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of **VERMONT**

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Scientific Management Review Board
NIH

Dear Review Board Members:

I am writing as a PI for one of the COBRE programs at The University of Vermont and wish to convey in the strongest possible terms my delight in the success of this and the IDeA program in general. By almost any metric IDeA has been a success story. In addition, I have found the NCRR staff with whom I have interacted to be among the most professional, well informed, and helpful of any NIH staff with whom I have interacted during my 20 years of NIH funding. It is an NIH jewel in my opinion and should not be tampered with.

During the past five years of our Phase I COBRE program, we were able to recruit and support 9 new faculty. They alone have already brought in more than \$8 million in funding, whereas the faculty as a whole garnered \$48 million during the same five-year period, not counting any COBRE funds! Our publication record is equally impressive. That is a huge leveraged return on the \$10.5 million COBRE funding, and unprecedented on this campus, except within our two other COBRE programs.

Beyond the recruitment of new faculty, the COBRE program has supported our seminar series, core facilities, and students. It allowed me to bring together for the first time on this campus the disciplines of immunology and infectious diseases. This would absolutely not have been possible without the COBRE support, as we are a small research university with minimal state support and very little endowment.

Recognizing the regional benefits of having such programs and intellectual capital distributed throughout the country is a concept that I fully embrace and one at which NCRR staff have been particularly adept. I strongly urge you to maintain the IDeA, RCMI and CTSA programs within NCRR. They know how to do it.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph Budd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end.

Ralph C. Budd, M.D
Director, Vermont Center for Immunology and Infectious Diseases