



# THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE

NEW YORK, NY 10021

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

15 June 1990

The Honorable Terry Sanford  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanford:

My colleagues and I were delighted to receive your letter of May 18. We congratulate you on agreeing to chair the Advisory Committee on Higher Education Colloquium on Science Facilities. You have an extremely significant and ambitious agenda. We wish you well and would be pleased to cooperate in all appropriate ways.

In this letter I will comment on just two of the many broad questions you posed. First, for many years I have favored a change in the federal government's depreciation allowance on financing new facilities. As the White House Science Council Panel argued several years ago -- see attached excerpts -- depreciating buildings on a schedule of, say, twenty years, would be a much better and more realistic approach. Although this would undoubtedly increase overhead rates slightly across the country, that is a small price to pay for achieving the larger goal of a decentralized approach to building and improving facilities as each institution may decide on its own priorities. In any case, the revised depreciation allowance would be more consistent with realities.

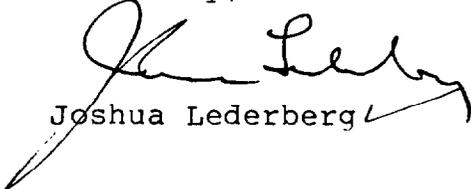
Second, I doubt whether we can expect substantial industrial support for constructing facilities on university campuses. It is unrealistic to ask firms to make major philanthropic contributions toward facilities that will not relate rather directly to their own corporate R&D goals. It is probably useful to remind firms that they have "philanthropic" obligations to the national academic system as well as to their local institutions.

I am alerting my principal deputy, Rodney W. Nichols, Executive Vice President, and a key member of our staff, Cynthia Greenleaf, LLB, Associate Vice President for Administration, to your efforts. You or your staff should feel free to be in touch with either of them over the summer as your work gets underway.

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I also am taking the liberty of giving a copy of this exchange of correspondence to my successor, David Baltimore, who will become President of The Rockefeller University on July 1. I am sure that David will share my strong interest in your efforts.

Sincerely,



Joshua Lederberg

Enclosures

cc: David Baltimore  
Cynthia Greenleaf  
Rodney W. Nichols