



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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May 2, 1978

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Mr. William O. Burke  
Vice President  
SUPA  
c/o University Patent Committee  
University of Georgia  
Office of Vice President for Research  
Athens, Georgia 30602

Dear Mr. Burke:

Thank you for your letter of April 28, 1978.

I'm afraid that I can do little to provide specific and well-documented answers to your four questions. The Rockefeller University has pursued patent protection only since 1972, when its Trustees reversed a long-standing policy to the contrary. Until quite recently virtually all work in this area was handled for us by Research Corporation and hence it is difficult to know precisely what the impact of our IPA has been in certain areas.

I can respond in generalities. Being centered in the biomedical sciences, our research effort is most likely to produce inventions which are of interest to the pharmaceutical industry. Given the enormous "front end" costs of bringing a drug to market through the necessary FDA clearances, this industry is especially and appropriately sensitive to availability of patent protection. We have indeed encountered concern vis-a-vis government rights in working with private sponsorship and private collaborators. There have been instances when the instance of our IPA has been a real help in achieving a workable arrangement.

Prior to our entry into an IPA with DHEW there was one instance in which we sought to obtain a deferred determination. This was with regard to the Cerami and Manning patent disclosing the cyanate treatment for sickle cell disease. Apparently because of the sensitive and somewhat controversial nature of this area of medicine, it proved impossible to obtain a determination. The title remains vested in the government and no licensee has ever been obtained.

While I cannot be more specific, I fully share your conviction that a government-wide institutional patent agreement would be an enormous aid in improving the ability of academic research centers to obtain industrial sponsorship and collaboration in the pharmaceutical area.

Sincerely,

Albert Gold  
Vice President