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February 25, 2015

Representative Tobias Read
House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development
900 Court St NE H-286
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Talent Council (House Bill 2728)

Dear Chair Read and Members of the Committee,

This letter is written in strong support of the Oregon Talent Council. The Council's predecessor, the Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC) has played an important role in Oregon's engineering education and workforce development.
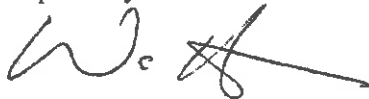
ETIC funding allowed Portland State University (PSU) to collaborate with Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) to develop a Computer Science transfer program, aimed at allowing Gorge residents to complete their first two years of Computer Science study at CGCC before transferring to PSU.

The funding from ETIC allowed the PSU Computer Science Department to place an experienced PSU faculty member on-campus at CGCC to both help develop a transferable curriculum, as well as mentor their new, young Computer Science instructor during the Fall 2014 quarter. It is unlikely this collaboration could have occurred without support from ETIC.

While some of the CGCC students that transfer to PSU or other institutions of higher education in Oregon may well end up with careers in the Willamette Valley, many are just as likely to return home and support the growing Gorge technology industry.

It is critical that Oregon continues to have a resource such as the Oregon Talent Council to foster and invest in initiatives such as the PSU-CGCC collaboration. This both increases the opportunities available to Oregon residents throughout the State as well as expands the depth and distribution of our high tech talent pool. On the other hand, it is equally important that support for the OTC does not come at the expense of the ETIC Base Funding for Higher Education.

Respectfully,

Warren Harrison, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair of
    PSU Computer Science

Frank K. Toda
President,
    Columbia Gorge Community College