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The Federal Register for Monday, August 15, 1977 invited comments on regulations regarding the closing of advisory committee meetings. The Society of University Patent Administrators is vitally concerned with this subject insofar as it involves advisory committee meetings at which research proposals are considered and evaluated.

Research proposals generally include research hypotheses, designs and protocols which rightfully belong to and are the property of the proposer. They do not become the property of the Government merely because they are submitted for consideration by an advisory committee. They may well be valuable property, containing the germ of an invention whose public disclosure would seriously damage patent rights. They may provide an important lead to future research whose public disclosure would provide the clue for others, with greater resources or more prestige, to take undue advantage.

For these reasons we would urge that HEW Advisory Committee Meetings be closed to the extent that and whenever such meetings consider research proposals.

cc: SUPA Officers and Trustees
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