

From: [Keren Wilson](#)
To: [JWMCC Exhibits](#)
Cc: [Keren Wilson](#)
Subject: Adding Capital Funding for PSU's Vernier Science Center to HB5201
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2020 2:53:54 PM

To: Honorable Fred Girod and Paul Holvey, Co-Chairs
Members, Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Re: Adding Capital Funding for PSU's Vernier Science Center to HB 5201

My name is Keren Brown Wilson and I am Vice Chair of the Executive Committee for Portland State University Foundation Board and an alumni of PSU ('83). It is my honor to serve on the PSUF Board because I am committed to and passionate about the success of Portland State University, and more importantly, its students.

I am writing today to express deep support for the renovation of PSU's undergraduate science building. I am so appreciative of the \$4.5 million pledge Christine and Dave Vernier recently made to PSU to support this project. The Verniers' pledge reminds me of the commitment my husband, Michael DeShane, also an alumni, and I made in 1997 to help construct PSU's College of Urban and Public Affairs. That building also required help from the State to come to fruition and currently houses some of the University's award winning degree programs.

My husband and I represent two of the numerous success stories for a University ranked as the #1 Oregon University for Social Mobility. I am the daughter of a coal miner and he is the son of a waitress. We are first generation college students and the only ones in our family with advanced degrees. The support we received from PSU helped make that possible. Since our graduation we have started a business and employed hundreds of people all over the state. Many of those employees have benefited from the opportunities offered by PSU. The same is true for many other local and regional businesses who seek PSU graduates. It is no accident that INTEL, OHSU and NIKE are big employers of PSU students. A new science building will help keep graduating students with the skills employers are seeking in today's workforce.

We strongly believe that our education played an integral role in our business success. Our belief is so strong in the importance of providing access to students like ourselves that over more a decade we have provided scholarships to 27 students transferring from Clackamas Community College to help them finish their 4 year degrees at PSU.

The Vernier Science Center project is not just another capital request. This is about opportunity for new generations of students. More than half of PSU's STEM students are first generation and low income. They need a facility that has the capacity to address the radically changing education for those working on health and science degrees. And Oregon needs them to be educated in a way that will meet its workforce needs.

Lastly let me say I know how hard the Legislature works and the pressure it faces, especially to get so much done in a short session. I am not unaware of the sacrifices that members of the Committee make to get this work done. Thank you for your commitment and service to our magnificent State.

Sincerely,
Keren Brown Wilson, PhD

JFRF

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