

M.I.T. Lab Conversion: The (Ford) Fraud Exposed

CONVERSION.... *THEIR*

Dear HoJo:

TO: Howard Johnson
C. L. Miller
1-290

SUBJECT: USL/Ford Support

October 21, 1969

May I take this opportunity to repeat and augment the points I made in your office Friday afternoon.

1. Fiscal planning for USL for FY '70 was based on the following:
 - a. Support from IBM grant funds of \$300,000, the same level as granted in FY '69 (actually, the IBM support in FY '69 was more like \$550,000, the full amount allocated to the 360/67).
 - b. Our understanding (as of late Spring '69) was that the Ford renewal proposal would be submitted in October/November for action in December with renewal funds available as early as February, 1970.
2. The situation we now find ourselves in is as follows:
 - a. IBM support granted is at the level of \$200,000 instead of \$300,000. In addition, IPC has announced rate changes (not discussed with USL) effective November 1, which increase our research costs by an estimated \$50,000 for the current year. Accordingly, we are short \$150,000 from this source for the period through June, 1970.
 - b. Our current understanding is that the Ford renewal proposal will not be submitted until the Spring of '70, which suggests to us that renewal funds will not be available until the Fall of '70. Accordingly, we are short the equivalent of Ford support for the Spring and Summer of '70 from this source. We had counted on at least \$350,000 from this source for the period through September, 1970.

The combination of the two means that we are short approximately \$500,000 in our fiscal planning for the immediate future. To avoid running in the red, it will be necessary to start cancelling support of faculty and students in the next several months, and I will be forced to take such action.

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3. In the face of an impending phase-out of the USL faculty and student support, it appears that a \$1,000,000 Ford grant to "convert" the Special Labs will be announced and in force. I anticipate that faculty and student reaction to this combination of events will be very negative and hostile. It will be interpreted by many as a wrong ordering of priorities by the Administration and as a reaction to radical students. Putting Ford money into Lincoln Lab, where no one seems to see a crisis situation, when dedicated faculty and students are being cut off in USL, is something I cannot understand and will not be able to defend. I personally feel that the Special Lab grant is a mistake and one which is going to backfire on the Administration.
4. USL has already caused serious trouble on campus by starting activities it cannot continue. Many have developed hard feelings toward USL as a result of having support discontinued. I believe the Administration is in danger of repeating my mistakes and compounding them by starting up still another set of activities for which continuing support is unlikely. There cannot help but be another and larger set of hard feelings created.

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With the above points in mind, I would like to suggest the following to you:

- A. Exercise great care in the wording of the announcement of the Special Lab grant, putting emphasis on interfacing with the campus, on faculty and student participation, and on support of faculty initiated projects to be assisted by the Special Labs.
- B. Schedule the proposals to Ford such that USL is insured of renewal support from Ford by February 1.

The USL Ford renewal request is going to be for support at the level of \$2,000,000 per year for at least three and preferably five years. For the gap period February 1 - September 15, 1970, we need approximately \$500,000.

In the past few weeks, I have become painfully aware of the very serious pressure and morale problems associated with the Instrumentation Lab. While wise use of Ford funds can help ease some of these, I feel it would be a mistake to ignore the critical needs of USL while giving a misleading illusion of "converting" the I-Lab.

Proposed MIT Administration efforts to reconvert the Instrumentation and Lincoln Laboratories from war related research are nothing but a fraud, according to the Administration itself.

This is one of many contradictions revealed in a private memorandum from Charles L. Miller to MIT President Howard Johnson. Miller was recently appointed director of the Instrumentation Lab and still holds the posts of director of the Urban Systems Lab (USL) and chairman of the Civil Engineering Department. A copy of this memorandum was received anonymously by the November Action Coalition.

The letter refers to a one-year, \$1 million "conversion" grant which is being made to the Special Labs by the Ford Foundation. At the same time, it makes clear that the Institute's Administration is aware that continuing support for such research is unlikely and that no major re-orientation of Special Lab activities is anticipated.

This coincides with a recent statement by President Johnson contained in the Institute Report of October 24, 1969, in which he states:

The Special Laboratories will continue to do fundamental research and to develop new technology in the fields of communication optics, guidance and control radar systems, geophysical systems, and computer designs and applications.

Moreover, it is clear that the Ford Foundation grant reflects no shift in MIT's overall research priorities. The same memorandum reveals that the Urban Systems Laboratory, MIT's present major urban research arm, is now being forced to cut back programs and staff due to funding shortages. These shortages reflect the fact that private corporations and government agencies only find it in their interest to subsidize little else but defense, aerospace and other harmful or irrelevant research.

Because Miller knows that MIT's conversion policy is illusory, he urges the Administration to exercise "great care in the wording of the announcement of the Special Lab grant, putting emphasis on interfacing with the campus, on faculty and student participation, and on support of faculty initiated projects to be assisted by the Special Labs."

It is clear that MIT "conversion policy" is merely a facade to "ease the very serious pressure" of popular opposition while furthering the profitable enterprise of defense related research. The November Action Coalition demands an immediate end to war-related research conducted at MIT,

November Action Coalition

