



**Minutes for SCITT Governing Board Meeting  
October 30, 2024, 10:00 – 11:00 am**

**Members:**

Ms. Kari Gonzales (Chair), Ms. Ann Rajewski (Vice Chair)  
Dr. Dave Lehmpuhl, Ms. Kat Papenbrock (absent), Ms. Lisa Staes, Mr. Nick Hinrichsen,  
Mr. Ruben Pena, Ms. Sara Cassidy, Dr. Steve Cohn (alphabetically)

**SCITT Director:** Dr. Md Rashad Islam

**Invited Guests:** Mr. Armando Valdez, Mr. Michael McMaster, Dr. John Williamson,  
Dr. Elena Sidorova, Dr. Saqib Gulzar.

- 1) Welcome – Ms. Gonzales and Dr. Islam  
Ms. Gonzales and Dr. Islam greeted everyone at the meeting. Dr. Islam started the recording of the meeting.
- 2) Welcome from CSU Pueblo President Armando Valdez  
Mr. Valdez is welcomed to the meeting. He expressed his excitement to work with SCITT on the CSU Pueblo campus. He expressed his excitement about the new grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, hoping it will bring resources into SCITT and therefore, the university as a whole. Mr. Valdez also informed the board about the new grant awarded under CRISI program of the Federal Railway Administration.
- 3) Approval of Meeting Minutes for 2023/12/07 – Ms. Gonzales and Dr. Islam  
Ms. Gonzales asked if there were any comments or changes that needed to be made to the December 7th meeting minutes. There was none. All members motioned for approval for the minutes of this meeting.
- 4) Introduction of SCITT Staff – Dr. Islam
  - a. Dr. Elena Sidorova who joined SCITT in March of 2024 as a postdoctoral researcher and is now also a visiting assistant professor as of the fall 2024 semester. Her expertise is in railway engineering and research. She will act as academic lead of SCITT.
  - b. Dr. Saqib Gulzar joined SCITT in August as a visiting assistant professor through SCITT as well. He has his PhD in transportation from North Carolina State University. He will act as research lead of SCITT.
  - c. Dr. Islam explained that there are also two undergraduate students and two graduate students working for SCITT.
  - d. Currently, there is a plan to hire a grant manager and maybe two more faculty. Dr. Islam would also like to recruit more students in the spring 2025.
- 5) Activities Performed Since Last Meeting – Dr. Islam
  - a. Hiring of new staff (as outlined above in (4)).

- b. In the summer of 2024, SCITT participated in the National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) program. SCITT taught middle school children about the transportation industry through lectures, hands-on activities, and field trips for two weeks. This was very successful and there are already plans to do it again in 2025.
- c. SCITT received a grant award to work on Hydrogen Refueling Structure along with the main CSU campus in Fort Collins. In this project, SCITT will assist in workforce development.
- d. The university was recently awarded part of the Congressionally Directed Spending grant. There is some money reserved for SCITT, though some paperwork still needs to be completed with the detailed plan. This work is going to be done in the month of November 2024.
- e. Most of the grants received by SCITT involve some amount of education and training, so that is where the majority of the focus has been since the last board meeting.
- f. The logo was finally approved by the university. This logo was designed by the university's marketing department. This logo can be changed in the future, if needed, and Dr. Islam wants to ensure the board likes this logo even though they do not need to officially approve it.
- g. There was no opposition expressed from the board about the new logo.
- h. SCITT held the first Southern Colorado Transportation Conference (SCTC) on October 24<sup>th</sup> on the CSUP campus. This conference was a great success, with 113 attendees, 21 poster presentations, and two key-note speakers. This conference will continue to be held every year and will hopefully be more ambitious each time.
- i. Ms. Gonzales asked if there will be any publication about the conference.
- j. Dr. Islam responded that there will not be, but the posters that were presented will be posted on the SCITT website. Next year he plans to have a bigger conference and therefore more documentation.

