



National Institute on Alcohol
Abuse and Alcoholism
5635 Fishers Lane
Bethesda, MD 20892-9304

November 12, 2009

Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction Working Group
Scientific Management Review Board
C/o Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health

Dear Members of the Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction Working Group:

I would like to bring to your attention an individual whose perspective should be heard as part of your deliberations. NIAAA had proposed that Robert Carothers Ph.D., J.D., immediate past president of the University of Rhode Island, be invited to present to the first open meeting of the SUAA working group. Dr. Carothers brings a unique perspective grounded in his decade's long career as a university president.

Unfortunately, Dr. Carothers's schedule precluded him from participating in the September 23rd meeting. At the time, we were assured that he would be given an opportunity to address the working group at a subsequent meeting and therefore did not attempt to fill the vacant slot opposite NIDA's invitee on September 23rd. We then contacted Dr. Carothers who kept October 14th, the date of the next scheduled meeting, open. When NIAAA suggested to the NIH Office of the Director that Dr. Carothers be invited to the October 14th meeting, we were informed that there was not sufficient time available for him to present at that meeting.

Once the agenda for the November 13th meeting of the SMRB was established and we received notice (one week prior to the meeting) that there would be public comment sessions, we contacted Dr. Carothers who offered to attend and address the Board in that format. Given the short notice, he was not able to be present for the full day on Friday, but he generously offered to rearrange his schedule to accommodate travel to Washington D.C. on Thursday evening and participation in the meeting on Friday morning. We broached this with the NIH OD, but were told they could not guarantee that he would be able to present at all during the public comment sessions, let alone ensure that he could have one of the public comment slots in the morning to accommodate his travel. Given the degree of uncertainty, we did not feel it appropriate to encourage him to travel to D.C. for the November 13th meeting.

To reiterate, Dr Carothers has an important perspective that the working group should hear as it moves forward. We therefore hope he would be given the same consideration as previous panelists and be invited to address the board for 10-15 minutes with an opportunity to respond to follow up questions.

Respectfully,

Kenneth Warren, Ph.D
Acting Director and Deputy Director