

Jorgen Nelson  
Vocational Rehabilitation Client  
April 13th, 2021

Dear Chairperson,

Hello, my name is Jorgen Nelson and I am a client of Vocational Rehabilitation, (Voc-Rehab). The purpose of this letter is to share about some of my experiences with Voc-Rehab, and how those have impacted my life. It is my position that Voc-Rehab is a key part of my recovering from being disabled and I am strongly in favor of the program continuing in its current state.

In order to discuss Voc-Rehab's impact on my life I need to address the disability that brought me in. Anxiety and depression first started to interfere with my ability to work in the early 2000's and by 2015 I had to file for disability. I knew from the therapy that I was doing with my psychologist that the jobs I was ending up in were playing a causal role in my anxiety/depression cycles. To break that cycle it was critical that my Vocational Rehabilitation counselor not just find me another job, but help me develop a career. I'm happy to report that they have done just that.

Since 2018 I have been training to work in the spatial computing industry. Spatial computing, also known as extended reality or XR, includes virtual reality, augmented reality, and mixed reality systems. Now as the pandemic is slowly receding I am in a position to return to the workforce with a strong skill set in a rapidly growing field.

As part of my plan Voc-Rehab helped me take a virtual reality programming course at Oregon State University. It turned out that the class was part of a major called New Media Studies, (NMS) that was the minor I graduated with in 1998. If there was a NMS graduate degree I would have liked to have explored that possibility, but unfortunately no universities in Oregon offer a masters in that right now. I would like to suggest that spatial computing education in Oregon be expanded at every level from elementary through PhD. This would grow and strengthen an industry that this state could be a leader in moving forward. That robust spatial computing industry could then employ many Oregonians including Vocational Rehabilitation clients like myself.

Thank you for hearing my position in favor of Vocational Rehabilitation. Please take it into consideration when you are making decisions about the program.

Best,  
Jorgen Nelson