

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

STARS Innovation Credit Letter: Green Product Design Network, University of Oregon

January 23, 2011

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to offer my endorsement of the Green Product Design Network (GPDN) for a STARS Innovation Credit. The GPDN represents an innovative approach to integrating the institutional strengths of our faculty and students with those of local, regional, and national partners to accelerate the invention and translation of greener products to the market. This model is unique in that it provides an opportunity to engage individuals and organizations that contribute to the whole innovation cycle, at the point of invention, which will produce new models for the sustainable development of future products and processes.

I am the Assistant Department Head and Senior Instructor for the Chemistry Department at the University of Oregon (UO) and I bring extensive network experience to my role as the Network Coordinator for the GPDN. I am the founder of the Green Chemistry Education Network whose mission is to facilitate the integration of green chemistry principles throughout the curriculum. Green chemistry is a set of design principles that is driving the innovative development of new materials and processes that are safer for human health and the environment. In this role I have enhanced the capacity of faculty to develop innovative educational materials by developing new tools and innovative strategies that support collaborative projects. I have participated in a green chemistry education panel for the National Academies of Science and consult on educational activities for the American Chemical Society's Green Chemistry Institute.

The Green Product Design Network (GPDN) began in the fall of 2009 with a group of faculty with expertise in green chemistry/materials, sustainable product design, sustainable business practices and greenwashing/advertising. During the past year, the GPDN has worked with internal and external partners to rapidly refine the network concept as a powerful approach to advance the development of greener products. It is not uncommon in a university setting to find partnerships between two different disciplines that facilitate sustainable development. However, we are the first in the country to strategically integrate green chemistry, product design, business and communications to impact the invention process in ways that can accelerate the translation of greener products to the market. In addition, we are developing new models for how education and research can support this effort.

As one of five key projects that the University of Oregon has chosen to support as a major strategic initiative we are

**(1) Actively engaging with Oregon companies to develop new products:** examples include assessing the role of nanotechnology in athletic apparel with Nike, Inc., and exploring alternative roofing materials for a major manufacturer of roofing systems;

**(2) Emerging as a hub to attract thought leaders in the areas of green materials design, communications and education:** examples include establishing a Life Cycle working group with representatives from eight University departments, eight regional companies and two

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

1253 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1253 T (541) 346-4601 F (541) 346-4643 [chemistry.uoregon.edu](http://chemistry.uoregon.edu)

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NGOs; hosting a Green Guides forum that brought together academic, industry and government leaders to discuss and analyze hot button issues in the area of green advertising; and sponsoring events like the PopTech's Green Materials Lab focusing on new materials for the apparel industry. Representatives from the UO, local corporations, state government and NGOs recently formed the Oregon Green Chemistry Advisory group and they are in the process of recommending that the state of Oregon fully embrace the GPDN as a model for green innovation to fuel economic development in Oregon.

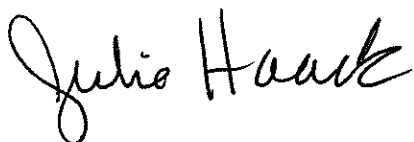
**(3) Developing innovative courses and curriculum that integrate chemistry, product design, communications and business:** examples include a workshop course in experimental materials where chemistry and product design students worked with a local electric car designer and manufacturer and a materials design studio to design a more sustainable car interior and a principles of advertising course that developed an advertising campaign for a successful new garbage collection product designed in a product design studio.

The success of the projects described above is based on a broad interdisciplinary approach—and the UO is uniquely equipped to provide it. The GPDN provides a unifying theme to leverage strengths in the arts and sciences, architecture and allied arts, business, journalism, and law to provide a systems approach to:

- **Improve** understanding about how new products affect the environment, our economic structures, and society.
- **Invent** greener products, materials, and chemicals.
- **Discover** the best business models and practices to deliver these innovations to society.
- **Create** meaningful educational programs for current and future generations.

Society is confronting challenges related to our dwindling resource base, climate change, chemical contaminants, the viability and success of our financial markets, and the emergence of new technologies. The best solutions to these problems will come from research cutting across many disciplines and from the creation of tailored, multidisciplinary education programs for our students. This is the aim of the Green Product Design Network (GPDN).

Sincerely,



Julie Haack, Ph.D.  
Assistant Department Head and Senior Instructor  
Coordinator, Green Product Design Network  
Department of Chemistry  
University of Oregon