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January 22, 2008

Representative Kathy Haigh
WA State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: In Support of the University of Washington's eScience Institute

Dear Representative Haigh,

On behalf of Google, I strongly support the University of Washington's 2008 supplemental budget request for the eScience Institute Initiative. The proposed work is directly in line with the new style of "cloud computing" that is allowing companies like Google to solve massive problems at unprecedented scale. The University of Washington's initiative is particularly compelling because it will bring the advantages of cloud computing to the scientific community. Like Google, the scientific community benefits from being able to analyze giant data sets using thousands of processors, but to date, the hardware and software infrastructure appropriate for this new style of scientific computing has not yet been built. With this initiative, the University of Washington can put itself at the forefront of these new technologies.

The University of Washington and Google are working together in a number of ways already, and I expect that this initiative will strengthen the bonds of the two organizations, benefitting students and faculty at the University of Washington, and the state as a whole. First, the eScience Institute will allow UW to build on the existing UW/Google/IBM Cloud Initiative, which is now being duplicated nationwide at other leading institutions such as MIT and Stanford. Today, UW students and faculty are benefitting from this program by means of new courses and new research. Second, the eScience Institute will create a forum in which Google scientists and engineers can collaborate with UW researchers. With Google's new Seattle R&D site in Fremont, just 1.5 miles from the University, the opportunity for collaboration is tremendous. Although the new Seattle R&D site is less than 3 months old, we are already hosting several UW student interns, are supporting a number of courses and research efforts, and expect to provide partial or full sabbatical support for a number of faculty researchers. Lastly, the eScience Institute will equip undergraduate and graduate students with the technology foundations necessary for them to join the high tech workforce in the State of Washington.

I offer my support for this initiative as both the Director of Google's new Seattle R&D site in Fremont, and as a former faculty member at the University of Washington. After 13 years as a member of the UW faculty, I joined Google to help it grow a significant R&D effort here in the Puget Sound region while working closely with the tremendous research talent at the University. Although Google does not make predictions about its long term hiring plans, it is the case that the company has gone from 2 to over 400 employees in the Puget Sound region since 2005, and that the new Seattle office represents a significant investment in future growth. Historically, the University has been a tremendous source of high quality computer scientists for Google, originally in California and now right here in the Northwest, where a significant percentage of Google's engineers come from the University of Washington. As the company's presence in the Northwest expands, so too does the opportunity for UW graduates. The eScience Institute will prepare future UW graduates for employment not only at Google, but also at the many other high tech companies in the Northwest.

Sincerely



Dr. Brian Bershad
Director, Google Seattle