

O'DONNELL FOUNDATION

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July 20, 2000

Dr. Larry R. Faulkner  
President  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, Texas 78712

Dear Larry:

It is with great pleasure that I will deliver, on behalf of the O'Donnell Foundation, the signed Deed of Gift of the ACES Building to The University of Texas System on Wednesday, July 26, 2000. Before doing so, however, I want to put in writing my expectations for the building.

**Purpose of the Building**

The ACES Building is to function as an interdisciplinary research center for faculty, graduate students and visitors in computational science and engineering, mathematical modeling, applied mathematics, software engineering and computational visualization. The discoveries they will make through research will be important to the University, to the State of Texas and to the nation. The graduate students they educate will be our future faculty members, industry researchers and high tech entrepreneurs. Taken all together, the ACES faculty and graduate students will contribute to our economic well being by creating jobs for the citizens of Texas.

Since the level of research in the building requires engineers and scientists of demonstrated ability, it is intended to give UT-Austin the edge in recruiting outstanding faculty and graduate students. The building's most important product will be excellent graduate students.

**Use of Space**

When fully occupied, the building will accommodate 300 graduate students and 70 faculty members. In addition, it will accommodate 36 visitors from academe and industry. These visitor offices are to be a permanent feature of the building to attract world leaders in science and engineering to the campus. Further, these visitor offices are not to be converted or occupied by University faculty, graduate students or staff.

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The building will also house a generous number of post docs and staff who are directly involved in the interdisciplinary research being conducted in ACES. The building is not designed to house undergraduate students or service departments of the University, or faculty and students not involved in the ACES research mission.

### **Expansion Space**

Approximately 30,000 gross square feet on the fourth floor of the building have been shelled in to provide expansion space for research labs and academic offices. In addition, on opening day there will be 2500 square feet of finished-out expansion space on the third and fifth floors and 750 square feet in the basement to accommodate future donations of large equipment, for a total of 3250 square feet of expansion space that is already finished-out.

### **Allocation of Space**

I want to be clear about my expectations for the allocation of space in ACES because I believe that the University has a unique opportunity to set a new standard for academic buildings on its campus that could serve as a model for other universities. It is my strong recommendation that the University adopt a policy in ACES to award "term leases" of three to five years based on research contracts. The leases would be renewable. Under this system, no one individual or department "owns" any part of the building. Space would be allocated to the most productive faculty, measured by peer-reviewed research grants and graduate degrees awarded. I think this is key to achieving two goals stated in your January 5, 1999 memorandum to the University leadership: (1) develop "operational values, structures, and habits that will allow the University to make the most of the ACES Building for a very long time into the future," and (2) the ACES Building will become "a highly visible symbol for the University's leading-edge computing-intensive activity."

### **Leadership for ACES**

I commend you for assigning general responsibility for management and operation of the ACES Building to a senior officer, Vice President for Research, Dr. Juan Sanchez. He has already demonstrated outstanding leadership in developing the governance structure for the building.

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### **Technology Systems**

I commend you also for appointing a Director for Information Technology in a timely way during construction of the building. Dr. Kurt Bartelmehs made invaluable contributions to the design of the technology systems and has overseen installation and testing of the equipment.

This facility is technologically intensive. Our mandate to the architectural team for the technology infrastructure was:

- State of the art equipment and systems that stay state of the art
- User-friendly systems
- Capacity for growth
- The ability to upgrade quickly and economically
- Flexibility to efficiently handle change and unexpected developments.

Operating and maintaining the infrastructure in ACES will not only require competent staff, it will also require a suitable operating budget.

### **Inspections:**

We insisted on outside inspections for every phase of construction. The University was urged to participate in all inspections of record, as well as conduct their own independent inspections. From my observation, they did that. As the building is occupied, it is normal to expect that problems may develop that we did not detect during construction. I hope they are minimal, but we do not want this to be a surprise to anyone.

### **Research Vision for ACES**

In February 1998, under the leadership of Interim President Peter T. Flawn, Dr. Tinsley Oden, Director of TICAM, Dr. Francis Bostick, Chairman of Electrical and Computing Engineering and Dr. Ben Kuipers, Chairman of Computer Sciences jointly wrote and adopted a Vision Statement for the ACES Building. It describes the advanced research to be conducted in ACES, and its importance to the University, Texas and to the nation. I endorse their vision and would like for that statement to become a permanent part of the file describing the terms and conditions by which I donate the building to the University. It is attached.

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This vision statement makes it clear that ACES is first and foremost an interdisciplinary research facility. It is also a University facility. In time, this will create campus wide requests for use of the ACES research facilities. For this reason, there must be careful oversight to be sure the ACES research facilities, and especially the Visualization Labs, are dedicated to legitimate research activities as described in the vision statement. It is my hope also that there will be a suitable budget to manage the scientific programs of the facility.

### **University Leadership**

Because of your vision and that of Dr. Peter Flawn, both as Interim President and President Emeritus, this project set bold new precedents and established a new model for campus construction. Your strong support throughout the project, as well as the wise counsel and support of Charles Franklin and Patti Ohlendorf, has enabled the O'Donnell Foundation to build a better building for the University. We are extremely grateful to all of you.

I am confident that under your leadership the research and graduate programs in ACES will enable The University to become the best in computational and applied mathematics and stay the best.

With great appreciation,

Sincerely yours,

Peter O'Donnell, Jr.

Enclosure

Cc: Dr. Peter T. Flawn  
Dr. Juan Sanchez