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October 17, 2001

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

Dear Mr. Hull:

I am fully supportive of the STEP II and its Photonics Curriculum Project. The critical need for more qualified technical workers for the optical telecommunications industry is clearly understood, and my comments are based on my own experience in incubating companies ([www.incubic.com](http://www.incubic.com)) as well as based on interaction with colleagues in the photonics industry as the president-elect of the IEEE LEOS (Laser Electro-Optical Society). Companies, including the companies we funded, were scrambling to hire and train skilled laborers from the semiconductor and disc-drive industry to fill their product development and manufacturing needs. That process was uncoordinated and inefficient, and the lack of qualified workers slowed down business development and the ability to compete.

There is also universal agreement that the information technology revolution will continue and that optical communication is a key to implement the bandwidth needs of the Internet. The current lull in telecommunication expansion is the perfect time to get prepared for the next wave of expansion. Upgrading the metro area infrastructure is becoming critical and business is expected to ramp in a matter of months, whereas expansion in the long-haul area will also occur within a few years. The time to act is now!

The program as submitted by CORD is well thought out, and the Principal Investigators (PIs) are well qualified and recognized individuals in the industry. I have known three of the four PIs for many years, and know of their genuine interest and commitment to education. I look forward to introducing students graduating from the program to our companies to recruit, and will also provide the industry and business feedback to CORD to help develop the appropriate program.

I strongly endorse this proposal and am happy to participate as a member of the Technical/Industrial Working Group.

With best wishes,

*Milton Chang*

Milton Chang  
Managing Director,  
Incubic, LLC

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