



UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER RESEARCH BRIEF

PROJECT TITLE: PacTrans Workforce Development Institute (WDI)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ying Jiang (UW), Yin Hai Wang (UW), Shane Brown (OSU), Billy Connor (UAF), Kevin Chang (UI), and Ali Hajbabaie (WSU)

INSTITUTION: MULTI-INSTITUTION EDUCATION PROJECT
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE: AUGUST 2019

SPONSORS: THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIUM, OSU, WSU, UI, UAF, WSDOT



Background

With support from WSDOT, and other transportation agencies, the Region 10 University Transportation Center (UTC), and the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) Department at the University of Washington (UW) had operated a very popular continuing education program called TRANSPEED until 2010. Administered through the UW's Professional and Continuing Education (PCE) programs, TRANSPEED brought transportation engineering's professional training and continuing education to governmental agencies and private firms. It generated huge national influence by conducting 50 workshops annually that serve over 1,400 students. Although the TRANSPEED program was popularity and far-reaching, it was badly hit by the most recent financial crisis. After WSDOT and other agencies stopped their funding support, TRANSPEED closed in 2010. Since then, working professionals have lost easy access to continuing education and local needs for workforce development has accumulated. With the recent emergence in technology and applications in transportation practice, such as Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs), smart cities technologies, the demand for continuing education and workforce development is growing. In 2016, a new dialog started between transportation agencies and PacTrans to re-establish a new workforce development program to address the increasing workforce development needs of transportation agencies and companies in the Pacific Northwest.

Research Project

This project will set up a Workforce Development Institute (WDI) and to develop a demand responsive and flexible program platform with the first sample certificate program

and courses responsive to the workforce development needs in the Pacific Northwest, which includes Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. In addition to the proven advantages of TRANSPEED and other past programs, WDI also takes advantage of the new information technology to make training accessible online and available at trainees' own pace and schedule. It is a program centric to addressing Region 10's workforce development needs by delivering a collection of short-term training courses and workshops.

The proposed workforce development program will benefit PacTrans and Region 10 in the following three aspects: (1) It allows Region 10's busy working professionals to access desired training materials and courses at their convenient time and locations, and at their own pace; (2) It provides a forum for working professionals and university researchers to jointly investigate on challenges and opportunities associated with the new technologies, such as connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) technologies and their potential impacts, so that transportation agencies and companies can be proactive in incorporating the new technologies into practice; and (3) It directly addresses the continuing education needs of Region 10 working professionals' and thus is critical for enhancing local transportation agencies' organizational strength and local companies' competitiveness.

