



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE · NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021

THE PRESIDENT

July 10, 1978

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Dr. Gobind Khorana
Departments of Chemistry and Biology
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Gobind:

Many people have urged on me the prime emphasis on chemical approaches to biological structure and function that should be nurtured as a primary part of the Rockefeller University's research and recruitment policy. I hardly need any persuasion about that!

At the present time the opportunities that the University has for further recruitment, especially to a senior position, are quite limited; and for that reason I am rather bashful about writing this letter. However, there will be some retirements expected to open up some space and faculty positions during the next two or three years; and it seemed to me it was not too early to begin a dialog by which I could get the benefit of some of your own advice about how to proceed. In addition, an exceptional appointment is being urged upon me that would be of very high quality, but would also strain the available resources to the very limits. Before taking an irrevocable step in that direction for a quite senior person of unquestioned reputation, I wanted to learn whether you might not have some younger people ready to emerge who would be more likely to be thought of as the Wally Gilberts or David Baltimores of the future (even than those very estimable people themselves).

My own inclinations are to gamble on two or three younger appointments if they have enough autonomy and self confidence to begin from a smaller platform, than to start out with tenured commitments at the very start.

So if you do have any longer range wisdom to offer: please share it with me, and I hope this will be a continuing process at closer range. If you have any more specific nominations, I can assure you that they would get the most enthusiastic and supportive reception at the Rockefeller University, as we try to sustain its vitality on a venerable tradition.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg

JL/als

bc: Subbu K.