[Editor's note: The relevant text of the e-mail sent to Dan Brooks by Bruce Weber documenting (1) the fact that Dan Brooks was clearly informed that the Wistar Retrospective Symposium was a Discovery Institute initiative, and (2) the fact that Dan Brooks was told this was to be treated as a private conference, out of public view, has been highlighted below.]

10/18/2006

Dear Dan,

At a conference last May at Biola University on Intelligent Design I said that ID asks interesting questions about the possible source of new information, novel structures, and emergent complexity but then gives the wrong answers. Afterwards Stephen Meyer indicated that there were plans afoot to have a second Wistar Symposium, this time on the issues of emergence vs design. You may recall that the original Wistar Symposium held about forty years ago, which included the likes of Richard Lewontin, Peter Medewar, and Roy Britten, addressed the question of mathematical challenges to neo-Darwinism. ***Recently, Bruce Gordon, who is the research director at the Discovery Institute contacted me to indicate that they have funding to support a second Wistar conference sometime in late spring or early summer of 2007, probably in Boston, on whether natural mechanisms can account for the emergence of novel information and structures or if some design argument needs to be considered. Bruce Gordon assures me that this is meant to be a scientific meeting, out of press view, and that he is looking for "researchers active in mathematical, computational and experimental biology who, while acknowledging that there are philosophical differences in the various approaches represented at the conference, will focus on the biological data and its mathematical analysis with the purpose of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each approach as a scientific research program, NOT as an ideological stance in a culture war."*** Bruce Gordon and I discussed names of individuals whom we thought would be open to participating in such a conference and whose work suggests that they would be willing to address these issues. So, I am writing to you to see if you would be interested in participating in such an event. I think we have the theories and arguments to provide answers to emergent phenomena without having to resort to design arguments, but I also think we have to be willing to put our arguments on the line and defend them as well. Let me know if you might be interested in participating. If so, I will let Bruce Gordon know. He will then contact you with regard to support and possible scheduling. Please feel free to ask me any questions that might come to mind.

With very best wishes,

Bruce

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and
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