AAU Statement on Human Cloning

The Association of American Universities has a long history of supporting academic and scientific freedom. It also recognizes the importance of conducting research consistent with ethical, legal, and safety requirements.

AAU strongly opposes human reproductive cloning, and supports legislation to ban this practice. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has concluded that cloning procedures are currently not safe for humans and that no responsible scientists or physicians are likely to undertake to clone a human. We generally do not support legislation to limit fields of research, but since some organizations have announced an intention to clone humans, we concur with the NAS that a legal ban is more likely to deter any attempt to clone a human than would any voluntary system or moratorium. The ban should be reconsidered at five-year intervals, based on current scientific knowledge.

In contrast to human reproductive cloning, AAU continues to support both basic and applied stem cell research. AAU therefore supports nuclear transplantation to produce stem cells, also known as somatic cell nuclear transfer, as nonreproductive cloning, and as therapeutic cloning. AAU concurs with the NAS that nuclear transplantation to produce stem cells has considerable potential for advancing our fundamental knowledge and developing new medical therapies to treat debilitating diseases. Continuing the investigation of stem cells produced by nuclear transplantation is the only way to assure that the value of this nascent technology is realized. Before applications to humans should be considered, we need further study of cells derived from the process of nuclear transplantation, subject to federal safeguards. This research should proceed in parallel with other types of stem cell research, including human embryonic and adult stem cell research.

Adopted by the AAU Membership on April 23, 2002.