Bill Grinstein
Chair

Ann Daley
Executive Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
917 Lakeridge Way • PO Box 43430 • Olympia, WA 98504-3430 • (360) 753-7800 • FAX (360) 753-7808 • www.hecb.wa.gov

January 31, 2008

The Honorable Helen Sommers
House Appropriations, Chair
Washington State House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Dear Representative Sommers:

As you may be aware, the University of Washington has requested funding in the supplemental budget for a proposed "eScience" Institute Initiative. The goal of the proposal is broadly to enhance the capacity of scientists across the UW campus to use rapidly developing computational techniques. Even many of the best scientists are not well versed in how to use the vast amounts of data now becoming available to extract knowledge.

The initial focus of the proposal is to quickly equip the UW to successfully earn a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant of $130 million to launch the NEPTUNE project. This supplemental budget request merits consideration due to the urgency of the pending grant application, and the UW's need to rapidly enhance its capabilities in computational knowledge extraction techniques in order to be awarded NSF funding. NEPTUNE would place thousands of sensors on the ocean floor off the Washington Coast and transmit enormous volumes of data that UW scientists would analyze and interpret with potential application to our knowledge about greenhouse gases, earthquakes and tsunamis, weather forecasting, and management of fish stocks.

This budget request of $2,025,000 by UW was presented and discussed at the meeting of the Higher Education Coordinating Board last week. It is the sense of the Board that the request deserves the support of the Legislature. First, a state investment here could serve as strategic leverage to attract the NEPTUNE project. While environmental sciences and the NEPTUNE project are the initial focus of the initiative, over time this first step is likely to generate spin-off benefits, likely spawning additional research grants and higher quality scientific research broadly across many disciplines.

Second, the value of the eScience Institute also lies in the resulting capacity of UW to stimulate more academic focus on math and science not only on campus but also in the K-12 system, where students may become more stimulated and better prepared in these fields. We can also become better equipped to attract a more diverse student population

to UW, higher education, and to study in math and the sciences, through these sorts of initiatives – all important policy objectives of the HECB.

Sincerely,

Bill Grinstein

Cc: HECB members
Ann Daley, HECB Executive Director
The Honorable Hans Dunshee
The Honorable Gary Alexander
The Honorable Deb Wallace
Victor Moore, OFM Director

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January 31, 2008

The Honorable Margarita Prentice
Senate Ways & Means, Chair
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40411
Olympia, WA 98504-0411

Dear Senator Prentice:

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Sincerely,

Bill Grinstein

Cc: HECB members
Ann Daley, HECB Executive Director
The Honorable Craig Pridemore
The Honorable Joseph Zarelli
The Honorable Paull Shin
Victor Moore, OFM Director