



*The*  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*of*  
**VERMONT**

DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY AND NEUROBIOLOGY

December 3, 2010

Arthur Rubenstein, M.B.B. Ch.  
Chair, Translational Medicine and Therapeutics Working Group  
Scientific Management Review Board

Dear Dr. Rubenstein:

I am writing to strongly urge that the IDeA and RCMI programs currently housed in NCRR remain intact and reside in the same institution in order to retain the synergies and impact in future years. The IDeA program is very highly regarded by Vermont's legislators and congressional representatives; both groups understand how important the IDeA programs have been to the growth of research and training opportunities at the University of Vermont (UVM) and other institutions throughout the state, along with their significant economic impact.

As PI of the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence in Neuroscience (Neuroscience COBRE) (NCRR P20 RR016435) at UVM, I can personally attest to the impact of the IDeA programs at our institution. Until the Neuroscience COBRE was awarded in 2001, neuroscience research and graduate training at UVM was not an identified area of strength recognized by the UVM Administration. Rather, it was primarily a faculty-driven series of research endeavors and graduate training programs diffusely scattered in departments across multiple colleges on the UVM campus. The Neuroscience COBRE significantly increased the infrastructure supporting neuroscience research and training on this campus. It created two key multi-user research Cores that have provided access to sophisticated imaging and molecular biology expertise and equipment not previously available to the UVM neuroscience community. The Neuroscience COBRE-supported research cores broaden research capabilities of faculty and complement, but do not duplicate other core facilities on the campus. Access to these core facilities has increased the competitiveness of neuroscience faculty for extramural funding. The Neuroscience COBRE also has supported recruitment of new neuroscience faculty in both basic and clinical departments and fostered the research endeavors of junior faculty until they attained independent extramural funding. Multiple new NIH grant awards are directly attributable to having had Neuroscience COBRE funding. The faculty and project support also has increased the number of science-related technical positions in the community, many of which have been filled by recent science graduates either from UVM or Vermonters returning home from out-of-state colleges. In a state with a small population and significant graying due to lack of good jobs for young people, these jobs have a substantial impact on our economy.

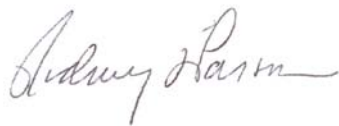
The Neuroscience COBRE award also was instrumental in facilitating the development of a University-wide Neuroscience doctoral graduate program. This program has been heralded by Dr. Daniel Fogel, President of UVM, as a model for the type of interdisciplinary graduate training programs he wants to develop at this institution.

The presence of the Neuroscience COBRE also contributed significantly to the selection of Neuroscience, Behavior and Health as one of the three Spires of Research Emphases at UVM. The selection process included evaluation by an elaborate internal review process and review by a committee comprised of very accomplished external reviewers.

Overall, the impact of the Neuroscience COBRE at UVM has been so significant that Neuroscience is now one of the strategic areas of research emphasis and graduate training at UVM. Its presence has been a key asset in recruiting both clinical and basic neuroscientists to our institution and has fostered translational neuroscience investigation. I encourage that the IDEA programs remain intact. I also recommend that if Clinical COBRES are made available in the future, that they should remain within the parent program.

I appreciate having an opportunity to provide input on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rodney Parsons".

Rodney L. Parsons, PhD.  
Professor and Chair

cc: Lyric Jorgenson, PhD, Office of Science Policy, National Institutes of Health  
Francis Collins, MD, PhD, Director, National Institutes of Health  
Patrick Leahy, JD, United States Senator for Vermont