

Dr. Gafford

DEFENSE RESEARCH LABORATORIES

GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION

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Mail Number A-193
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Denver 1, Colorado

Dear Bob:

Thank you for your letter of May 7, 1962, concerning the possible formation of a national professional society to specifically represent the area of space biology. This letter is written just after receiving yours. Thus, it represents my first reaction and not necessarily an immutable opinion or immovable position. However, I do want to get a reply off to you immediately because if I don't write it now, I might not get to it for weeks!

First, let me say that I recognize all the points you make as justification for the formation of a new society. Each has validity, though the weights that I would assign to each argument vary considerably.

Second, I must observe that the Aerospace Industrial Life Sciences Association (which Chuck Gell, I, and others have organized as a Constituent Association of the Aerospace Medical Association) shares some of these *raison d'être*. From its name you can see that AILSA is designed to represent the industrially affiliated workers in space biology, who are also members of the Aerospace Medical Association, and from its position inside the parent body you can see that it is attempting to achieve its objectives from within an existing structure.

Third, I must say that, though in sympathy with your problem, I do not favor the formation of a new society.

May 10, 1962

Please believe me when I say that this is not motivated by fear of competition with the newly-formed Constituent Association mentioned above since the two have similar, not identical, objectives. My objections are based solely upon the following considerations.

- a. There is a strong nationwide feeling for a reduction in the number of societies and publications. This is sound and desirable and has been recognized by President Kennedy as a desirable national trend. It is unwise to buck a trend; particularly one strongly felt by so many of our colleagues. The ARS-IAS merger, for example, has been enthusiastically endorsed as are other such consolidations in other fields. I just wonder if a new group would flourish in the face of a strong popular feeling. Also, many workers would hesitate to abandon old affiliations and might just not want to pay even a small new dues levy. (Besides, I'll guarantee you, dues won't stay small long, not if you want to stay alive as an effectively communicating society. By the way, when was the last time you got money from a corporation to support a scientific journal?)
- b. The formation of a society devoted to space biology is bad for space biology because it deliberately sequesters space biologists from the aerospace engineering community upon whose understanding and support we increasingly depend. At least now when we publish in the IAS, ARS, or AAS journals we get read by some of our engineering colleagues. If we publish separately we probably won't be so generally read. Out of sight, out of mind, etc. The same argument goes for the societies themselves. Now we at least are on the programs, on the various committees, on the various executive councils, and consequently able to make ourselves felt. If we are to devote our time to this new group we must, perforce, abandon some of our old activities and

May 10, 1962

and we will, more and more, lose our voices within these societies and thus ~~lose~~ our present gains which are growing, year by year.

- c. The objectives of the new society can be met within present societies. If we all exert ourselves maximally in our present positions to insure high professional standards, adequate publication volume, shorter publication time, etc., we will solve most of our problems. The rapid growth of the "para-medical" group in the Aerospace Medical Association attests to this; we steadily see more and more people like Al Mayo, Gordie Wells, Gene Konecci, etc., elected to high offices and the ratio of medical/para-medical people steadily decreasing in this one example. The time will come when we will constitutionally run the Aerospace Medical Association as we do now run it for all practical purposes.

For the three major reasons given above I do not favor the formation of a new group at this time. I have examined my soul objectively in this matter and I am satisfied that my motives are (fairly) pure and relatively untainted with vested interest, selfishness, conservatism, or "fuddy-duddyism." I just don't think it's right, right now. It doesn't feel right to me somehow, Bob.

Please show this to anyone you want. I will not regret saying these things any more than I do about 90% of everything else I say, after I've been proven wrong!

Sincerely,



Bruce W. Pinc
Biological Sciences
Department

BWP/amg

cc: Dr. C. F. Gell