

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA



VICE PRESIDENT
FOR RESEARCH

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: Coast Architects, Inc.

I recently submitted a construction grant application to the U.S. Department of Commerce and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Our application proposed the construction of an Imaging Institute (Image X) which would merge imaging sciences, covering the breadth of disciplines from medical to engineering to environmental, into one facility on the University of South Alabama's main campus. We had a short window of opportunity to submit our application which included an extremely complex building design program, and required detailed architectural design drawings. Coast Architects, led by Phillip Owens and Bill Partridge, worked closely with head scientists from 6 scientific thematic areas, including: Biomedical, Materials, Sensors, Mathematical, Image Processing, and Vision.

Our program called for support of faculty, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows from Earth Sciences, Marine Sciences, Mathematics, Chemistry, Medicine, Computer Sciences, Engineering, Psychology, and our very own Cancer Institute. Our program required that the imaging equipment from these diverse science sectors be combined into one facility to promote scientific collaboration between the different fields of study. The equipment—from the visible to the electromagnetic spectrum—to ultrasound—to electromagnetic waves—required the technologies, technical staff, and computing resources to be co-located to maximize support for faculty and graduate research and development programs. The creation of Image X is expected to be a major stimulus to bring core research programs and technologies together in unique combinations, but had to be fully justified to the funding agencies as a facility that will allow our campus to accomplish scientific works and graduate education that cannot currently be accomplished using our existing infrastructure. The building design had to intuitively lead the reviewer to the conclusion that Image X was something innovative, unique, and fundamentally related to the activities planned for the building.

Coast Architects listened to our ambitious program, understood the myriad of complex ideas and requirements, and assisted us in creating a facility that merged all of these requirements from the diversified science sectors to required space for collaborations to occur. Based upon my experience with this group, I give them my highest approval and recommendation and look forward to working with them in the future on other projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Russ Lea'.

Russ Lea, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research