

Memo/Reply From
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

TO: Dr. Joe Stokes

JAN 18 1980

Academic organization:

THE ORGANIZATION OF BASIC SCIENCES

To the Editor: The article by Hogness and Akin in the March 24 issue of the *Journal* focuses on the key issues related to the administration of academic health centers, but I'm not sure that the authors have posed the right questions about the administrative arrangements for the basic sciences. Although both State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of Texas, San Antonio, have chosen to aggregate their basic-health-science departments into a "college" as a separate administrative unit within the academic health center, there may be better alternatives to the classical Flexnerian pattern.^{1,2}

If one conceptualizes a two-dimensional grid with the various disciplines (i.e., faculty with related sets of information, concepts and skills) as one dimension, and the various student aggregates (i.e., baccalaureate, graduate and health science) as the other, administrative units should be organized along these "natural lines of cleavage." I assume that a college of basic sciences devoted exclusively to the teaching of health-science students would include a spectrum of disciplines ranging from biophysics to history — strange bedfellows, indeed. For example, it is more important that medical anthropologists who are involved in the education of health-science students maintain liaison with other anthropologists within their university than it is for them to relate to biochemists and biophysicists within a college of basic sciences. Channels of communication need to be kept open along both dimensions of the grid. When vital contacts are broken, relations tend to revert to primitive power struggles — games that academicians do not play well.

*MEMO
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Dear Joe - If you have any other writings on this I would appreciate copies.

*Yours,
Joshua*

see N.Y. C. Div.

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