



Oregon  
University  
System

## News Release

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Office of the Chancellor  
P.O. Box 751  
Portland, OR 97207-0751  
PHONE (503) 725-5700  
FAX (503) 725-5709  
www.ous.edu

Contact: Di Saunders – Office, 503-725-5714; Cell, 503-807-5539

Source: Bruce Schafer, Executive Director, ETIC – Office, 503-725-2915

### **Campaign Launched to Expand Computer Science Pipeline in Oregon**

*GET REAL partnership works with high school students to proactively address skill shortages*

*PORTLAND, March 22* – The Oregon University System announced today the launch of an effort to interest more high school students in pursuing degrees and careers in computer science as a way to address current and anticipated shortages in this area in Oregon. Called **GET REAL: Explore Computer Science**, the effort is overseen by a task force set up by the Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC), a partnership between the Oregon University System and private industry.

“Because of a serious shortage of technology professionals in Oregon many companies recruit heavily outside of our state,” said Nick Konidaris, chair of ETIC and president and CEO of ESI, Inc. based in Portland. “The goal of *GET REAL* is to help young people in Oregon see the many opportunities available to those who choose computer science as their college major. It’s important that we expend more resources to develop the local talent we have so that more Oregonians can better compete for the top-paying technology jobs now going to workers recruited from other states or internationally.”

In 2005, the ETIC Computer Science Task Force made high school outreach their first priority in a broad-based effort to increase the number of Oregon students pursuing computer science education. The “dot.com” bust served to reduce the number of students overall who pursued computer science degrees in the OUS institutions. Nationwide, the number of freshmen choosing computer science as their major dropped by over 50% between 2000 and 2004. But now shortages of computer science professionals in Oregon are causing industry to look elsewhere for skilled workers, a more expensive alternative than recruiting locally, and less advantageous to Oregonians who are losing out on jobs in these relatively high paying fields.

The GET REAL effort is a partnership between the Oregon University System, Oregon high school teachers, and many of Oregon’s top industries, to provide college and career information about the field of computer science to high school juniors and seniors, and those in other grades as well. The campaign materials currently include a brochure-poster and a website ([getreal.ous.edu](http://getreal.ous.edu)) and are a first step in making high school students aware of the creative, flexible, and diverse types of jobs in the computer science field. The publication and information on the website has been sent to math, science, and technology teachers at every high school in Oregon to distribute to students. The GET REAL brochure folds out into a “cool” poster that developers hope students will hang in their homes, or in classrooms or counselors’ offices at school.

“We worked really hard to make sure that the GET REAL materials were teen-friendly in terms of the language and graphic design approach,” said Bruce Schafer, executive director of ETIC. “Through

focus groups of high school students, the GET REAL team was able to determine what information and approaches would work best with teenagers to inform them about computer science degree programs, jobs, salaries, working environments, and opportunities, including those for women who are under-represented in the field.” Education and industry leaders in Oregon will also receive information about the GET REAL campaign and the availability of these materials to use in their various outreach efforts, such as career presentations at high schools.

ETIC is a public-private partnership between the university system and top Oregon industries. It works to advance engineering and technology postsecondary education throughout Oregon to enhance the economic climate for both the public and private sectors. It establishes success criteria and measurements for investments in these areas, makes specific investment recommendations, and monitors the results of these investments. For more information go to **[www.oregonetic.org](http://www.oregonetic.org)**

The Oregon University System (OUS) comprises seven distinguished public universities, reaching more than one million people each year through on-campus classes, statewide public services, and lifelong learning. The Oregon State Board of Higher Education, the statutory governing board of OUS, is composed of eleven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon State Senate. For additional information, go to **[www.ous.edu](http://www.ous.edu)**

Teachers or others interested in receiving a GET REAL brochure(s) can contact ETIC at 503-725-2919 or at [Michele\\_vitali@ous.edu](mailto:Michele_vitali@ous.edu)

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