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March 9, 2008

Dr. James J. McCarthy - AAAS President
c/o Harvard University
Museum of Natural History
26 Oxford St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Dr. McCarthy:

Few scientists can equal Donald Kennedy's gracious and Olympian prose. But the selection of the new Editor-in-Chief of Science is a choice about the future of AAAS and the rapid advance of science and science-based policy in all fields. And Bruce Alberts is the wrong choice. Building on my letter of January 31, 2008, may I use the current issue of Science (February 29, 2008) to illustrate one area of concern?

In this issue, Donald Kennedy orchestrates cheerleading for Bruce Alberts (by himself and Marc Kirschner, pp. 1161, 1199) and still suppresses the needed and legitimate examination, concerning this important decision, of Bruce Alberts' damaging twelve-year record as President of the National Academy of Sciences. The style of top-down manipulation is an insult to our members; Bruce Alberts used the same style when he was President of the National Academy of Sciences. It is likely to shape the future when Bruce Alberts gains power in AAAS and takes control of our journal.

May I bring three additional concerns to your attention and the attention of the Governing Council?

1.) Bruce Alberts' Chilling Effect on News and Editorials

In Washington, an entire system needs to be reformed and re-energized quickly but the constructive role of AAAS and Science will be weakened if Bruce Alberts is Editor-in-Chief. Every relevant news story that is run (or not run), every editorial and Letter to the Editor that is printed (or not printed -

and eventually not even submitted), will be decided by Colin Norman and Monica Bradford and other staff members in the inhibiting context of being a criticism (direct or indirect) of the Republican-era damage that Bruce Alberts and his friends caused, egregiously to the social sciences and in the hundreds of studies with muted scientific advice (as assessed by the Times). It is an untenable position for Bruce Alberts to supervise news and editorial decisions and what AAAS members will read.

Bruce Alberts and his associates also may face many years of litigation that will limit his effectiveness and create conflicts of interest. Alberts repeatedly put his personal reputation and the scientific reputation of the National Academy of Sciences behind a decade-long reallocation of hundreds of millions of dollars for a neutered restructuring of the social sciences and the civic role of American universities. (The specific budget recommendations endorsed by the National Academy to the eight major funders of social science were obscured. Even today, most social scientists are unaware that there *was* a decade-long national plan, with the detailed budgets endorsed by the National Academy of Sciences, that restructured funds and the competitive advantages for their fields).^{1 2} Alberts et al. were warned (by the Carnegie Commission and others) about the lack of scientific integrity in what they were doing. There is a strong prima facie case that they are guilty of breach of contract, fraud, conspiracy, and coverups as well as poor judgment.³

2.) Obligations for Justice: Donald Campbell and Others

If there is to be any sustaining legitimacy to the phrase “self-governance of science,” one of the important issues that we should discuss is the obligation for justice. How does the scientific community redeem injuries inflicted unfairly on Donald Campbell and entire fields at our universities by the misused credibility of the National Academy of Sciences (and with the coverup aided by Science)? For example, before the National Academy of Sciences endorsed its plan for the de facto civic neutering of social sciences, Donald Campbell’s work (e.g., “Reforms as Experiments”) inspired a generation of young social scientists and the development of the evidence-based public policy movement and public policy programs across the country. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and he became one of the most widely read social scientists at our colleges and universities. Then suddenly, in the 1,700 names in the index of the National Academy’s working papers, there was no entry for his name. Donald Campbell became a nonperson.

These are very distressing and embarrassing events. We already can guess that if Bruce Alberts controlled scientific priorities in the 19th century and spotted the potential of young Darwin to anger a political and religious Right, the Beagle would have been defunded and it never would have sailed. And

Donald Kennedy would have assured that nobody could debate the decision or even learn that a decision had been made. The nonperson status of Donald Campbell and obedient accommodation to Republicans by Frank Press and Bruce Alberts et al. were worthy of the science bureaucracy in Stalinist Russia.⁴

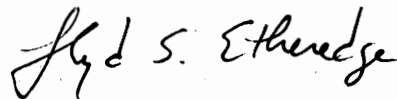
We should be discussing how to make amends. And how to make up for lost time. There is special urgency in several fields.

3.) Was the Selection of Bruce Alberts Illegitimate?

I am concerned that Bruce Alberts' friends and supporters unethically withheld information and manipulated his selection by AAAS.⁵ And now claim that there is a fait accompli that cannot be undone.

I cannot answer this question fully from the information that is available to AAAS members. But I am deeply disappointed and surprised that AAAS members who were known critics of Bruce Alberts were not given a right to present evidence from his damaging twelve-year control at the National Academy and provide an independent perspective and contribute to a better-informed decision. I think it is certain that critical information about Bruce Alberts was withheld - otherwise he would not have been confirmed. Thus, I think the null hypothesis still applies. At this point, I do not believe that our officers or members should regard the selection of Bruce Alberts as legitimate.

Sincerely,



(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge

cc: Governing Council

1. The restructuring (still endorsed across three NAS Presidents - Press, Alberts, and Cicerone) also allowed an inner circle to designate itself for "leading edge" funding and this has reduced competition and innovation and perpetrated biases and injustices. For example, it has continued the prominence of the politically innocuous social science research of the University of Michigan that Philip Converse was anxious to preserve and it has specifically blocked efforts to explore the role of hierarchical psychology in political behavior and perpetuating societal problems. (I am not trying to start a fight with colleagues at the University of Michigan. Recognizing - as Converse did - that they are doing politically innocuous research is not a judgment of the scientific value of specific projects.) The more challenging and innovative hierarchical psychology research ideas are included in "Grand Challenges: Mapping the Brain-Mind Connection of Emotion and Politics" online at www.policyscience.net

2. It was described as a decade-long plan, but it has had a much longer impact. Self-interested insiders apparently began to transmit detailed budgets (with applications) to several funders by 1986. The volume at the end of the 1980s said that it was a decade-long plan, implying that the National Academy's endorsement covered the 1990s. Bruce Alberts did not respond to later NSF requests for participation in

21st century revisions as part of NSF planning exercises (e.g., for new infrastructure investments and data systems) and there has been no national system to rethink priorities.

3. Legal discussions and background documents are available in the filing with the Department of Justice and related materials, online at www.policyscience.net.

4. The late Donald Campbell was a member of the National Academy of Sciences. Like most of its social science members, he was not given an opportunity to review the new national plan before it was endorsed and published. Bruce Alberts has been responsive to biologists and environmentalists: Due process for social scientists, even social scientists who are members of the National Academy of Sciences, has not been one of his strengths.

5. As you know, Donald Kennedy recently acknowledged in writing that he personally rejected several appeals, over the years, for news and editorial reporting and candid discussions in Science. Had this occurred, I believe that members of the National Academy of Sciences and the wider scientific and academic community would have become outraged by the breakdowns of integrity and Bruce Alberts would have been removed. I suspect that Donald Kennedy's political instincts suggested the same conclusion.