

## EDITORIAL

# Human Genetics Education in Medical Schools—Forward Ho!

Carl A. Huether  
Editor, Human Genetics Education Section

Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati

Just possibly, this issue of the Human Genetics Education Section may someday be viewed as representing a turning point in how we deal with human genetics education in medical schools. After two reports (Childs et al. 1981; Riccardi and Schmickel 1988) over the past decade indicating this activity's state of disrepair, two articles in this issue give very specific suggestions for how to begin resolution of the problem.

Our feature article, contributed by no fewer than 17 authors, is the report of a task force convened in March 1988 by the Information and Education Committee of The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG). The task force was charged with examining the challenge of teaching human genetics in medical schools and, most importantly, with making recommendations for improvement to the ASHG Board of Directors. They have developed a conceptual framework for teaching human genetics to medical students, long-term goals for implementation, and specific action proposals for the here and now. One of these proposals was to conduct a workshop at the October 1988 ASHG annual meeting where various strategies for implementation were presented.

While the task force felt there is no ideal human genetics curriculum for medical schools, Pat Baird sagaciously tackles this issue with sufficient justification to present her article in our subsection "Innovations in Human Genetics Education." Her approach is worthy of a true professional educator.

Received September 23, 1988.

Address for correspondence and reprints: Carl A. Huether, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0006.

© 1989 by The American Society of Human Genetics. All rights reserved. 0002-9297/89/4401-0024\$02.00



The existence of these articles and much else in human genetics education is owed in large measure to the tenacious and dedicated commitment of Vincent Riccardi as chair of the Information and Education Committee for the past 5 years. On the committee for 6 years, Vic completes his two terms of service this month, and we all owe to him considerable gratitude for providing farsighted and dynamic leadership in his capacity as chair.

Other valuable features of this issue are reviews of the latest (4th) edition of Rothwell's *Understanding Genetics*, of Emery and Mueller's *Elements of Medical Genetics*, and of materials for human genetics training programs for health professionals. Louise Paquin critically evaluates the quantity and quality of human genetics material covered by Rothwell in his textbook for undergraduate general genetics courses; Joann Boughman provides a clear and concise view of Emery and Mueller's textbook for undergraduate medical students, reminding us to compare this with its two competitors reviewed in the last Human Genetics Education Section (October 1988); and Robert Baumiller is, well, vintage Baumiller!

Do keep all those letters and manuscripts on Human Genetics Education pouring across my desk!

### References

- Childs, B., C. A. Huether, and E. A. Murphy. 1981. Human genetics teaching in U.S. medical schools. *Am. J. Hum. Genet.* 33:1-10.
- Riccardi, V. M., and R. D. Schmickel. 1988. Human genetics as a component of medical school curricula: a report to The American Society of Human Genetics. *Am. J. Hum. Genet.* 42:639-643.