

October 14, 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

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Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Dear Al,

It was good to get a brief glimpse of you on the 8th floor of the Landow Building. I was a bit overwhelmed by your suggestion of posing my candidature. I have almost automatically rejected propositions over the last three years because of my commitments here. However, I've come to feel that it is quite possible the laboratory could survive here without me as a result of the firm support we now have from the Dean, and the staff and programs that we have developed the last three years.

Consequently, I now have been thinking a little more than beforehand about situations in which I might be able to do the most good in the most creative way. As I mentioned to you I believe that the greatest contribution needed now is evidence of how best to achieve changes in health attitudes, behavior and risk characteristics. Because of the nature of the diseases we are concerned about there is no one best approach but ~~the~~ interaction between a community climate, produced presumably by health education, and individual change produced by changes in cultural mores, environmental factors and motivation to self-control, is most likely to bring about the desirable changes in community health.

Over the next six to twelve months I will be systematically exploring and weighing the potential for carrying out such investigations in Minnesota. I believe they are good. Without imposing on your funds and hospitality, I would welcome a simple reply from you concerning whether these matters would be a primal concern at Chapel Hill, and the availability of existing staff or state-supported new positions potentially applicable to such community intervention. Is Jim Grizzle interested in expanding the rôle of the Coordinating Center in such enterprises, as LRC completes its job? How would such demonstration efforts complement or contradict the very sound and considerable efforts of Chapel Hill in explanatory studies?

HB
Personal
corresp.
Soliciting my interest
in Dept. Head at
UNC.

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As you can see, you have roused my interest concerning the possibility for doing things I want to do. What remains to be seen of course is my interest in what you fellows want to do. In my limited administrative experience of 3 years as Department Head, I have had no difficulty whatsoever in allowing and helping good people to explore opportunities, within a wide latitude provided by our "mission" in Physiological Hygiene. This ranges all the way from the LRC activities of my colleagues that you know about, to animal experimental work on ventricular fibrillation thresholds. However, I am not terribly impressed with my administrative capacities of a supervisory, accounting and housekeeping nature. Certainly, I would not be wise to accept a position which involves primarily such activities, or "fund-raising".

Why don't you drop me a line if you think we should pursue this any further at all and I will reply promptly.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.

HB:jp