6) Proposed Academics – Dr. Islam

- a. There are four courses Dr. Islam is proposing to begin at CSUP. These courses would be offered by and through the School of Engineering and facilitated by SCITT, and have been approved.
  - TENG 140 Railway Basics and Safety
  - TENG 405 Multimodal Transportation Systems
  - TENG 415 Supply Chain and Logistics Management
  - TENG 440 Railway Transportation
- b. SCITT is proposing three new programs through the school of engineering at CSUP- Certificate in Transportation Engineering (undergraduate), Certificate in Transportation Engineering (graduate), MS in Civil Engineering (Transportation).
- c. Currently these programs are proposed for fall of 2025, though graduate certificate and MSCE program are still under review and may not begin until fall 2026.
- d. For these programs, SCITT is using some existing CSUP courses and proposing some new ones as well. Dr. Islam feels comfortable with these courses based on the universities current resources as they relate to transportation engineering. These new courses are :
  - CE 500 Research Methods for Engineers and Scientists
  - CE 507 Cyber Security for Civil Infrastructures

- TENG 505 Multimodal Transportation Systems
  - TENG 510 Transportation Economy and Finance
  - TENG 530 Traffic Engineering
  - TENG 532 Pavement Engineering
  - TENG 540 Railway Transportation
  - TENG 560 Hydrogen Fuel
- e. Due to the hydrogen refueling grant, SCITT is obligated to fill a component to provide education on hydrogen refueling.
  - f. Ms. Gonzales asked if these courses are going to be funded by the university or through grant funding.
  - g. Dr. Islam answered that these are going to be funded through grants. He also added that Dr. Sidorova's position is currently funded by the university for two years, and she would be involved in teaching several of these courses.
  - h. Ms. Gonzales then asked how these courses and programs are going to be advertised to students and how to get the word out about them.
  - i. Provost Mackin answered this by saying per accreditation rules, we cannot advertise until they are fully certified by the board of governors as well as the accreditation bodies. Though, in the meantime, Dr. Islam is working with the marketing department to prepare for that time.
  - j. Ms. Gonzales then asked for clarification on these courses being offered in fall of 2025 but must also be accredited at that time.
  - k. Provost Mackin answered that the courses can be offered as they are approved, but we can't advertise a particular program until it is certified.
  - l. Mr. Valdez added the insight that there will be an opportunity to promote these courses before fall 2025. He also mentioned that the university is always going to be looking to the board for help with marketing/spreading the word about programs in SCITT.
  - m. Mr. Hinrichsen noted that from the course list, he sees the opportunity for this to turn into a graduate certificate for supply chain management (and transportation logistics) in the future.
  - n. Ms. Staes added that her Institute, CUTR at the University of South Florida, does not offer courses, but they are part of the College of Engineering at the university. They support the development of curriculum and programs. There's a process involved at the university to get things approved, and the steps are very similar to getting things approved from them. Like CSUP, they can't advertise things until they are approved.
  - o. Ms. Staes asked if these proposed courses will be online, in-person, or hybrid.
  - p. Dr. Islam answered the question by saying that they will be offered online initially to attract more students, and then as SCITT grows in terms of faculty, the courses will be offered in person as well.
  - q. Dr. Islam finished this topic by adding that these courses and programs are working in conjunction with the School of Engineering as well as Extended Studies, so there is access to their resources and feedback as well.

7) Outreach Activities – Dr. Islam

- a. SCITT hosted a Hydrogen 101 on the CSUP campus on February 20<sup>th</sup>. There were 37 attendees. The event was sponsored by A New Day Hydrogen, who provided speakers and snacks.
- b. Dr. Islam presented the hydrogen refueling project at the Pueblo Area Council of Government (PACOG) meeting.
- c. Dr. Islam also presented the hydrogen project at the City of Pueblo Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) meeting.
- d. A representative from SCITT has been invited to attend all further TAC meetings.

