LETTERS

Berkeley Audit

Colin Norman's article "Audit may cost UC millions" (News and Comment, 16 Apr., p. 279) deserves clarification insofar as the Berkeley campus is concerned. The exit interview of the auditors at the Berkeley campus stated that more than 41,000 effort report forms were processed at Berkeley during fiscal year 1980–1981 to substantiate more than $37 million of salaries under federal grants and contracts. The total questioned costs resulting from incomplete or absent forms directly attributable to our Berkeley campus operations were $41,007 involving a total of 17 forms—almost all of them for students and staff, many of whom have left the campus and whose signatures are not available. An additional possible disallowance of $331,630 is attributable directly to deficiencies in the centrally prepared and mandated effort reporting support system used by all nine campuses, including the San Francisco campus. This computer system was not completely debugged during its first year of operation, and the questioned costs could be negotiated downward.

While any loss of dollars in this era of tight funding is unfortunate, it should be noted that our faculty, while sharing national concern over the utility and/or futility of effort reporting, are 99.9 percent willing to abide by the rules while actively working for modification of the reporting system.

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Isabelle: Request for Funds

It would be a shame to engrave an epitaph for Isabelle (News and Comment, 9 Apr., p. 158) before an announcement of her death. Indeed events in Congress may yet prove that such an announcement might be premature. To date, the only proof of an impending death is the omission of construction funds for Isabelle in the fiscal year 1983 Reagan budget. And even this omission is being challenged in Congress by Senators Christopher J. Dodd (D–Conn.), Alfonse M. D'Amato (R–N.Y.), and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D–N.Y.). On 1 April Dodd, D'Amato, and Moynihan sent a strong letter to the Senate authorization and appropriations subcommittees urging the inclusion of $10 million for Isabelle construction for fiscal year 1983. The letter acknowledged that, while $10 million was considerably below the level required for rapid completion of the project, fiscal restraint was necessary in light of the large deficits predicted for fiscal year 1983. The request for the allocation was made in recognition of the scientific, educational, and technological importance of a strong American high-energy physics program and out of concern for the need to preserve the momentum and key staffing of the Isabelle project.

To many members of the physics community, inside and outside the high-energy field, a successful Isabelle and healthy Brookhaven National Laboratory are key factors in our country's commitment to the pursuit of basic research and the technological strength that we will derive from it well into the next century. While it is difficult to predict the outcome of budgetary action, I believe that a number of us are already heartened by congressional recognition of the importance of the project.

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NIH Funding

The Association of Medical School Microbiology Chairmen wishes to express its strong support for the letter that appeared in *Science* (26 Feb., p. 1026) concerning the crisis in funding at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The letter was written by Elliot S. Vesell and H. George Mandel on behalf of the Association for Medical School Pharmacology. Four major ways in which current fiscal problems might be partially alleviated were outlined. These were (i) development of a sliding scale for the funding of grants approved by peer review groups, the fraction of the approved budget to be funded to depend on the priority score assigned by the peer review group; (ii) a fixed, reasonable indirect cost rate; (iii) fewer large center and program project grants; and (iv) a dollar limit on the support of individual laboratories.

In a poll of our members there was an overwhelming consensus (94 percent of the respondents) that all four of the suggestions were highly desirable. All of the remaining respondents favored at least three of the four.

We feel that it is also important to point out that increasing the NIH budget 7 percent above the President's request would make an enormous difference in the health and vitality of the extramural program. Finally, we note with sadness and consternation the extent to which funds have been shifted from the extramural program to the intramural program in the NIH budget proposed for fiscal year 1983.

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Hybridoma Technology

Nicholas Wade, in his article "Hybridomas: The making of a revolution" (News and Comment, 26 Feb., p. 1073), discusses Köhler and Milstein's use of lymphocytes as fusion partners of mouse myeloma cells as though it were a radical departure from the science of the time. In fact, fusion of human lymphocytes with mouse myeloma cells to give rise to hybrid cells which secreted myeloma and lymphocyte-derived immunoglobulins was described in 1973 (*1*), concurrent with the first myeloma-myeloma fusions (*2*), and again in 1974 (*3*). Köhler and Milstein acknowledged this work in their 1975 description of mouse splenocyte–mouse myeloma hybrid cells. The mouse immunoglobulin secreted by these mouse-human hybrid cells was an antibody (*Pneumococcus C* polysaccharide). The germinal contribution of Köhler and Milstein to this process was the use of immunized spleen cells to derive hybrid cells that secreted antibodies which could be determined by prior immunization and which could then be selected from the general population.

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References

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2. R. G. H. Cotton and C. Milstein, *ibid.*, p. 42.
3. J. Schwaber and E. P. Cohen, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **71**, 2203 (1974).