



TECHNOLOGY  
ASSOCIATION  
OF OREGON

April 24, 2023

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 consider increasing funding for the Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF) and Oregon Operating Grant (OOG).

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.

The engineering and computer science programs at public universities in Oregon are an essential resource for our member companies. The Tech sector has proven its resilience in Oregon, growing steadily since the early 2000s, including through economic shocks and a global 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. Over 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, including among students with backgrounds that have been historically underrepresented in the tech sector.

A modest increase in funding will enable the state-supported engineering colleges to produce more qualified engineers and computer scientists to meet growing industry demand and further the important research missions at our universities. To be sure, each engineering program is working proactively to improve recruitment and retention and building collaborative opportunities to meet anticipated demands.

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



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a realistic possibility of college affordability for Oregon's low- and middle-income students.

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. This is even more important this biennium in light of the important role that university engineering and STEM programs play with respect to the semiconductor and advanced manufacturing industries in Oregon, including with respect to any Oregon company's application for CHIPS Act funding. We therefore respectfully request that members of the committee consider increasing funding for ETSF and the OOG. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Skip Newberry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Skip Newberry

President & CEO, Technology Association of Oregon