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May 13, 2011

Liz Sipes
Secretary to the Board of Trustees
Western Washington University
516 High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: Termination of WWU Computer Science Department

Ms. Sipes,

My name is Brian Bershada and I am the Site Director for the Google Seattle office. I am writing to you in regards to the proposed termination of the of the Western Washington Computer Science program.

Google is growing at a rapid rate in the state of Washington with our presence in Seattle at two sites: Fremont and Kirkland. The Seattle sites are pure R&D sites with the vast majority of employees having an engineering background. Our headcount is up 45% from last year to approximately 1,000 employees and we hope to continue growing here in the region. Our investment here as a company, though, is critically dependent on being able to find qualified employees to fill our various roles.

Before joining Google, I was a full tenured faculty member at the University of Washington in the Computer Science Department. I also received my PhD in Computer Science from the department in 1990. With the exception of three years, I have been a full time resident of the state of Washington since 1986.

The discussion of the termination of WWU's CS department concerns me. Google relies heavily on the state's CS programs to produce qualified candidates. For example, about one third of our current Washington engineering staff came through the University of Washington's CS program. We also have a significant number of WWU graduates on our engineering staff. Google is not alone among high-tech companies attempting to grow their presence in the state.

This pool of potential candidates was a contributing factor in Google selecting Washington state as an engineering site. Having Google and other high tech companies view the state as a producer of qualified candidates is beneficial to residents as well as contributing to the local economy. I hope that you will agree with me that the state should be investing more, not less, in the production of highly qualified engineering candidates.

I understand the need to make careful choices in any large institution and am pleased that the state is being thoughtful in its investment decisions. I am hopeful that, after careful review, the state will conclude that any decrease in the rate of production of qualified engineering candidates would not serve the state's long term interests.

I am happy to discuss this matter with you in more detail.

Sincerely,

s/

Dr. Brian Bershad
Engineering and Site Director
Google
bershad@google.com

cc: Ed Lazowska
Hard copy to folly by mail