

January 5, 2002

Ms. Christine Boesz, Inspector-General
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1135
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Inspector-General Boesz:

I am writing to follow-up recent correspondence about scientific misconduct (e.g., undisclosed biases) and serious institutional damage caused by the Luce-Smelser Report. The Report says that it was invited and partly funded by your organization.

The Null Hypothesis of Rationalized Self-Interest

Could you determine what safeguards were used by the National Research Council to prevent bias arising from the self-interest of the Commission members and the small group of Academy members who, behind closed doors, decided the national agenda? Ordinarily, ethical disclosures of self interest would be included in any Report, but this did not occur. The conflicts of interest (i.e., payoffs) may not have been disclosed to the internal reviewers at the National Research Council or to NSF or to the other institutions who received the detailed budgets forwarded by the Luce-Smelser Commission.

I fear that the null hypothesis (of bias that gave rationalized primacy to projects of personal interest and financial benefit to the judges and an inner circle) may be true. The Report's dust-cloud explanations of its theories of scientific advance; decision rules; the nature, validity, reliability, and independence of rankings, etc. (e.g., many others could have been chosen) were gratuitous bullshit.

The burden of proof should be on Dr. Alberts, and if they used public funds, I think they have a compelling obligation to address the issue. If there were undisclosed conflicts of interest, this is added ground for the Report to be

withdrawn. Also (I think Congress would agree) for public funds from NSF and other government agencies to be repaid.

Yours truly,

(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
Government Learning Project

cc: Eamon Kelly
Norman Bradburn