

A Proposal for A Special Conference On the Biomedical Sciences

One of the major and crucial questions being discussed by scholars working in the biomedical sciences is what does the future promise? The extraordinary advances in the field during the past century and the effects upon the lives of people throughout the world - most dramatically in the industrialized sector - have been so great that it is now of high interest to speculate upon the future. It is the purpose of this proposal to bring together several successfully imaginative people to address this question and to discuss their ideas on the resources needed to fulfill the potential advances of the next several decades.

In order to accomplish this purpose a special type of small conference is proposed. It is conceived as a meeting to be both congenial and provocative, conducted in a pleasant setting, at which the most imaginative and fanciful motions are to be ventured. There should be an air of intellectual adventure for the participants, a quality only rarely attained in the usual scientific conference. What we wish to have discussed are the most challenging aspects of the biomedical sciences: What are the next most important problems? What are the disciplines that are most central to their solution? Who will be the scientists to work on their problems? What will it take to produce such scientists?

The components that are most likely to determine whether we are successful in creating such an exchange are the moderator, the panelists, the setting, the time allotted, and the style of discussion.

The Conference Moderator

The Conference Moderator must be an outstanding scientist who has a particular talent for commentary and analysis and whose understanding of recent scientific advances will make it possible to catalyze a wide-ranging discussion. The person proposed for this role is Dr. Daniel E. Koshland, Jr. Professor of Chemistry, University of California at Berkeley, who is also the chief editor of Science. He has held the latter position for the past year, and during that time has written extraordinarily perceptive and thoughtful essays. His editorial voice has quickly become one of the most respected in world science. He has also administered a number of design, layout, and content changes of the magazine so as to make it more accessible and instructive to a wider audience. He is extremely enthusiastic about serving as conference moderator, and because of his broad acquaintance throughout the scientific disciplines he has helped suggest a panel of discussants.

The Panelists

The panelists must be individuals who have already made important contributions to their disciplines and who have a certain reputation among their colleagues for thoughtful and provocative reflection. The panelists being proposed include the following: James Watson, Director of the Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory; Walter Gilbert, Professor of Biochemistry, Harvard; Sydney Brenner, Medical Research Council, Cambridge, England; John Hopfield, Biophysicist, California Institute of Technology; Hugh McDevitt, Department of Medicine, Stanford University, and Roy Vagelos, Biomedical Research Executive, Merck Sharp & Dohme.

The Setting

The conference should take place in a locale that is pleasant and is free from the intrusive distraction of daily work. A modest-size hotel in a quiet retreat-like setting would be ideal. Such a locale has not as yet been identified.

Duration

The conference should last over several hours - preferably 2 or 3 sessions of two to three hours in length, with appropriate recesses and breaks, to allow for a full range of discussion and exchange. It is suggested that the conference could begin midday of one day, proceed through and around dinner, and then reconvene the next morning with closure scheduled for midday of day two. The setting should provide facilities for recreation which, in addition, should enhance a sense of ease necessary for the conference.

Proceedings:

The conference should be recorded and then professionally edited. The goal of the editing would be to develop a monograph. Since the most imaginative ideas and speculations of the participants are what we are desirous of evoking, the detailed design of the monograph will have to await review of the edited transcript. The type of exchange among the participants that is envisioned is quite likely to contain an important set of views that will merit publication.

Budget:

One of the important goals for this conference is to have the full enthusiasm of all participants, and to create a sense of special importance to this meeting. In order to indicate such an intent, a very generous, above-average honorarium should be awarded: \$5,000 to all participants. All

travel and meeting expenses also will be paid for the participants which should be approximately \$1,000 per participant. The cost of the transcribing and editorial function will be approximately \$15,000.

Thus the budget would appear as follows:

Honoraria (moderator + 6 panelists)	\$35,000
Travel, hotel	7,000
Transcribing	5,000
Editing	<u>10,000</u>
Total	\$57,000

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