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G E O D E S I C S, I N C.  
3013 Hillsboro Street  
Raleigh, N. C.

February 11, 1955

Mr. xxxxxx  
xxxx School of Art  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

LIBRARY  
BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL CENTER

Dear Mr. xxxxxx:

Thank you for your letter of January 20th.

I am sure that you must have been unaware that the Geodesic and discontinuous compression structures are covered by U.S.A. and other patents which I hold. During a recent visit to xxxxxxxx I saw your reproduction of a Geodesic structure in front of the xxxxxx School. It is well executed.

This letter will constitute a special license to you authorizing the specific erection of this one dome. Will you please mark the dome on the radial flange surfaces of five of its struts with the following: "Pat. No. 2,682,235". This may be done with water-proof paint or waterproof ink, - or by carving. The letters should be approximately 1/2" high. The lettering should not be placed on the dark struts unless it is lettered with light colored paint. If you know of a slot machine printing device in xxxxxxxx where aluminum printed strips can be had, you may produce the patent marking on such strips and tack them onto the structure.

To date I have had no patent infringement cases in respect to Geodesic structures and am eager to avoid such unhappy events. Your prompt action in response to this letter not only will avoid suit but also will allow your structure to be properly identified in a family of structures which are now increasing at an accelerating pace.

In answer to your request for information regarding discontinuous compression spheres, there are no schools in which distributable information resides. I and my companies, - Geodesics, Inc., Synergetics, Inc., Fuller Research Foundation, and Fuller Research and Development, - are the only licensed proprietors for the development of such structures.

When various universities and schools invite me to conduct courses in industrial philosophy and prototyping strategy, I require that all students voluntarily agree in advance to protect my proprietary rights in respect to my inventions which will be disclosed to them as incidental to leading them into the particular cresting frontier phases of research and development work whose evolution I have fostered.

In return for their pledges I agree to provide them with unreserved, unguarded disclosures of my evolving thoughts concerning unique experiences and emerging inventions. Because it would be

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both unfriendly towards, and frustrating to, the students to expose them to such knowledge regarding ways of obtaining unique technical advantage, while at the same time putting them on notice that they could not practice within the premises, I further agree at the outset to license under my patents all of the students admitted to the course, issuing that license upon satisfactory completion of the course.

The license permits the graduated students to produce one such structure each, either for themselves or for a client. I further agree that should they take advantage of the license and produce a Geodesic structure, - or a discontinuous compression structure, - or an octahedron-tetrahedron truss, - that if they do it in a satisfactory technical manner, so adequately processed as to do credit to the general development of Geodesic structures, - I will, upon their re-application, issue them further specific license permits as the occasion arises provided their records continue as satisfactory. In return, the licensees are to pay such royalty as they individually deem appropriate, the estimate being entirely within their own discretion, it being understood that that royalty should represent a representative fraction of the increment of gain by either the owner or the architect as accruing to the special technical advantages inherent in their Geodesic licensing and use. I agree to apply such royalties to further research and development.

I am enclosing a mimeographed copy of a letter by my assistant, Mr. John Dixon, which discusses the expenses to which I am at present subject in maintaining this structural development and which makes reference also to the expenses which in the past have gone into the development of those advantages which are now identified as either Geodesic structures, discontinuous compression structures, or octahedron-tetrahedron structures, etc. I enclose this item so that you may become aware of the magnitude of inherent responsibilities attached to the developing and maintaining of the unique set of technical advantages which you had unwittingly exploited without license.

The license that I give to the students for a single structure must be reconfirmed in respect to the specific structure they contemplate undertaking, as I am determined that in the early days of Geodesics the common advantage to be gained by their use shall not be impeded by discrediting types of use. For instance, I will not tolerate any Geodesic structures intended to look like oranges for wayside "pop" stands, etc. Individual licenses will be granted only for what promises to be regeneratively accrediting uses.

Licenses to graduated students are nontransferable; that is, no licensee can re-license others to produce, or reproduce, any of the structures of which I am the legally exclusive proprietor.

In granting the single-use licenses to my graduate students no licensing rights accrue to the colleges, schools or universities where I conduct the projects. I visit only those universities and schools that invite me, - upon their own initiative, - to

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visit them. I never propose such visits. When a school invites me to conduct one of my short courses within their domain, I require in advance that they waive any "shop rights" claims upon my patents or design development as exposed or advanced within projects as conducted under their invitation on their premises. If they are not willing to "waive" I cannot afford to bring my lifetime work to them and expose my technical frontiers to loss of control and loss of initiative.

Because of the prominence of the Geodesic structure as now incorporated in the publicly visible design ensemble of the xxxxx School, I must ask that you advise the xxxxx School administration regarding all of the above matters, and thereafter notify me that you have complied with my patent marking and administration informing requests.

I am sure that you will understand that it would be a deliberate betrayal of my relationships with those schools that I do visit and those students whom I have licensed if I were to permit and implement the uninstructed exploitation by other schools of advantages accruing only to the patient, thorough, scientific disciplines fostered by those schools that I have visited, if I were to make technical information available to nonvisited schools to be exploited to their scholastic curricula advantage.

I am intent within the best of my abilities to foster within the world of design the same integrity of development which characterizes the front line events of scientific exploration wherein infinite respect and meticulous accounting of the work of others is practiced by all to the enormous mutual advantage of all.

