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On behalf of the Biophysical Society, I want to thank you for seeking broad input on the National Institutes of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering Draft Strategic Plan 2011. We appreciate the time you, your staff, and the NIBIB Council spent gathering input from the community and putting together a thoughtful document to guide the Institute over the next five years.

We appreciate the plan's emphasis on interdisciplinary science through the first goal, "*Improve human health through the development of emerging biomedical technologies at the interface of engineering and the physical sciences*" and fifth goal, "*Develop training programs to prepare a new generation of interdisciplinary engineers, scientists, and health care providers.*" The report correctly points out that many of most important advances in basic research and medical care have come from this interface.

We are concerned, though, that the draft focuses more on the interface with clinical research and less on basic biomedical research. The interface of the physical sciences and engineering with biomedical researchers studying fundamental issues was a key component of past clinical breakthroughs, such as the development of magnetic resonance imaging and drugs designed based on high-resolution crystal structures determined with synchrotron generated x-rays. New techniques being developed by basic physical and biophysical scientists, such as single molecule fluorescence imaging studies, are leading the way toward sequencing individual genomes and personalized medicine.

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In regards to training programs, the key point made in the document should include promoting interdisciplinary training of investigators not only at the interface of medicine, engineering, the physical and life sciences, but also fundamental biomedical research.

We also commend you for pointing out in the plan that it is important for NIBIB to invest in high impact research as part of its portfolio. While this type of investment is more risky and will lead to some failures, it also has the potential to lead to the greatest breakthroughs in research.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft strategic plan. We applaud you on identifying well-positioned goals. Please let us know if the Biophysical Society can be of assistance to you in any way.

Sincerely,



Richard Aldrich
President

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