Dr. Bernadine Healy  
Office of the Director  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, MD 20892

October 30, 1991

Dear Dr. Healy:

We write regarding an important aspect of NIH's policy concerning the training of scientists who are young women. We feel that one aspect of this policy is incomplete and can inhibit women from pursuing careers as scientists.

Currently, anyone who is awarded an NIH postdoctoral fellowship must serve full-time, for one, two or three consecutive years, as the case may be. Aside from maternity leave (which, presumably, would cover the period involving the birth of a child) there is no allowance made for part-time service (and consequent extensions of the time of the award). Accordingly, a woman for whom full-time day care is not an option and who wishes to work part-time while rearing an infant, cannot do so while holding an NIH postdoctoral fellowship. This policy is unnecessarily restrictive and works against our national goal of training more young women as scientists. Furthermore, it stands in contrast to the corresponding policies at many of our home institutions to such an extent that a woman being paid as a postdoctoral associate in our laboratories can work part-time, but a woman in the same laboratory who is a holder of an NIH postdoctoral fellowship, cannot. It is also our general experience that women who work part-time under the circumstances described above often achieve almost as much as men or women who work full-time: they are simply better organized and more highly motivated.

We urge you to institute a re-examination of the policy addressed above. A relaxation of the current guidelines to allow women to work two-thirds or three-quarters time while child-rearing (perhaps to be considered as a kind of maternity leave under a broadened definition) would benefit the whole nation.

Sincerely,

Maxine Singer, Director  
Carnegie Institution

Sidney Altman  
Sterling Professor of Biology

.....Continued on next page
The following individuals are signatories in absentia. Notes of assent are available for inspection.

Dr. David Baltimore  
Office of the President  
Rockefeller University  
1230 York Ave.  
New York, NY 10021

Dr. Alice Huang  
Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
New York University  
6 Washington Square, N.  
New York, NY, 10003

Professor Daniel Koshland, jr.  
Editor, Science  
Department of Molecular and Cell Biology  
Barker Hall  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA  94720

Professor Dan Nathans  
Dept. of Molecular Biology and Genetics  
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine  
724 N. Wolfe St.  
Baltimore, MD  21205

Dr. Donna Shalala  
Office of the President  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison, WI  53706

Dr. Robert F. Goldberger  
Dept. of Biochemistry  
College of Physicians and Surgeons  
Columbia University  
New York, NY 10032

Dr. Jeremy Knowles  
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, MA  02138

Dr. Phil Leder, Chairman  
Department of Genetics  
Harvard Medical School  
25 Shattuck St.  
Boston, MA  02115

Dr. Phil Sharp, Chairman  
Department of Biology  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
77 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA  02139

Mr. Benno C. Schmidt, jr.  
Office of the President  
Yale University  
Box 1302A Yale Station  
New Haven, CT  06520