



May 6, 2021

The Honorable Lew Frederick, Co-Chair
The Honorable Susan McLain, Co-Chair
and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 5528 – Engineering Technology Sustaining Funds

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

Blount International recognizes the 2021 legislature is faced with difficult budget decisions caused by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 virus. We appreciate your efforts to limit the budget impacts to the Public University State Fund, as well as the statewide programs, specifically the Engineering Technology Sustaining Funds (ETSF).

Blount International among others seek to support and grow Oregon as a world-class, inclusive innovation economy. The engineering and computer science programs at public universities in Oregon are an essential resource for workforce and innovation.

Over the last few years, Blount International has supported Oregon universities in multiple ways. Our participation in the Engineering CO-OP program, MECOP, includes hiring 5 or more students per year into 6-month internships. The extended length of these internships allows the student and Blount to gain valuable experience and resources for growth. We have also directly supported OSU through Capstone and Graduate research projects, which, in many instances, has developed these engineering students into full-time productive members of our professional engineering team. That talent recruiting funnel is also extending to include OSU, OIT, and PSU, allowing Blount to build a team of innovators and technical leaders.

The legislature's continued investment is a legislative success story, and a win for engineering students, the state's engineering programs and the state's economy.

Over a period of 20 years, the legislature investment has:

- Tripled the number of engineering graduates in the state
- More than tripled research expenditures
- Provided substantial economic mobility for students graduating with engineering degrees

Each engineering college is working proactively to improve recruitment and retention of an increasingly diverse student population. Reductions in ETSF funding will impact the college's shared commitment to improving access and decreasing the time to earn an engineering degree.

Please support a 7.42% base funding increase to the university state programs budget, which includes the Engineering Technology Sustaining Funds (ETSF). This program is within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) budget, SB 5528. Investment in the ETSF would continue to support the state engineering programs and the many students the colleges serve.

Sincerely,

Sam Lumetta
Vice President, Engineering and R&D
Forestry, Lawn & Garden Division, Blount International

Todd Gerlach
Director of Product Group
Concrete Cutting & Finishing Division, Blount International