob Glaser appointed a Search Committee to recommend a chairman for Biochemistry. Raffel made that search and recommended that I be appointed chairman. Except for vociferous dissent and criticism (I'm told that his blast was largely at the commitment of space and positions made to me by Glaser) by our mutual friend in Radiology, the appointment was approved by the Executive Committee and Glaser has started the paper work to make it official. We have had several discussions about our earlier understanding and Bob reassured me that we would have the two new positions and the additional space; I guess I have to rely on his word and assurances. But frankly, since there is very strong pressure throughout the University not to make any new appointments and not to make any commitments that can cost the

School money, I would also like to be reassured by Pitzer that this commitment will be met. In any case, I hope to get this ironed out before Bob leaves.

This brings me to the toils of the Dean's Search Committee. We have screened a lot of names and have got our list down to the top 10 or 12 people. Some of us will be visiting these people to see if they are authentic candidates. Holley Smith did not want to be considered and that eliminated a most attractive possibility. The Search Committee meetings have gone reasonably well. Pitzer, of course, has had to be educated as to the problems of the Medical School and I can assure you that Eric, Dave Korn and I have been speaking loud and clear about which end of the science versus service continuum we want to see Stanford come out on. I am not sure that we have as staunch an ally in Carl Djerassi. As time goes by, I will keep you posted as to who the most likely candidates become and try to get your reaction to some of them.

From Karl I hear that you are buying all kinds of radioactive chemicals and so I have to assume that you are busily at work. I hope things are going well for you and for Sylvie. Ken told me recently that Sylvie frequently goes to London. I suspect that Cambridge doesn't offer a great deal of things to do for her. Millie's argument when we were away was that it is easy enough for me to go off to the laboratory and become submerged in work, but the displacement for the wife is not as easy to adjust to.

Have you managed to find some problem on membranes that attracts you? I gather that you are no longer spending much time at the MRC and therefore don't see many of the people there. I haven't heard too much of what's going on there, but I gather they are as active as ever. Did you get to meet Joan and Tom Steitz in Cambridge? I suspect they will be arriving in Berkeley soon. As far as I know, there is still the possibility that Tom could be invited to come to the Chemistry Department at Stanford, but I don't know where that negotiation (if that's the right term) stands. If he comes to Stanford, we might certainly think seriously of Joan as a candidate for a position in our department.

Things in the lab have generally been going quite smoothly. The Biochemistry course was a resounding success and the performance on the final examination was really quite creditable. I have talked to a number of students and once again the happy sound of the "best course in the School," or the "best course I ever took" comes through. There is a formal attempt to get their evaluation of the details of our course and that will be tallied within the next month or so for us to see. The Clinical Correlations were very good, popular and well attended. Mort Swartz gave a superb discussion on gout which rivaled Holley Smith's talk of last year. George Wald is here now giving the Lane Lectures and the attendance has been phenomenal and they have been marvelous to listen to. We had a departmental luncheon for him the other day and it was a joy to sit and talk science, politics and everything else with him for an hour or so. He sends his best to you.

Work in the lab in my group is going along quite well. There are a number of new and interesting things but I am not sure that a letter is the best way to tell you about them. I will save it all up for when you visit this June. By the way, do you know when you will be coming back? I plan to be in England from the 9th through the 27th of June. If we overlap for part of that time, let's try to get together. I

Dr. Arthur Kornberg

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will even challenge you to a tennis match on grass. If you are not there, maybe I can induce Jim Spudich to play. I have always had an ambition to try grass - it must be very different then the hard surface we play on. We still play every weekend and manage to stay in shape. There is a departmental tennis ladder which ranked me first to start off with (that's the departmental chairman's prerogative), but I have been challenged by Bob Schimke this afternoon so my top ranking may be only temporary. (It was!)

I will close now by sending Millie's and my love to you both and our hopes that you have a relaxing and productive (those are not incompatible) period in England.

Best regards to all and from all,

Sincerely,

PB/liw
Enclosures