



School of Optics/CREOL

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. Daniel M. Hull
President
Principal Investigator for STEP II
CORD
601 Lake Air Drive
Waco, TX 76710

Dear Mr. Hull:

We in the School of Optics and Center for Research & Education in Optics and Lasers (CREOL) have a mission that is dedicated to the growth and sustainability of the optics and photonics industry in the State of Florida and nationwide. For this reason, I am delighted to be able to participate in the STEP II Photonics ATE project by serving on your Educational Working Group.

One of our goals in recent years has been to try to address the national shortage of optics & photonics technicians by working closely with our local community colleges (Valencia, Hillsborough and Seminole) as well as our own Department of Engineering Technology and the Florida Photonics Cluster. Our strategy has been to help Statewide industry by instituting Associates degrees in Photonics at the community colleges that may feed into a 2+2 AS - BS Photonics program in our Engineering Technology Department. The STEP project will therefore be of immense value to us. I am aware that many states are considering expanding technician education in photonics and, without a program such as STEP, I believe much time would be wasted by each community college around the US trying to independently develop their own photonics course materials. Not only would time be wasted, but also the quality would be highly variable. Moreover, the STEP program goes a stage further than we had envisaged - to start education in photonics at the high school level. I know that some of our local schools are eager to initiate such programs, but until now, we have not had the resources to help them. With the work done under STEP II, this would no longer be an obstacle.

I see my role as a member of the Education Working Group as a link between the STEP program and the Photonics Workforce initiative of the Florida Photonics Cluster. This can be a two-way process, as we are currently engaged in a state-wide industry survey to evaluate the future needs of photonics - trained personnel at all levels, with emphasis at

the technician level. I could gladly share our knowledge with the working group. Moreover, there are several community colleges that I have worked with that could be willing to participate in pilot programs and I would gladly try to recruit such institutions and assist with implementation of these programs. I believe we could also find ways to obtain collaborative funding through the State of Florida's "I-4 Technology Corridor" initiative. Although I am not an expert in technician training, I believe my overall knowledge of the rapidly changing photonics industry could be of great value to the STEP program. I also would be able to encourage some of our 26 highly-talented optics faculty to participate in curriculum development.

From a purely selfish perspective, the STEP program will be of tremendous benefit to our efforts in Florida to enhance technician training. Taking a more global view, multiplied across the many states in the US that have similar needs, the value of this program will be immeasurable. I am sure it will be funded, and I very much look forward to participating in it in whichever ways I can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Hagan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'H'.

Dr. David Hagan
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