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Dear ORU Reviewers,

As someone with first hand experience of the value that the Center for Information Technology Research (CITR) brings to UTK, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to urge that CITR continue to receive strong support from the University in 2009. The success of our recent NSF IGERT proposal for a next-generation graduate program combining leading edge biological research and computing expertise — SCALE-IT — was due in no small measure to the support, both practical and programmatic, that we received from CITR. I view CITR's continuing role in that effort as critically important.

Practically speaking, Prof. Dongarra and his CITR team contributed directly to the development of the proposal, helping to develop the innovative ideas that made the SCALE-IT proposal successful and to formulate the prose in which they were expressed. Programmatically, the existence of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science (IGMCS) was essential to the credibility of our SCALE-IT proposal in terms of providing training in Computational Science for biology graduate students. A key part of the SCALE-IT plan is that all SCALE-IT students will participate in the IGMCS and minor in Computational Science. But the IGMCS is an interdisciplinary program that is not housed in and does not receive administrative support from any particular academic department. It relies completely on CITR's staff to provide all such support and, consequently, SCALE-IT relies on CITR as well.

In both research and education, the field of Biology generally, like nearly every scientific field, is being revolutionized by high performance computing and computational methods. As our experience with SCALE-IT shows, having CITR and its highly experienced team already in place gives UTK a major competitive advantage in this area. I therefore strongly encourage the University to continue its support for this critical organization.



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