

Draft OPAS Endorsement of eCHAMP

14 January 2009

Ben Manny
Chair, OPAS Motivate Workgroup

Dear Ben,

The Oregon Pre-Engineering and Applied Science Initiative (OPAS) is pleased to endorse the Engineering Coach and Mentor Program (eCHAMP). The OPAS mission is to increase the number of work-ready engineers and applied scientists in Oregon through collaboration of education sectors, industry, and government stakeholders. We are working to ensure that all K-12 students have access to high quality education and career exploration opportunities that prepare them for postsecondary and workplace opportunities and success.

eCHAMP provides valuable support for high school science, math and engineering teachers and volunteers as they work with students in informal club and team setting to provide engaging experiences solving real-world engineering challenges and leveraging national and regional organizations serving the informal education community. These kinds of intense, informal experiences motivate and inspire students to greater achievement and interest in academics and the wider world. The OPAS Steering Committee believes that this project will help us meet a key OPAS goal:

Enhance the ability of STEM education programs to increase students' interest and knowledge of engineering and applied science opportunities.

(http://opas.ous.edu//WorkshopFall2006/Workshop2006_ReportG.pdf)

OPAS is also excited that the Lemelson Foundation and the Intel Foundation have funded a pilot eCHAMP program, administered through the TechStart Education Foundation, our collaborative partner. OPAS members will continue to provide guidance, staff work, and evangelism for eCHAMP.

The data and insight gained through the eCHAMP pilot will help determine how to best structure the longer-term eCHAMP program. We feel strongly that the insights to be gained from this pilot program will help make our use of future resources more effective and accountable, and optimize our ability to support schools and the informal education community in providing students with in-depth experiences motivating them to enter college and make informed choices about pursuing a technical curriculum.

Sincerely,
Bruce Schafer
Director, Industry Affairs
Chair, OPAS Initiative Steering Committee