April 4, 2010

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dr. Neal Smatresk
Office of the President
Box 451001
4505 S. Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1001

Dear Dr. Smatresk:

I couldn't have been more upset when I learned that the School of Informatics was included in the shortlist of schools/programs being considered for elimination. It is clear to me that there is a serious misunderstanding of the importance that this school has in the Las Vegas hospitality and gaming industry. The local Information Technology (IT) community, with participation from numerous Las Vegas hotel/casinos, has invested a great deal of time and effort to help refine a truly great school that supports our business needs. Not only would the elimination of this school greatly disadvantage the local IT community, but it will fundamentally undermine the opportunity for Las Vegas businesses to hire and grow local IT talent.

As an active advisory board member for the School of Informatics, I am personally committed to the success of the school. In addition to donating equipment and contributing to the curriculum direction, I have participated as a guest speaker to help students better understand demands and challenges that local business are faced with. I am also looking forward to internship opportunities where eager students can help tackle real-world IT/business challenges while at the same time better preparing themselves for local employment directly following graduation.

We so desperately need local undergraduates and graduates with an education in the specific areas that the School of Informatics covers. There simply isn't a better program available to address these needs locally. I fear that elimination of this school will further handicap our business' ability to hire and grow local talent. I strongly urge you to reconsider your position and do what is right for the university, prospective students, and the local business community - Remove the School of Informatics from the elimination list.

Sincerely,

James Houghton
Vice President and Chief Information Officer
Wynn|Encore