8) New Business– Dr. Islam

- a. SCITT will start to develop training programs. Dr. Islam wants to develop something for hydrogen safety and will share this information with the board to get their opinions and feedback.
- b. Areas where SCITT needs more improvement include being “a resource for the state” and “to serve as information exchange and depository”.

9) Financials / State Funding – All

- a. Ms. Gonzales asked if the board needs to review financials at all for SCITT.
- b. Mr. McMaster said that he would double-check this and get back to her about the topic.
- c. Others on the board recalled that the board only needs to approve state funding, not grants.
- d. Speaking of state funding, Mr. Valdez brought up a discussion that occurred over the summer between Dr. Islam and Mr. Hinrichsen regarding state funding. Mr. Valdez would like to move forward with this discussion with direction from the board.
- e. Mr. Pena remarked that it needs to be considered as a board. He shared some of his thoughts, saying that using experience from the congressional directed fund, they should work with Antonio and Senator Hickenlooper to develop a request for the same amount of money. Secondly, at the state level, since SCITT is state sanctioned entity, the board should pursue something around 500k a year that could support SCITT personnel at two, two and a half full-time employees to continue the growth of SCITT. That would allow a baseline and free up some grant money to perform the grant work. Mr. Pena wants to move forward and see what can be done at the state level.
- f. John Williamson added to the discussion by saying when he and Mr. Pena wrote the law, the bill went in just a few weeks before the legislature when to approve it. They decided not to ask for funding for SCITT at that time because the state was not going to be able to come up with it at the last moment. So, with the plan, we would come back to the state at some point and ask for an amendment for funding. There is a lot of success for that right now, and maybe we should start that along with Mr. Hinrichsen’s help, and present what we have done with SCITT to the transportation committees so they know we have been successful, and the state would benefit from investing in it. If we do get state money, then the board would have to approve the budget.
- g. Mr. Hinrichsen stated that the state of Colorado is currently going into a very difficult budget year. Usually, there is some general idea for a budget, but that does not seem to be the case this year. The state mandated property tax reductions are going to enforce local revenue reductions. We (as in a state of CO) have obligated ourselves to backfill

a part of that, but there is no stated definition of how much or how we do that. That makes it difficult for higher education projects to get funds. Not to say that he thinks SCITT should not try, in fact, we should and SCITT should have those presentations for the transportation development committee and the house. We need to be creative with funding, to tie the research and workforce development to the needs of the state in order to have a higher chance of receiving state funding.

10) Board Member's Involvement – All

- a. Overall, there was an expressed interest by the board members to be more involved and more informed on SCITT's activities before they happen.
- b. Ms. Gonzales would like to have a one-page write-up of these activities (or more specifically the academic courses/programs) so that they can share this information correctly with their communities.
- c. Ms. Rajewski expressed that some events, like the hydrogen event in February, would have been a great opportunity to invite all of the board members to. That along with the conference in October.

11) Next Meeting Schedule – Ms. Gonzales and Dr. Islam

- a. Mr. Valdez suggested more frequent meetings, given that the last one was in December of 2023.
- b. Dr. Islam and Ms. Gonzales both suggested quarterly meetings would be a good amount for 2025.
- c. There was no opposition from the board about the more frequent meetings.
- d. The motion to have quarterly board meetings was passed.
- e. Dr. Islam was tasked with finding some good meeting times to send them out now, reserving the time now since board members are usually quite busy.

12) Action Items – Ms. Gonzales and Dr. Islam

- a. Dr. Islam will find meeting dates for the governing board for 2025.
- b. Mr. McMaster will confirm what the board has to approve when it comes to finances.
- c. Dr. Islam and his team at SCITT will keep board members informed about activities going on more readily via things such as one-page write-ups. This write-up includes academics and events that are being planned.
- d. Dr. Islam will invite board members to events in the future as well.

13) Public Comments

No public comments were made during this meeting.