



September 2, 2010

Daniel M. Hull, PE
Director of OP-TEC
The National Center for Optics and Photonics Education
P. O. Box 21689
Waco TX 76702-1689

RE: Precision Optics Technician (POT) training needs

Dear Mr. Hull,

We are writing on behalf of the Florida Photonics Cluster (FPC), which is a state-wide non-profit industry association that promotes and supports the large and diverse optics and photonics industry in Florida. Per our 2009 industry survey, we have over 270 companies in Florida directly involved with the fabrication, test, or integration of precision optics and photonics components, with customers in aerospace, defense, commercial, and other application areas. For over 20 years, these companies have sought assistance to help them find Precision Optics Technicians (POTs) with the knowledge and skills to fabricate, test, and/or integrate sophisticated optical and photonic components. Although there are some good classroom-based programs for training of POTs, there are almost no laboratory programs in the entire USA. *It is essential* that we have several US colleges that are producing precision optics technicians, and we desperately need at least one such institution in Florida to meet the needs of the growing optics sector in the state.

Consequently, on behalf of the 43 member organizations of the Florida Photonics Cluster, we strongly and enthusiastically support OP-TEC in its application for supplemental grant from NSF for precision optics technician education and training. We are particularly glad that you have identified Florida and Indian River State College (IRSC) as a prime location for the location of such a program. We will commit to having at least one FPC member serve on an advisory committee to provide expert information and review for skill standards, curriculum design, materials development and laboratory/equipment design and specification, and we will support the creation of an instructional program in precision optics technology at IRSC. Through the FPC, and with the support of our regional partner the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, and our state partners Enterprise Florida and the Florida Research Consortium, we can assist OP-TEC in several ways including communicating with optics and photonics companies in the state as well as elsewhere for support (e.g., equipment donations and internship programs), in working with IRSC to make a precision optics technician program a reality, and ultimately in promoting the program to potential students.

We have asked all of the FPC member companies, plus many other companies in the state to respond to you, showing how strong their support is for your proposed program.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex J. Fong".

Alex J. Fong
FPC President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James E. Pearson".

James E. Pearson
FPC Executive Director