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William Roper, MD
UNC School of Medicine
Chapel Hill

Dear Dr Roper

I would like to thank you and your committee for permitting a brief comment from me as you struggle with recommending a strategy for the future of NIDA and NIAAA. After my morning with you, and hearing the various testimonies, I am sympathetic with the difficult politics and multiple realities you are trying to synthesize.

In addition to thanks, the purpose of this note is to indulge you briefly in my own sense is that the partial merger plan you are considering will not bring about the hoped for efficiencies in knowledge growth and clinical application for the field of addiction. Unless there is a full merger, with a single leader, council, IRP, etc, I believe you will not affect the needed changes. Everyone agrees that the biology underlying addiction has large arenas of overlap between different drugs, and most would agree that ameliorating addiction relies ultimately on understanding the biology of addiction. It is the sociological impact of alcohol versus other drugs that seems to be less overlapping, and this results largely from alcohol being legal. Nicotine is also legal and as you heard in testimony, marijuana is likely to become so. It is arguably more efficient to deal with all legal drugs and the associated sociology and treatment implementation of these drugs under a single administrative roof. Thus, as cures and treatment protocols for one or the other drug emerge, this knowledge can more readily be applied to the other legal drugs.

I urge the committee to take the more courageous and more difficult path, but the path of greatest future impact, and recommend implementing a full merger of the institutes. Again, thank you for your time and patience.

Best of luck,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Kalivas".

Peter Kalivas, Ph.D.
Professor and co-Chair