



September 27, 2001

Dr. Ken Kennedy
Director, Center for High Performance Software Research
MS - 41
Rice University
6100 S. Main St.
Houston, TX 77005

Dear Dr. Kennedy:

As founder of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), I eagerly look forward to the opportunity to collaborate on the Education and Outreach programs of the proposed National Science Foundation Science and Technology Center (STC), Center for Grid Application Development Software (CGrADS), to be headquartered at Rice University. As you know, since 1989, FIRST has existed with an imperative, singular focus: to excite more young people about the fun, accessibility, and importance of science and engineering. FIRST is a non-profit organization founded to interest and inspire students in mathematics, science and technology - we work toward these goals through programs such as the FIRST Robotics Competition, the FIRST Place Science and Technology Center, and the FIRST LEGO League. Our reach is extensive and our growth is phenomenal. In 2001, FIRST sponsored 14 competitions in 42 states, and our participant numbers have expanded to more than 20,000 team members.

One of our challenges is to engage many more students in our FIRST activities from those groups currently underrepresented in the sciences. It is in this realm that I see the proposed CGRADS making an impact on FIRST programs. I am very aware of the experience and expertise in diversity matters among the proposed program staff at Rice. I am so confident that FIRST can benefit from this experience that I propose collaboration with CGRADS where Richard Tapia and his staff work with FIRST to implement policies that will significantly increase participation of underrepresented groups. As I said when I met with you, Richard, and your staff recently in Houston, I am willing to devote FIRST resources to augment CGRADS' efforts to implement this initiative. The FIRST/CGRADS relationship can create an almost immediate impact on thousands of students all across the country.

Respectfully,



Dean Kamen

FOR INSPIRATION AND RECOGNITION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY