

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SPACE SCIENCE BOARD

28 February 1962

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
School of Medicine  
Stanford University  
Balo Alto, California

Dear Joshua:

The enclosed memo to Committee 15 brings you up to date on my activities, in part. You will note that September 5 is a date for a get-together of all the Board's Biologists to polish (and/or complete) a general position paper on the Biosciences for submission to NASA by September 15. These dates are the outcome of many discussions with NASA, SSB and especially Lambertsen. First, I hope you can make it here for that date. Please let me know. Second, what would you prefer to do in the way of a committee report (from Committee 14, Exobiology) by August 15? You will see that this is the date by which time Committees 15 and 16 will have submitted Panel Reports.

Incidentally, in asking all these questions -- and taking the initiative on dates, etc. -- I am acting (as urged by Lloyd) both as a member of the SSB Executive Committee and for the ad hoc Coordinating Committee for Biosciences. The need for a General Biological Position Paper is a compelling one -- almost a demand from NASA. Could your Westex group pull together a paper on the state of exobiology problem; and especially give emphasis to the kinds of things that need to be done, etc. Anyhow you know best what is needed -- my only plea is for a paper from Committee 14 by August 15.

The overall Position Paper due September 15 in a way replaces the paper I had in mind when I saw you in Stanford. In the meantime Newell wants whatever informal advice on the bio-program we can give him. Lambertsen, Hartline and I had a long session with him in January and then we (Chris, Keffer and I) held a meeting of the ad hoc Biological Coordinating Committee in an attempt to draft a brief and tentative paper. This failed because of Lambertsen's objections to everything Hartline and I had to say. In consequence the formal paper is postponed, etc. In the meantime I plan to write Newell some of my

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impressions and send copies to you and the other Board members who can promptly send Newell objections and qualifications if you have any. He is anxious for something new, and in Lambertsen's present mood there is no hope of the unanimity necessary for a formal Board Paper. Needless to say in my letter to Newell, as you will see, I shall take full recognition of your own opinion against an Exobiology Institute.

Regards to Esther.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Pittendrigh', written in a cursive style.

Colin S. Pittendrigh

Enclosure