



TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION
OF OREGON

April 28, 2021

Re: Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund and Oregon Operating Grant

Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Technology Association of Oregon (TAO) to request that you maintain funding for the Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF) and Oregon Operating Grant (OOG) and, if possible, consider increasing funding.

TAO aims to establish Oregon as a world-class, inclusive innovation economy. We work with nearly 500 tech and tech-enabled companies in Oregon, ranging from some of the largest technology companies in the world to early-stage startups. Our programs focus on helping companies to grow and remain competitive, and we have a particular emphasis on talent, capital, and the business environment.

The engineering and computer science programs at public universities in Oregon are an essential resource for our members. Tech is one of the few sectors that will help to lead the state's economy out of the COVID-19 crisis, and many of our members have continued to hire people throughout the pandemic. As companies in other sectors seek to become more competitive and resilient, the vast majority are doing so using technology, and they need tech workers as a result. To be sure, half of all tech jobs in Oregon are at non-tech companies.

Since 1997, ETSF support has resulted in a tripling of the number of engineering graduates in the state. Interest in tech careers is growing among K-12 students nationally, and that is also true here in Oregon. High school students have watched as tech companies have largely thrived during the pandemic, and we need to ensure that Oregon students from all backgrounds and geographies are able to get access to high-wage, resilient careers offered by the tech industry.

If the legislature cuts the engineering programs, the colleges will likely limit student access and reduce degree choices and course offerings, leading to an increase in the student time to graduation. Reductions will cause the state-supported engineering colleges to produce fewer qualified engineers and computer scientists and shrink the important research missions at our universities. Each engineering program is working proactively to improve recruitment and retention and building collaborative opportunities to meet anticipated demands. Disinvesting in engineering would stifle this creativity.

Additionally, the OOG is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based grant program for college students. It is the state's only need-based aid program. Approximately 40,000 students receive Opportunity Grants each year, yet funding limitations have meant that the grant is not available to thousands of students who demonstrate significant financial need. Funding for the OOG should be increased in order to provide a realistic possibility of college affordability for Oregon's low- and middle-income students.



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State investments in student financial aid aren't just investments in our students--they're investments in our future workforce.

Strong engineering programs and need-based grant programs are critical to the development of Oregon's workforce and Oregon's economy. We therefore respectfully request that members of the committee maintain funding for ETSF and the OOG and consider increasing funding, if possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Skip Newberry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Skip Newberry

President & CEO, Technology Association of Oregon