

June 21, 2016

Higher Education Coordinating Committee
c/o Ben Cannon, Executive Director
775 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
ben.cannon@state.or.us

Subject: Support for Oregon Tech's Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology / Cornett Renovation, Phase 2

Dear Members of the Higher Education Coordinating Committee,

My name is Nathalie Smith. I am a Geomatics business executive working for the world's leading mapping technology company, Esri. I am unable to officially represent my company's position but I wanted to lend my personal support with this letter. I currently serve on the Industry Advisory Board of Oregon Tech's Geomatics' Department. As a business person who has engaged with the Geomatics faculty and students over the past 10 years including hiring their graduates and who has helped shape Oregon Tech's Geomatics curriculum, I am seeking your support for the Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology/Cornett Hall Renovation, Phase 2 project.

I can tell you from first-hand experience that the current facility, Cornett Hall, that houses labs for various high-demand programs, is in desperate need of repairs. Built in 1964, Cornett Hall has seen better days. It has multiple live-safety, seismic, and ADA-compliance problems, and lacks functionality and efficiency in both classroom and lab spaces. The facility does not reflect current industry and student needs and does not do justice to Oregon Tech's nationally-ranked engineering programs. **We are grateful for the HECC's and the legislature's support for \$10,920,000 in General Obligation debt (\$10,170,000 Q-bond, and \$750,000 G-bond) for Phase 1 of this project, but these funds are not sufficient to complete the renovations nor to build Phase 2, the Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology.**

Phase 2 is envisioned as a new 80,000 GSF engineering building to complete the Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology. Designed as an integrated facility with the existing Cornett Hall, this new building will allow for the consolidation and expansions of the critical functions. The focus for building development is in creating a multidisciplinary collaborative model for student learning. This project is currently the highest campus priority for state funding in the amount of \$40M in Q bonds with \$2M in university matching funds.

This project builds on phase one to complete the integrated Center for Engineering. The combined project will be home to the expanded interdisciplinary School of Engineering, Technology and Management, including the departments of: Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering (MMET), Civil Engineering (CE), Electrical Engineering & Renewable Energy (EERE), Computer Systems Engineering Technology (CSET), Geomatics, Management, and Oregon Renewable Energy Center (OREC).

The new space will provide a new model of learning that integrates offices, classrooms and labs around interactive workspace. Working labs will be visible and integrated into the use of the building. Photovoltaics on the roof provide a visible indication of some of the sustainable research inside the facility. This building supports recruitment and retention of students, hands-on experiential learning, and high-demand career pathways.

I have been involved with Oregon Tech for the last 10 years as I have seen the quality of its Geomatics program and its dedicated faculty. Geomatics is a fast growing field and requires well educated, talented, and capable graduates. I have always been impressed with the level of job preparedness of the Oregon Tech interns as well as full time applicants that I have hired. Oregon Tech's Geomatics students need safe, accessible, modern facilities so students are ready to go to work on the day they graduate.

I encourage you to support the Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology / Cornett Hall Renovation, and am particularly focused on ensuring that Oregon Tech's Center for Excellence in Engineering and Technology is ranked high on the prioritized list.

STEM education is critical to the economic engine of the state, the success of our regional businesses, and to our kids who need meaningful, well-paying jobs in Oregon and elsewhere.

Thank you in advance for your support of Oregon Tech and its capital construction priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Smith', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Nathalie Smith
Geomatics Professional & Business Executive
(360) 485-2371