

Professor \_\_\_\_\_  
Department of \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
The University of Tennessee

Dear Prof. \_\_\_\_\_ :

In February of 2016, Darwin Day Tennessee will be hosting the annual Darwin Day event at the University of Tennessee. UT has historically counted itself among the most active institutions in promoting evolution education, with a tradition of Darwin Day events stretching back to 1997. While Darwin Day's "home" department is Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, we would like to ask for the continued assistance of your department in funding this valuable mission and making the 2016 event the best yet.

Darwin Day is a week-long event held around the time of Charles Darwin's birthday. Our mission is to promote awareness of evolution's importance to the study of biology and to our lives, to showcase science being done at UT and elsewhere, and to emphasize how vital the teaching of evolution is. For 2016, we are planning a three night lecture series, a birthday party for Charles Darwin (cohosted by the McClung Museum), field trips, public school visits, art contests, and a teachers workshop all centered around this year's theme: paleontology. Darwin Day has already raised enough funds for 2016 to create fossil kits for every elementary school in Knox County to teach students about the paleontological history of our region of the country. We intend to reach an audience that encompasses both science and non-science departments on campus, and the Knoxville community at large. For our keynote speaker in 2016, we are in the process of securing Dr. Neil Shubin, best selling author of *Your Inner Fish* and recent star of a PBS mini series. The University of Tennessee's Student Programming Allocation Committee has provided a generous amount to aid in covering most, but not all, of the speaker's fee.

As coordinators for Darwin Day Tennessee, we are asking the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ for a suggested financial contribution of \$250 to help host Darwin Day. We are requesting modest amounts from numerous sources around campus because we believe the topic is pertinent to many University programs. As recognition for support, we will officially acknowledge contributors on our website (<http://darwindaytn.org/>) and during the event itself. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sheffield and Jennifer Bauer  
Program Coordinators, Darwin Day Tennessee