

12 February, 2023

To Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Semiconductors,

My name is Katherine Kaylegian-Starkey, and I am a nontraditional student. I began my academic journey at Ukiah Community College in California after the birth of my second child then continued to the University of Oregon where I received my bachelor's degree in physics in 2021. I took a year off before deciding to pursue my master's degree, and in the summer of 2022 I began my graduate journey as a student in the UO's Knight Campus Graduate Internship Program (KCGIP).

While I pursued my undergraduate degree I worked as a research assistant at the UO, and I worked as an Academic Coach in the math department at Lane Community College. I currently work at Thermo Fisher Scientific (TFS) in Hillsboro, OR where my paid research counts toward my degree, and I expect to graduate with a MS in applied physics with a focus in optics this spring. My position as a Sr. Intern at TFS gives me the opportunity to conduct fundamental physics research outside of an academic or national lab setting- affording me and my family a comfortable and well-balanced life, and this position would not exist if not for the strong semiconductor industry in Portland, OR: the fundamental research I do is ultimately used to increase the performance of our products, many of which are purchased by local semiconductor manufacturers.

My position would not exist without the semiconductor industry in Oregon, and my appointment to it would not have been possible if not for the networking opportunities provided by the KCGIP. Equally as important as the networking opportunities is the support that the KCGIP faculty provide. Any MS program can teach a student, and many programs graduate students with a high cost to their mental and physical well-being, but the KCGIP faculty provided constant and outspoken support for me as I faced academic and professional hurdles. Their support helped me realize that I have accomplished amazing feats on my academic journey which I should celebrate and not be afraid to leverage, and it helped me realize my self-worth as a scientist. I am a better scientist, advocate, and human because of this program.

Sincerely,

Katherine Kaylegian-Starkey

Katherine Kaylegian-Starkey, MS Candidate

Knight Campus Graduate Internship Program

kkayleg2@uoregon.edu