UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

January 20, 2014

Dear Professor Slaybaugh,

I am writing to enthusiastically express my support for the proposal "The Impact of Intensive Software Skills Training on Students' Scientific Careers" that you and your colleagues are submitting to the NSF's "Improving Undergraduate STEM Education" program. As your proposal points out, one of the major bottlenecks in scientific computing today is a lack of computing proficiency among would-be practitioners: while scientists now have direct access to computing resources vastly more powerful than those available in the past, most of them have not been trained to use them effectively to accelerate their research.

The Software Carpentry project has proven to be a very practical and wildly effective way to address this problem. The workshops we have run here at the University of Washington through the eScience Institute have been enormously popular: For the first offering, we had 160 responses within the first few *hours* of sending the announcement to our on-campus eScience mailing list. We ended up running three concurrent classes of 35+ students each and carrying forward a waitlist of well over 100 people. We ran another event a few months later and have a third event scheduled for this March – Software Carpentry events have become part of our "standard portfolio" of educational activities, and was featured as a core educational activity in our successful proposal for a $12.5M award from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Should this proposal be accepted, we would hope to host workshops for our high-achieving undergraduate students. I therefore extend my strong support to this proposal, and urge you to accept it.

Sincerely,

Bill Howe, Phd
Associate Director
University of Washington eScience Institute
Affiliate Assistant Professor
Computer Science and Engineering