Dear John —

I very much appreciate the friendliness and openness of your invitation. Having carefully considered my other commitments, I don't think I can take on the full vocation you ask — and what my own inquisitiveness and sense of responsibility would entail.

There are three major government agencies and four public service institutions for which I play a similar role — not to mention the university — of overseeing their general programs; and it is temporarily difficult for me to "hit-and-run," and reduce my commitment to less than the opportunity and responsibility.

Let me be so bold, however, as to suggest a counteroffer, of more modest scope. That is to be a consultant to the committee, advise, when matters closest to my central professional competence — in microbiology and so to molecular biology — one of those.
Others might well believe that these specialized perspectives would have the greatest marginal value to you. I had in mind that two or three days a year would exhaust my ability to pursue this mode, and still be fruitful in my own calendar. Above all I would not be tempted to too far-reaching a commitment.

I can imagine many reasons why you might not wish to take up this offer, and above all I would not want to preempt any more useful alternative. So please don’t write much further in protest or repudiating my suggestion along any motives other than what you meta-balanced best interests.

Of course I would be happy to discuss this with you further after you have decided on Arizona.

Yours,

John