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HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02115

April 15, 1971

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
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Dear Josh,

I'm embarrassed at how long I've owed you a letter reporting progress and expressing thanks for your help during the job hunt. I hope this will at least partly redeem my "account".

To save time on the progress report, I'm enclosing a copy of a letter I sent to Don Kennedy a while ago which describes most of the project's successes. As updates, I might mention that we have had fairly good luck culturing spinal cord neurons (which we hope eventually to hook up with the sensory cells), that the search for UV-induced DNA repair synthesis in sensory neurons showed that they do have it, and that, with the help of a post-doc in the Neurobiology Department here, very nice intracellular recordings have been obtained from the sensory neurons (my current thought is that a combined intracellular - extracellular recording arrangement offers the best chance of early success in the search for synapses). Also, the longest of the transformation papers is about half-finished; I hope to spend a lot more time on them late this spring.

As you probably know from Gan, I've decided on the job in Gordon Lark's department at Utah. It seemed the best choice on almost every count, especially so because of the size, quality, and interests of the group of young people Lark has gathered there. On the basis of location alone, though, Santa Barbara would have had the edge, and I found the group there a friendly one. But uncertainties about the future of UC (at least the near future) weighed too heavily. The people at Santa Barbara understood, and I think agreed with, most of my apprehensions. Ellis, in fact, asked me to detail them in a letter to the department chairman that could be used as documentation of recruitment difficulties; since I think you might be interested, I'm enclosing a copy of that letter too.

I'm also going to take this opportunity to put in a plug for more columns on the fiasco in health research funding that seems imminent. I know you started a discussion of the issue in at least one recent column, but I think more are needed. I'm particularly worried about the "crash program" to cure cancer and the decisions that have apparently been made to concentrate funds in a relatively few large laboratories. Conversation around here, for example, has it that Sol Spiegelman is being given \$2 million a year and that George Todaro at NIH will have support for a group of 60 (not counting technicians, etc.) directly under him. Leaving aside the question of whether anybody can responsibly administer basic research groups so large, I'd like to see more discussion of what is going

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to be lost in the drying up of support for small, independent (dare I say innovative?) labs that is bound to accompany such concentration. (Admittedly there's a little "special pleading" in my bringing this up - the future looks grim the way things seem headed.) Also more ought to be said about the political risks of public disillusionment if a long period of highly publicized crash funding goes by without dramatic results, as might well happen.

Finally, Josh, though they are probably understood anyway, let me mention again my thanks for whatever comments you made in responding to reference requests that helped open up the several job possibilities.

Regards to Margu^erite. I hope we'll have a chance to see you both again soon. (Salt Lake City isn't so very far from San Francisco!)

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Larry".