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TO Jack Dongarra
Distinguished Professor, Dept. of Computer Science

FROM Soren Sorensen
Head, Department of Physics

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S.S.", with a horizontal line underneath.

DATE April 7, 2006

RE: *Support for the proposed Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science*

It is a pleasure for me on behalf of the Department of Physics and Astronomy to enthusiastically support the proposed Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science. Computational Science has over the last couple of decades emerged as one of the most important fields of science. In the Department of Physics and Astronomy many of our best researchers are completely relying on advanced computational techniques to do their research and many of our graduate students are in the same situation. Furthermore, each year we have several students requesting more formal training in computational methods. Both the fundamentals which can best be learned from Computer Science or Mathematics or more practical applications best learned from departments outside of Physics. In addition, we have developed a special graduate course in Computational Physics, which is very popular.

The proposed graduate minor brings all this together in a very well designed manner. The faculty in our department is very supportive. There is in my mind no doubt that if UT does not approve this minor in Computational Science, we will be left behind by nearby competitors like Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech, Florida, etc. Combined with the fact that many of our graduate students in this program will benefit from the close interactions in this field with ORNL, this degree will make us very competitive for computationally inclined graduate students independent of their discipline.

In summary, this proposal represents a large cross-disciplinary effort on the UT campus with support from all the major departmental stakeholders. In particular, the Department of Physics and Astronomy is supporting this as strongly as possible. It simply has to be a reality soon!