The professional fields of writing and music have long ago been forced by needs of mutual welfare to adopt legal means of protecting individuals' rights. Because books and sheet music, or records were mass-produced and involved substantial tooling cost and commercial risk, all of which was easy to regulate by law, the author-composer protection was easily effected.

Only in the field of personally articulated arts of design, painting, dance, and teaching is medieval piracy as yet rampant, - even "accepted" as a necessary and realistic evil.

Our society is on historical trial and if we are not able, as individuals, to discern the necessity of initiating the integrity that protects all other individuals and fosters their every contribution to team play for second derivative integration toward common advantage, we will come rapidly to history's negative verdict.

I assure you that I am in no way charging you with any lack of integrity whatsoever. Your letter is a clear declaration of integrity. Because I admire you for your integrity of action I also seek to enlist your aid.

What I am doing is taking this occasion to show that there are feasible and logical procedures which avoid trespassing while at

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the same time developing common artist-initiator as well as public advantage. I hope that we may thus accelerate the development of effective awareness amongst schools and designers that it is advantageous to adopt personal disciplines leading to increased popularity of self-policing, - thus avoiding droary and unenforceable professional-ethics policing codes. I am not favorably impressed with school disciplines that teach otherwise innocent students to make pathetic attempts to out-Mies Mies while overlooking the energetic and economic fundamentals governing development of truly evolutionary design initiative, and design responsibility.

Faithfully yours,

GEODESICS, INCORPORATED

R. Buckminster Fuller  
President

RBF:D:B

XXXXXXXXX SCHOOL OF ART  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

FEBRUARY 23, 1955

MR. R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER  
GEODESICS INCORPORATED  
3013 HILLSBORO STREET  
RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR MR. FULLER:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 11.

THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR ISSUING ME THE SPECIAL LICENSE AUTHORIZING THE ERECTION OF THE DOME. WE HAVE INSCRIBED PATENT NO. 2,682,235 AS DIRECTED.

AS REQUESTED I HAVE INFORMED THE ADMINISTRATION. HOWEVER, THE GRAVE IRRESPONSIBILITY WAS TOTALLY ON MY PART.

I HAVE ALSO TAKEN THE LIBERTY TO QUOTE YOUR LETTER AND DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS OF MY IRRESPONSIBILITY WITH THE SMALL GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO CONSTRUCTED THE DOME.

IT WAS MY ENTHUSIASTIC BUT INCOMPLETELY STRUCTURED ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE TO THIS GROUP OF STUDENTS THE MORE COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF DESIGN. THE ATTEMPT INEVITABLY LED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF FEW OF THE ARTICLES WRITTEN BY YOU ABOUT YOUR CONCEPTS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CONSTRUCTIONS EXECUTED UNDER YOUR DIRECTION. IT WAS THE STUDENTS' CURIOSITY TO ACTUALLY "SEE THE THINGS WORK" THAT INITIATED OUR PROJECT. IT WAS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO TEACH THE STUDENTS "TO MAKE PATHETIC ATTEMPTS TO OUT-MIES MIES". I ASSURE YOU THAT SUCH AN ATTITUDE DID NOT ORIGINATE DURING OUR ATTEMPT. ACTUALLY, THE PROJECT CONCRETELY DEMONSTRATED THE ILLOGICALITY OF OUR ATTEMPT. SOME OF THE STUDENTS, SINCE THEN, HAVE STARTED ON NIGHT COURSES IN MATHEMATICS. WE HAVE ALSO INITIATED AN EXTRA-CURRICULAR READING PROGRAM OF A MODEST SCOPE.

THIS IS MY FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING. THIS IS ALSO THE FIRST YEAR XXXXXXXX SCHOOL OF ART IS UNDER A NEW ADMINISTRATION. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION PROMOTED ANY DEFINITE PROGRAM IN THE CURRICULA WHICH MAY HAVE LOGICALLY APPROACHED A COSMIC VIEWPOINT. THIS RECENT IRRESPONSIBLE ACT FURTHER INDICATES MY OWN INADEQUACIES. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT MORE LOGICALLY AND BY MORE FEASIBLE PROCEDURES A DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM WHICH MAY EVENTUALLY QUALIFY US TO INVITE YOU FOR A LECTURE OR SHORT COURSE PROGRAM.

AS THE CURRICULA STANDS THE SO-CALLED INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STUDENTS HERE ARE NOT GIVEN ANY COURSE IN MATHEMATICS, ECONOMICS, SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY, ETC. BY MY OWN LIMITED INITIATIVE I HOPE THAT THESE WILL BE ADDED TO THEIR PROGRAM. MY HOPE IS THAT THE PRESENT EXTRACURRICULAR STUDY PROGRAM WILL EXPAND INTO SUCH. I BELIEVE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL FAVOR SUCH AN ADDITION.

IF IT IS NOT ALREADY INFRINGING OVERLY ON YOUR KINDNESS, COULD YOU INFORM ME AS TO WHAT YOU MAY CONSIDER TO BE THE MINIMAL BACKGROUND IN MATHEMATICS, ECONOMICS, ETC. UPON WHICH BASE YOU MAY PROFITABLY COMMUNICATE TO THE STUDENTS.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR LETTER.

I HOPE THAT I MAY EVOLVE IN MY OWN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT TO CONTRIBUTE CONCRETELY TO YOUR INTENT AND DIRECTION TO WHICH YOU EXERT TOTAL ENERGY. MY DEEPEST APOLOGY FOR THIS RECENT IRRESPONSIBILITY.

FAITHFULLY YOURS,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,  
INSTRUCTOR