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May 31, 1966

Honorable John E. Fogarty  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Fogarty:

Thank you very much for your kind response to my request to your office for a copy of your remarks about cost-sharing requirements for grants from Federal agencies. I have read the remarks on page 9335 of the Congressional Record for May 4, 1966, and am delighted to find this confirmation of my faith last Fall that you could not possibly have intended all of the confusion and turmoil that was created by the Bureau of the Budget in Circular A74 and by the temporary and final regulations and instructions from DHEW, NASA and NSF that filtered and then flooded out to institutions that held or hoped to hold research grants from those agencies. My only disagreement with your remarks is that you attribute the worst actions to DHEW. I have found NASA and NSF less precise but none the less confused and bewildered. They have left us with little visible facts to object to but with great concern over what may be done without explanation. Uncertainty is sometimes worse than undesirable certainty. The latter you can try to change. The former is difficult to grapple.

It was a pleasure to read all of your remarks on the appropriations bill (HR 14745) which leads me to express my admiration for the grasp and mastery of the difficult, complex and very broad subject that these reflect.

I am grateful, too, for the copies of Parts 3, 4, and 5 of the Hearings in the House on the bill (HR 14745) for the Public Health Service and the National Institutes of Health, and for the Report (No. 1464) from the Committee on Appropriations. It is an impressive report. I can strongly support your position on the desirability of an orderly rate of increase for research grant funds such as the 15 per cent rate accepted for some Federal agencies. From

*cc Krog 11 +  
20, 5, 13, 14, 15*

Honorable John E. Fogarty  
May 31, 1966

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nearly eighteen years of operating a Federal research grant program, I can attest to the difficulties of the "feast or famine" procedure. I longed for the day when this concept of a reasonable rate of annual increase would be adopted. Now, from the vantage point of the grantee institution I can attest to the disadvantages and discouragement of the "feast or famine" experience in its effect on the investigators and their institutions. "Feast" engenders overconfidence, overexpansion, the funding of marginal projects, and a lack of the sense of privilege and responsibility for funds easily obtained. "Famine" actually forces investigators out of research and into practice or other activities where the personal salary as well as the wherewithal with which to do are not so uncertain. When this occurs at the beginning of a young man's career, it may abort any research or academic aims he had simply because his family must have greater security than subsisting on a research grant salary can provide. While such stringencies may serve to separate the real career man from the ostensible career man, we cannot help feeling that some really independent and original thinkers find it difficult to provide certainty or a love of uncertainty in a domestic situation dependent upon a grant that cannot be renewed for lack of funds. These and many other related situations make me applaud your efforts to provide a greater degree of stability for research.

There are many other topics, such as engineering and applied research in the Report on which I hope to find time to comment later. For the present, please accept our thanks for your help and our good wishes for resolution of more of our mutual problems.

Sincerely yours,



Ralph G. Meader  
Deputy Director (Research Administration)  
Massachusetts General Hospital

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