

ACME

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Norman Nielsen

Ron Jamtgaard

Meeting with Bill Raub on July 20, 1970

Last Monday Bill Raub visited Stanford in order to obtain a critique of the PROPHET Project. I spent the evening with Bill discussing several aspects of ACME planning. Several significant pieces of information were put out by Bill in the course of the evening. There follows a recap of our discussion.

Budget for ACME: Bill cannot give us the amount requested in our budget proposal for the coming fiscal year. He has a few questions concerning the manpower level presented in the budget request. These will be resolved by early next week. At this time he expects to be able to give us the Research Council recommended level of \$750,000 initially. At some time later in the year, he hopes to be able to increase the budget ceiling, but this action would follow a review by Research Council. He has asked that ACME provide him with additional information concerning its long range financial planning by the middle of September. With this information he can prepare to meet with the Research Council to discuss a phasing out of NIH support for the operational aspects of ACME.

NIH Support of ACME Operations: Bill Raub stated that it was time to negotiate a termination date for the direct subsidy of ACME operations. He felt that it would be possible on a continuing basis to support some level of research activity for the ACME staff. The fee-for-service concept should lead to a period of full cost recovery from user fees. He has asked us to prepare a long range plan indicating when we feel that crossover point might occur. He is fully willing at this point to consider adding 12 or 18 months to the planned period of support for ACME operations. In the near term he would like to resolve a specific date beyond which time ACME should not anticipate further direct subsidy of operations.

Sigma 5: NIH received many inquiries concerning the Sigma 5. After a preliminary review of informal proposals, about 15 formal proposals were invited, Of that number, five are still receiving consideration and Stanford is among them. We are not at the top of the list of five potential receivers of the Sigma 5 System. Two primary reasons given for this were questionable financial resources and lack of a quantum jump in the style of computing made available to the user community as a result of adding a Sigma 5. Bill indicated that someone from Stanford would be invited to come back to Washington in the near term to answer technical questions on the proposal. It is still possible that the machine could be given to Stanford.

Research Policy for Special Research Resources Branch: Bill Raub indicated an intent on his part to increase the number of SRRB Grants for research

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activity; decrease the average dollar per grant; and reduce the number and period of long term "multi-year" commitments. I pointed out the need for some continuing direct support for hardware without which most schools cannot launch major projects. I believe that Bill Raub finds very little flexibility with his budget resources due to prior commitments to a few major facilities around the country. He sees a need for a more dynamic program in his branch.

Potential Research Contract between SRRB and ACME: Bill Raub has some Research Contract funds available for the coming year. He may invite proposals for research contracts involving interface and interaction between large and small machines. He is very interested in the work presently being handled by Lee Hundley on small machine assemblers under PL/ACME. In the near term we are to consider the desirability of a joint research contract involving at least two medical schools in addition to Stanford, plus the ACME staff. If such a multi-school joint contract arrangement appears desirable, Raub would like to hear more from us.

Bill Raub continues to praise ACME highly. He feels that much has been accomplished here with the funds provided by his office.

Budget Cutting in Research Proposal Computing Funds: Raub would like to hear of any instance in which an NIH agency cuts the computing budget in a new grant where the initial estimate appeared to be realistic from our point of view. He is anxious to contact other agencies in order to help preserve funds requested for computing.

cc: J. Lederberg
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