

Public Testimony of James Hook, Associate Dean, Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science, Portland State University to be presented at the Oregon Talent Council meeting on September 1, 2015.

Members of the OTC Board,

I am James Hook, Associate Dean of the Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science at Portland State University. I bring greetings and best wishes from Dean Renjeng Su, who is currently visiting an Intel facility in Penang, Malaysia.

I want to begin by thanking you for your service on the Oregon Talent Council. Oregon's economic growth potential is limited by the availability of talent at multiple levels: from skilled technicians to visionary leaders. The Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science at Portland State University is part of the rich ecosystem of educational opportunities that respond to this regional need. Our role in this ecosystem is unique based on our location and on the population we serve. We are located in the heart of Portland. We serve a diverse population of students, including many non-traditional and first-generation students. The Maseeh College is part of a proven path to the professional workforce that has been followed by many Oregonians. In self-reported data last year, over 80% of our responding graduates reported being employed within 6 months of graduation. The median initial salary was over \$60k.

The Maseeh College benefits greatly from its ties to industry. Industry leaders serve on our college and departmental advisory boards. We believe that industrial and government experience in internships is a key opportunity for engineering and computer science students. We have enjoyed a long-term partnership with the OTC's predecessor organization, the Engineering and Technology Industry Council. The college has also enjoyed a strong partnership with Manufacturing 21, representing another of the OTC's constituencies.

Students make great personal sacrifices to pursue university degrees. Many students obtaining degrees in Engineering and Computer Science at PSU will dedicate six years to pursue their "four year" degrees, often while continuing to support families. Many of these students will spend the first three years at a community college taking courses that articulate closely with PSU's engineering and computer science curriculum.

In the inaugural meeting of the OTC you will be discussing the transition of projects initiated under ETIC. PSU has three ongoing projects that have been recommended for continuing funding. These projects respond to ETIC priorities in the software development workforce, the power engineering workforce, and in the Internet of Things. In my comments today I will focus on the software development workforce initiative called New Beginnings.

The New Beginnings program targets students with a bachelor's degree outside of computer science that wish to rapidly prepare for graduate study in Computer Science.

The first cohort of New Beginnings students began their studies in Summer 2014. In the pilot phase the ETIC award supported the major share of program costs. The students in the first cohort included graduates from Reed College and Brown University with backgrounds in History, Law, and the physical sciences. After the period of accelerated study, those students entered the PSU Master of Science program in Computer Science. Some members of the first cohort have already joined the workforce.

The second cohort of New Beginnings students began their studies this summer (Summer 2015). We continued the program under the expectation that continuation funding for this successful program would be a high priority of the Oregon Talent Council. We understood that there was a risk in taking this action, however we thought there was a greater risk for the overall goal of supporting the talent pipeline if we had elected to pause the program.

Portland State University is a notoriously lean institution. Without ETIC's support, New Beginnings would not have been launched last summer. Without the expectation of support it would not have been continued this summer.

As the OTC has its initial deliberations, we respectfully request that priority be given to continuation of the ongoing projects. We would also request clarity on Fiscal Year 2016 priorities as soon as is practical. The second academic term of the current fiscal year is about to begin.

If there is any additional information that PSU can provide on our continuing proposals, our recommended proposals, or any facet of how our university serves the Oregon Talent pipeline please do not hesitate to contact Dean Su or me. We look forward to developing a strong partnership with the new Oregon Talent Council.