

To Sen. Lew Frederick, Rep. Susan McLain and the Education Subcommittee, Joint Ways & Means:

I am writing this letter in support of the OSU Fermentation Science program and request that this program continues to be fully funded in relation to HB 5024 for the benefit of all Oregonians.

This program has made an immense impact in my personal and professional development, as it has the many other graduates of the program. Many of these graduates now directly support the Oregon economy by working for local food companies and driving economic development through the creation of small businesses.

I received my master's in food science through the program in 2015 during which I conducted research that directly benefited Oregon's 1 Billion dollar dairy industry, helping to provide data that was immediately relevant to the dairy industry; supporting the quality of the state's 4th most valuable commodity.

I chose to attend Oregon State University specifically because of the industry relevant research and the holistic approach to education offered by the fermentation program. This type of program is extremely rare, with OSU being one of only two comprehensive fermentation programs in the country and one of the most hands-on, allowing students both an academic and a practical learning experience while preparing them for the workforce. During my time at OSU I gained an education, experience, connections to the local food economy and most importantly saw the value of cross pollination between students and faculty working on different elements of fermentation with a common thread of food science. Through the program I gained my first exposure to the cheese making process by working in the lab as well as the hands on opportunity to learn about the alcohol fermentation process of making beer and wine.

After working in the food industry, I returned to Oregon State as a member of the food science extension program, motivated by the impact the department delivers to individual companies and the state economy.

In Oregon, food is a point of pride and the unique setting of our state provides an economic opportunity that must be supported. OSU's fermentation program, with expertise in enology & viticulture, brewing science, dairy, and bread/cereal science is incredibly special as it mirrors and supports Oregon's diverse agricultural industries; directly converting to export and tourism dollars. The economic opportunity of growing food production and support of new food companies is beginning to be fostered from an entrepreneurship level, with programs such as OEN Food Angels and Built Oregon's new accelerator; it taps the state's passion, resources and talents to do something no other state can compete with.

The fermentation program is rooted in creating value added products and finding business opportunities through science with the state's agricultural resources. This is closely aligned with the fundamentals of new business creation and entrepreneurship. With a focus on fostering the food entrepreneurship ecosystem it would be short sighted to cut the budget to the program that is needed to support companies that can grow the economy from the field-to-fork and beyond.

I am now a small business owner in the process of launching a company called Wheyward Spirit which utilizes whey from the cheese making process to produce a value added and superior tasting spirit. This prevents food waste and based on research conducted by the Oregon State University's fermentation program has been shown to have about half of the carbon footprint of a traditional spirit. The exposure

to multiple facets of fermentation gained as a student was critical experience needed to develop a company like Wheyward Spirit, which is exactly the type of business and company that highlights Oregon's unique food economy through entrepreneurship.

I am now able to support and give back, in a small way, to Oregon State's food science program through grant funded research. This is only possible if there is the staff and infrastructure to support food companies of all sizes, that also supports the educational development of the technical people needed to work for new (and large) companies keeping them based and thriving in Oregon. From firsthand experience both as a student who has benefited from the program, as a former faculty employee who was motivated to return for the opportunity to support the local economy and now as a food entrepreneur, I can say that the fermentation program at Oregon State University is vitally important and I urge you to continue supporting it through state funding as there is a direct benefit to all Oregonians and the economy as a whole.

Thank you ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Darchuk". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end of the name.

Emily Darchuk
Founder, Wheyward Spirit
OSU MSc Food Science '15