Memo: From J. Lederberg, Dept. Genetics
To: Dean Alway

Bethesda, Maryland
September 26, 1958

Dear Bob -

I'm out here for a couple of days on the NIH study section on genetics. Fred Stone, as you probably know is head of the Division of General Medical Sciences which is in charge of training grants and similar broad programs. He buttonholed me today with a rather startling proposal. [Has he already contacted you about this?]

In a few cases, NIH has experimented with programmatic grants. These have not been widely advertised and, by and large, the administration is uncertain about them but they would like to experiment with them from time to time. He was suggesting that Stanford submit a package proposal for research and research training in genetics, as a new departure that might elicit particular enthusiasm. To start the ball rolling, he suggested that I write a letter, cleared through your office (or vice versa) that might then be the basis of further negotiation. He seemed to imply that this should embrace our programmatic needs in genetics and should in no sense be restricted to my own personal or departmental program, but rather be construed as "Genetics at Stanford" or at least "Genetics at Stanford Medical School", though this would plainly center on the genetics department.

I took the liberty of explaining to Stone something of our organization and to stress the fact that Stanford had taken something of a gamble in the hope of getting specific and harder support for the genetics program. I did not think it likely that you would want to foreclose this possible solution to the problem. This was a brief conversation and there are some features I would want to clarify

perhaps by telephone. I will call you, or wait for the converse, after a convenient interval during which you might have formulated a reaction.

While Stone stressed some breadth in the proposal, I believe it might be premature to open questions that might disturb existing arrangements for geneticists in other departments who may be quite content as they now stand. We can consider later (and will have to) what relationship (if any) Janofsky & Perkins in Biology, and Dale Kaiser in Biochemistry, and actions of Goldstein's and Kaplan's activities should have. But I think this occasion does bring to a focus what parallel developments there may be in the clinical departments, especially Pediatrics. It seems to me this would be a golden opportunity to finance a position for say Barton Childs (or anyone better if we can think of someone) if this is still a direction that would be open. And such a counterpart might well strengthen the appeal of the whole package. At the very least I would hope we could give assurances that funds for an appointment at some level in some clinical department would not go wasted (Psychiatry? or Medicine? in place of Psychiatry).

To change the subject somewhat, I know that you have a committee looking into Surgery and I would like (anonymously for the moment) to put Walter Burdette's name on the table. He currently holds a similar position at Utah. He may already be well known to you; however I will be collecting some more information to form a considered opinion. I know he was keenly sought after at Wisconsin but not successfully.

Yours,

Joshua Lederberg

P.S. – You won't be able to read this anyhow but could I have back a thermofax (or carbon copy of typescript) of this to remind what I heard [illegible]