

## In support of Ph.D. program in Computational Mathematics at UNCG

Merkx, Peter <merkx@wfu.edu>

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To:Stephen Tate <srtate@uncg.edu>

Dear Franklin Gilliam,

In my stays in higher education positions at Wesleyan University, Wake Forest University, the University of California, Davis, and the University of California, Santa Barbara, I have found that mathematics, statistics, and computer science departments' degree programs play a critical role in shaping the broader structure of each of these universities' operations. The NRC graduate program rankings in particular consider a variety of factors that are even when indirectly still closely tied to whether an institution offers graduate programs in mathematics and which such programs are available. Those rankings in turn affect the overall funding and other ranking of the university in non-trivial ways.

While it may be tempting to view shorter term budgetary concerns ahead of long term effects of the presence of such programs, I would caution against underestimating the role that having such a program has on UNCG as a whole, not in the least due to which working mathematicians, computer scientists, physicists, and other quantitative professionals might be willing to join the institution. As a faculty member presently of a university without a PhD program in mathematics who has heard various considerations from our department's members as we weigh forming such a program moving forward, to hear that UNCG will work in the opposite direction by working towards a plan to abolish such a program appears to my read as a very poor decision for the long term aims of UNCG.

Sincerely,

Peter R. Merkx, Ph.D.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Wake Forest University