November 6, 1973

Provost Miller

Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics

Academic Advising for Students: Computer Models

Dear Bill,

I do not have to tell you how difficult it is to implement effective student advising within the framework of an elitist academic institution. It is extremely difficult for professors who are motivated by other goals to find the enormous amount of time that would be required to do well by students' needs for guidance and information about academic programs. Nor do I have to point out the tragic consequences of bad academic planning on the part of the individual student.

Have you ever given any thought to try to set up a computer assisted system of advising, to provide a framework of problem posing and problem solving for the student, and access to a somewhat nebulous data base, to take at least some of the load from the faculty. The information given out by knowledgeable faculty tends to be somewhat repetitious but is rarely sufficiently stable to be usable in conventional printed format.

I let you use your own imagination from there. It is also possible that rephrasing an old problem from the standpoint of a newer technology may encourage a fresh look at it.

Sincerely yours,

JL/rr
cc: Dean James Gibbs