Development of PacTrans Workforce Development Institute - Phase III

Yinhai Wang, PhD, Wei Sun, PhD, Shane Brown, PhD, Kevin Chang, PhD, Billy Connor, Eric Jessup, PhD

Background

With support from WSDOT, other transportation agencies, and the former form of the Region 10 University Transportation Center (UTC), the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) Department at the University of Washington (UW) had operated a very popular continuing education program called TRANSPEED, which 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 popular and far-reaching, it was badly hit by the most recent financial crisis. However, with the recent technology development and applications in transportation practice, such as Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs), smart cities technologies, the demand for continuing education and workforce development is getting even stronger. In order to fulfill the gap, in 2016, a new dialog started between transportation agencies and PacTrans to re-establish a new workforce development program to address the critical workforce development needs of transportation agencies and companies in the Pacific Northwest.

In the first two years, the available state of practice training technologies and critical needs of current working professionals were reviewed within our dedicated area of Region 10 (i.e., Idaho, Alaska, Oregon, and Washington). The Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium (PacTrans) Workforce Development Institute (WDI) has been established, with solid demand responsive and flexible program platform in catering workforce development needs in the Pacific Northwest. The WDI is not a simple re-establishment of the TRANSPEED program. In addition to the proven advantages of TRANSPEED, it also takes advantage of the new information technology to make training accessible online and available at trainee's own pace and schedule.

Research Project

To further ensure and strengthen the advantages of developed WDI in dealing with Region 10's specific workforce development needs, the WDI is currently collaborating with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to deliver training services to address WSDOT's immediate workforce development needs. Specifically, the WSDOT representatives have identified three top priority subjects that need training, i.e., the MUTCD, human factors, and data analysis and tools. The PacTrans WDI team will design, develop, and deliver three short-term training courses in respond to these training needs. Besides onsite training courses, the team will also provide online course offering to WSDOT's professionals. In addition, the team will develop training service model that aims to collaborate between WDI and WSDOT to provide demand responsive and flexible training services to address the long-term training needs. The team will develop course evaluation procedure with evaluation methods and indicators regarding the course content, effectiveness, and instructors, etc. Based on the course evaluation results, the team will identify areas of improvement of the current course offerings and propose suggestions for future course development and delivery.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS
The research team consists of one member from each of our five consortium research partner institutions.

ABOUT THE FUNDERS

EXPECTED DATE OF COMPLETION
August 2021

FOR MORE INFORMATION
http://depts.washington.edu/pactrans/research/projects/development-of-pactrans-workforce-development-institute/