

*Corres - Perlmutter*



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
TWIN CITIES

Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene  
School of Public Health  
Stadium Gate 27  
611 Beacon Street S.E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

February 12, 1982

Ms. Cherie Perlmutter  
Assistant Vice President  
Office of Vice President  
for Health Sciences  
432 Morrill Hall

Dear Assistant Vice President Perlmutter:

This is in response to your request for information on the academic and administrative characteristics and strengths of the candidate for Vice President of Health Sciences, William Harlan, M.D. I've known Dr. Harlan 20 years, have served with him on a number of national committees and followed his researches and career with interest.

On the academic side, his is a remarkable combination of distinguished characteristics which give him the respect of the clinical, the basic science and academic, and the preventive medicine and public health communities. This surely has something to do with his broad range of interests and contributions. He has a firm background in internal medicine, biochemistry, and clinical investigation which establish him with those in the clinical and academic fields. He has addressed himself to the larger issues of professional education and has administered programs of continuing education which earn him the respect of educators. He has been centrally involved in epidemiological researches and in training and service activities in preventive medicine and public health. He contributes at the highest level in peer review at NIH and in congressional committee testimony and offices in national organizations.

From the standpoint of background, competence, breadth of view, energy and productivity, I could not imagine a more capable person or one more likely to command respect and to work well with colleagues on this campus.

Strictly with regard to administrative skills and experience one can hardly pass good judgment unless one has actually experienced administrative relations in the same institution. His position as section, department and division head along the way, his frequent experience in chairing committees, site visits and study sections, and his general interest in the administrative aspects of medical and health care are manifest in his many activities including his present sabbatical with the World Bank. His Duke and Michigan colleagues speak highly of his administrative skills.

February 12, 1982  
Perlmutter Letter  
Page Two

Running down your excellent series of desirable characteristics, I add the following comments:

1. I believe the comments above on experience in health sciences and on the national scene speak well to the breadth of his perspective and leadership.
2. His numerous careers, all successful, and the maturity of his views contain no suggestion of any narrow view along disciplinary lines.
3. His ability to make changes, remain on the forefront of medical education, public health and medical care suggest an exceptional ability to keep pace.
4. My earlier comments attest to his collegiality and ability to work with others.
5. Dr. Harlan is a strong and articulate advocate but not adversarial or abrasive in his dealings. He is direct, forthright and conciliatory.
6. His direction of laboratories in biochemical metabolic researches simultaneously with clinical appointments through the 60s characterizes his work throughout the 60s; since, his chairmanship of divisions of family medicine and community and post-graduate medicine attest to his administrative leadership and concern for broader issues in medicine. His Markle scholarship in the 60s was an early recognition of his leadership in American medicine.

Personal attributes include excellent presence and charm but "no nonsense." He has a young and attractive wife with complementary professional skills. His most important contributions are in his ability to synthesize experience across medical disciplines and apply it effectively to concepts, research and administration.

Sincerely,

Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director

HB/jml

bpc: Dean Stauffer

*sent 2-12-82 CB*