Dear Klaus –

I would not send you this note if you had not approached me to tell me how uncomfortable your position was. I sympathize with that and respect the sense of integrity that moved you to take a critical line, and then also to approach me personally about it.

My fear is that in your zeal to be sure that the committee not be inappropriately conned into an exaggerated view of the relation of our work to the state of the art, that you may have left a more negative view than you intended. I accept your negative criticisms; but I did not hear some positive statements that you might have made – that in emulating the mass spectrometrist, we had undertaken a difficult intellectual task; that we were at the beginning of new approaches related indeed to some that you yourself have been interested in; that we have added some element of system to the chaos of chemical topology; that many other chemists have been equally emphatic about computerizing their systems, possibly with an equal blurring of short-term goals; that analytical chemistry is a promising area to experiment with the exercise of machine intelligence – as far as this can go (and here as in every other AI arena, we still barely match isolated facets of human capability).

Of your critical remarks to the study section

were not intended to be a global condemnation, I hope you have communicated the positive side to that group (whose lack of familiarity deserves as much positive as negative attention.) If your conclusion and intention was that our efforts should be turned off, then I am sorry both that this should be the case (and I would give careful thought to such a message) and also that your personal words to me should have misled me into writing a letter like this.

If we do survive this Ordeal I am going to ask for your advice and help ~~to~~ ~~organ~~ in planning a biomedical mass spectral data library service that can be interrogated over our network. I did not think that Dendral should take operational responsibility for this; but perhaps other groups would participate in a cooperative fashion, especially with a focus at NIH.