

25 June 1956

Dr. H. A. Tave
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Dear Marlow:

I was greatly disturbed by your two recent letters, one to Beams at the University of Virginia and the other to Dr. Stewart at the University of West Virginia. I feel that when as radical a move as an attempt to generate a combination of two universities and the Oak Ridge Institute for Nuclear Studies with the implied support of the National Science Foundation is taken by the Chairman of the NSF Panel, he should first call a meeting of the Panel, discuss the matter and have agreements within the Panel.

You were in error when in the fourth paragraph of the letter to Dr. Stewart you said, "Our Advisory Panel for Radio Astronomy for the NSF has taken the position that the trustees of AUI are too fully occupied with the large-scale operations at Brookhaven for us to feel confident that the radio astronomy activities will have full and unbiased attention." This is just not a fact, the Advisory Panel has never taken such a position.

It is my feeling that the majority of the members of the Advisory Panel feel that the AUI has done an excellent job to date in planning this activity and would look with favor upon continuance of the NSF relations with AUI.

The National Science Foundation in this, its first excursion into the operation of large facilities, needs the confidence that will come through operating with an experienced organization. This is not a plan automatically tossed at the northeastern universities, to use your words, but is a planned attempt to give astronomers in the east a useful tool with which to work. You must realize that in the east and northeast there are no large telescopes because atmospheric conditions are such that it is not wise to build one. There is however, a large group of capable astronomers who need a facility to provide them with an outlet, a means of doing modern work and of attracting and training students.

Had we held a meeting to discuss your scheme, I would have opposed it on the grounds that this activity should be national in character and that AUI comes nearer than any other organization to satisfying the requirements for operating it in this fashion. To have the facility operated by two local universities is impractical and would defeat the purpose of making the facility national in tone.

I am pleased that NSF has decided to hold a meeting this July for I feel that it is imperative that the decision be made by the National Science Foundation soon in order that orderly planning of the facility may proceed.

Sincerely,

John F. Egan

Copy to:
Dr. A. T. Waterman, NSF
Members, Advisory Panel on
Radio Astronomy, NSF

JFE/lac