

DATE: 4 February 1971

To : John L. Wilson, M.D.  
Acting Dean, Medical School

FROM : Norman ~~Kretchmer~~, M.D., Ph.D.  
*Norman*

SUBJECT: Departments of Anatomy and Human Developmental Biology

The proposal to be Acting Chairman of the Departments of Human Developmental Biology and Anatomy presents the potential for many educational and scientific opportunities, but I regret that I cannot accept the offer at this time.

This decision is based on my rather extensive present commitments to the Program in Human Biology and the Department of Pediatrics. Even as Acting Chairman, I would of necessity have to dissociate from prior obligations to teaching and scientific activities which have been initiated only recently.

The teaching program in Anatomy needs a complete revision for which additional faculty are required. Investigative programs would have to be organized for the Departments of Anatomy and Human Developmental Biology. As you know, I have always believed that the functional and structural elements involved in the discipline of Human Developmental Biology should be obligatory to the education of a physician. The amalgamation of this concept with the anatomical sciences provides a basis for creating an innovative and exciting program in Anatomy, which does not exist in any medical school in the nation. Stanford University is a unique setting in which to carry the program forward, particularly since the Departments of Pediatrics, Radiology, Surgery, and Pathology have indicated overt enthusiasm. There is also an opportunity to interdigitate a modern program in Anatomy and Human Developmental Biology with the undergraduate program in Human Biology. This educational construct would indeed respond to the pleas of the medical students for modern approaches and relevant scientific information. Within this atmosphere, graduate research programs could flourish in ultra-structure, reproductive biology, developmental biology, and neurobiology.

These tasks, as well as the development of new funds, space, and faculty, would be difficult for an Acting Chairman to accomplish. Yet, I can understand why the appointment of a permanent chairman now, probably should not precede the appointment of a permanent dean. When that event occurs, I would be delighted to be considered for the permanent position as Chairman of Anatomy and Human Developmental Biology. Then, there would be a basis for my withdrawal from previous commitments. In the meanwhile, I would suggest that a teaching committee in anatomical sciences be appointed, composed of members from the Departments of Pediatrics, Radiology, Surgery, and Pathology, along with faculty from Anatomy. I would indeed be pleased to serve on such a committee.

cc: Professors Paul Berg, Robert Chase, David Hamburg, Halsted Holman, Joshua Lederberg, Richard Lyman, and Herbert Schwartz.