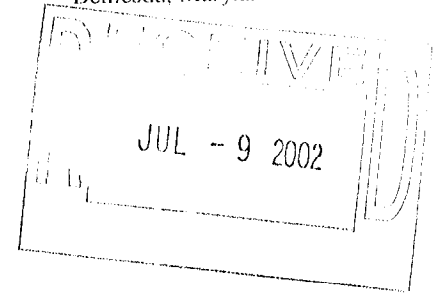




Center for Scientific Review  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892



June 20, 2002

Brian L. Strom, M.D., M.P.H.  
President  
American College of Epidemiology  
1500 Sunday Drive, Suite 102  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27607

Dear Dr. Strom:

We have received your letter of May 28, 2002, in which you urge the Center for Scientific Review (CSR) to include epidemiologists as members of the Boundaries Team Panel that will design the study sections for the Fundamental Genetics and Population Biology (FGPB) Integrated Review Group (IRG).

The Fundamental Genetics and Population Biology (FGPB) and Molecular Approaches to Gene Function and Interactions (MAGF) IRGs are inter-related in terms of subject matter and it is highly probable that like expertise is required to review the applications that will ultimately be assigned to those units. Consequently, CSR has decided to hold one meeting under the title of the Genetics Study Section Boundaries Team. At that time, the Team can decide whether the scientific areas covered in the IRGs should be reviewed together under one IRG or remain separate entities.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and deliberations concerning the role of epidemiology in the basic sciences. Although there are three other study sections that review epidemiology proposals, there are other IRGs that may review the same types of proposals based upon their orientation. In setting forth principles for reorganizing study sections, the original Panel on Scientific Boundaries for Review (PSBR) emphasized that study sections should have broad mandates that share interests with other study sections both within and across IRGs. The Panel stated as a principle that it is, in general, advantageous that any application has two potential homes for review.

CSR has recently formed a Steering Committee to determine the areas of expertise required for the Genetics IRGs and to select members of the SSB Team. We will heavily consider your suggestion to include epidemiologists among Team members. The Genetics SSB Team will meet from November 13 - 15 and its roster should be available by the end of September. We will gladly share the roster with you. As to applications addressing epidemiologic issues, the Genetics Team may elect to design study sections around whatever themes suit the science. Thank you for your input in helping us design new study sections.

Sincerely,

Ellie Ehrenfeld, Ph.D.  
Director