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Dear ORU Review Committee,

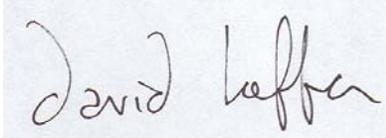
I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the continued funding the Center of Information Technology Research (CITR). In terms of securing external research funding, the record of achievement that Prof. Dongarra and his team of professionals at CITR have established is well known to the UTK research community. But what should be better known, and what I hope that ORU reviewers will take into account, is the impact that CITR is also having on *educational* initiatives that are critical to keeping UTK at the forefront of higher education in the 21st Century.

In particular, the work of CITR in spearheading and coordinating a faculty-led effort to create the *Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science (IGMCS)* is extremely important to UTK's ongoing academic competitiveness. It is clear that nearly all fields of science and engineering are becoming more computational with each passing year, and the sooner our curriculums focus on this fact, the more prepared our students will be to meet the future. The IGMCS is the only university wide program to begin addressing this critical need in a comprehensive way and this work is already bearing fruit. As the leader of the UT Computational Materials Research Group, I have made it a matter of routine that all graduate students in my group participate in the IGMCS program. Before the IGMCS program began, I was responsible for all of the extracurricular education of these graduate students in the various computational elements of the research, including parallel programming and data visualization. Now that the IGMCS program has opened courses in the graduate-level courses in the Computer Science program to my students, a more thorough and state-of-the-art exposure to this material.

The presence of the IGMCS also played an important role in the success of our recent NSF IGERT proposal to create a program in *Sustainable Technology through Advanced Interdisciplinary Research (STAIR)* at UTK. Those STAIR students involved in computational research tasks will participate in the IGMCS, so the work that CITR staff does for the IGMCS, and in turn, the support that the University gives to CITR, make an important contribution to the education of these students.

Given their record of achievement and the quality of their staff, I have every confidence that CITR will continue to make outstanding contributions to UTK in both research and education, and therefore urge you to give them your strong support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Keffer". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured paper background.

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