

Public Testimony – March 27, 2013

by Ashtyn Moehlenhoff

Co-chair Monroe, Co-chair Komp, and members of the committee – my name is Ashtyn Moehlenhoff. I graduated from Oregon State University a year ago and have been working as a software engineer at Garmin in Salem, Oregon since I graduated. My education at OSU helped me become a successful software engineer in a variety of ways, but most of all, I feel like my senior design project prepared me for success the most.

The senior design project at OSU is a three term class where students work in teams on a large scale project for a customer. My team consisted of me and my friend, Amber, who was also a computer science student and now works as a software engineer in Portland, Oregon. We created a medical iPhone application that helps users keep track of their medications and medical history. The senior design class guided us through all of the aspects of software engineering including:

- figuring out the requirements for our project by meeting with our customer and potential users
- figuring out the technical details for how to design our application and building it
- constantly testing and refining our application to make it better

The senior design class taught Amber and I how to develop a project from start to finish. We also learned a lot about communicating in the business world and interacting with customers. When Amber and I started looking for jobs, we found that our senior design project was a great talking point to show employers our skills. We were able to show them that we were well-rounded students who not only had technical skills, but also possessed the business and communication skills that are equally important to employers. The project was a great way to wrap all of the skills we had learned in our four years of college into one project.

During my senior year, I attended one of the engineering career fairs at OSU with my fiancé, Alex, who was an Electrical and Computer Engineering student at OSU with me. We met a representative from Garmin that day, and they were so impressed with both of us that they called us the next day for an interview. After several interviews and three months before we graduated, we accepted jobs with Garmin. Now we are both living in Salem and enjoying working at Garmin as software engineers. We are both very thankful for the education that OSU provided us because it helped us get where we are today. Unfortunately, OSU has more qualified lower division students than the current faculty can support in upper division classes¹ like the senior design class. More funding to ETIC programs would help ensure that more students have the same opportunities that my friend Amber, my fiancé Alex, and I were able to take advantage of. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

References

¹ "ETIC Project Proposal" submitted September 7, 2012: http://www.oregonetic.org/13-15/RFP/GL/OSU_FacultyInvestmentFund10-12-12.pdf