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Department of Medical Genetics

April 29. 1957

Professor James A. Jenkins  
Department of Genetics  
University of California  
Berkeley 4, California

Dear Jim:

Thank you for your nice letter. The election to the Academy was a profound surprise, but not an unpleasant one. But I'm still surprised.

We are a little disappointed that you did not succeed in getting a simple, or at least the simplest, solution to the problem of Esther's employment. If there were any prospect that that were still possible, I would ask you to pursue it. However, the main essential is that the President be aware of our intentions and be in accord with them by whatever formalities are most convenient to all parties. I hope it is quite clear that we are not contemplating a stop-gap arrangement. Esther received her Ph.D. nearly seven years ago, and has been pursuing her research career here without hindrance since then, and I trust will continue as long as she is competent too.

May I ask just a couple of questions on the proposed arrangement. Would I continue to be able to assign research funds from my own grants for her salary, regardless of her title? For example, would I include an item like the following on my applications:

"Professional personnel:

Esther M. Lederberg, Research Associate in (say) Agr. Biochemistry:  
\$ x,000. "

If Esther has a title in another department, I assume she will have to comply with whatever standards of performance, and compensation, prevail there, but so long as it is clear her duties will be research that can be carried out in the Genetics laboratory, I am sure this will cause no difficulty. We would like to wait a bit before specifying which department, assuming there will be free choice between Esther and the respective chairman; there is an embarrassment of riches, comprising Bacteriology, (?) Botany, Agr. Biochemistry, Biochemistry and Virus Laboratory, perhaps others, as possibilities. Or would it be advantageous to stay within the College?

I'm sorry to have bothered you about the folder. I suspect it's en route from London, together with a heap of other impedimenta that was left behind to be mailed.

Yours,

  
Joshua Lederberg