

To
Prof. Dr. Benjamin Libet
UCD Center for Neuroscience
(c/o Terry Wright)
1544 Newton Ct
Davis, CA 95616-8768, US

Klagenfurt, June 26th, 2003

Re: Nobel Prize in Psychology 2003

Dear Professor Libet:

Today I am the bearer of very good news: I have the privilege and pleasure to inform you that you have been awarded the "Nobel Prize in Psychology" 2003. Now you will immediately say that there is no such prize, which is in a way true. However, the students in my course "Innovations in Cognitive Psychology" here at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria, agreed with me that our discipline is in strong need of a Nobel Prize, and therefore we just created one – in strict accordance with Alfred Nobel's legacy and with the existing prizes' selection criteria (for instance, it is no problem that you are not a psychologist by training).

Out of several student nominations, you were elected the prize winner of this year in the summer term's closing session of the student Scientific Board (June 18th, 2003). As this is the first (but not the last) time that the prize is being awarded, you are the

first Nobel Laureate in Psychology ever – an excellent choice, I might say (though I had little influence on the process itself, just a single vote like everybody else). The Board explained that the prize goes to Benjamin Libet “for his pioneering achievements in the experimental investigation of consciousness, initiation of action, and free will”.

In the name of the Scientific Board, please let me congratulate dearly to this well-deserved recognition of your work. Although the price unfortunately does not come with a monetary reward, I very much hope that the idealistic value of it pleases you, and that you accept it.

It initially was our plan to also invite the Laureate to give a Nobel Lecture here in Klagenfurt. This, however, probably only makes sense if you could combine it with another trip to Europe in the near future. If not, maybe there is a technically skilled person at your Center who knows how to make bit-stream videos with a simple webcam? One of my students had the idea that as a surrogate for the lecture, you could maybe send us some minutes on digital video (a brief “acceptance speech”?) via e-mail.

Again, Professor Libet, please let me express my warm congratulations to this wonderful success! From now on, the winners of the “Nobel Prize in Psychology” will be featuring on the webpage of our unit (see <http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/psy/cognition/>, English mirror site in preparation), and we will also start with a – not virtual, but real – photo gallery of the Laureates. Prospectively, there will also be some media coverage in Austrian newspapers or magazines.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Vitouch, Ph.D.
Full Professor of Psychology
Head of the Cognitive Psychology Unit

The Representatives of the student Scientific Board:

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