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Student Leadership Summit - University Transportation Centers Open Competition

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MATC

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Project Activities	1
1.1 Original Plan Prevented due to Long-Term COVID Lockdowns	1
1.2 Revised Activity List of Technical Training for KU Students	2
1.3 Conclusions.....	2

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Abstract

This final report documents the activities conducted during this grant. The original intent of the grant was to organize and hold a student leadership summit associated with the Missouri Valley District of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. In the event, the COVID pandemic restrictions put in place by many universities from 2020 to 2022 required a change in how these plans were implemented. As students at many universities remained unable to travel to official functions due to social distancing restrictions held in place by many universities across the country, it was decided to instead send transportation students from the University of Kansas to transportation-oriented conferences to expand their knowledge of current technical topics.

Chapter 1 Project Activities

1.1 Original Plan Prevented due to Long-Term COVID Lockdowns

This grant ran from June 2020 through June 2024. The original intent of the grant was to organize and hold a student leadership summit associated with the Missouri Valley District of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (MOVITE). In the early Spring of 2020 discussions had taken place with MOVITE and they expressed support for such a plan. However, starting in March 2020 most organizations moved to a work-from-home orientation due to the COVID lockdown policies instituted nationwide. The effort to develop a leadership summit was placed on hold in hopes it could still be held in early 2021, but by the summer of 2021 it was clear that students at many universities across the country remained unable to travel to official functions due to social distancing restrictions held in place by their universities. In addition, the University of Kansas (KU) had a prohibition on large official gatherings for any university group, with no plans to lift these regulations. After discussion with MATC leadership, it was decided to redirect this project to instead send transportation students from the University of Kansas to transportation-oriented conferences to expand their knowledge of current technical topics. This approach was determined to be more feasible during the original grant period, as the planning team had no control over when lockdown policies at other universities would be relaxed enough to allow students to travel to KU (or other regional university) for a leadership summit, but technical events were being held at other (non-university) locations. The remainder of this report details events to which KU students were sent in order to gain knowledge of transportation-related topics. This revised approach still fits within the overarching goal of the university transportation centers program of training the transportation professionals of the future.

1.2 Revised Activity List of Technical Training for KU Students

Students were sent to the following events, fully funded by the grant:

1. Twelve graduate students from the Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering (CEAE) Department at KU attended the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, held in Washington D.C. January 9 - 13, 2022.
2. Twelve CEAE graduate students from the Civil, Environmental, and Architectural Engineering Department at KU attended the 2022 Summer meeting of the Midwestern District of ITE (MOVITE) in Overland Park, Kansas, from April 20 - 23, 2022.
3. One CEAE doctoral student attended the International Conference on Transportation and Development 2022, Seattle, Washington, May 31 - June 3, 2022. At that conference, the student made a presentation entitled, "Comparison of Teen and 25-44-Year-Old Driver-Related Crashes Using Spatial Analysis".
4. One CEAE graduate student attended the 2022 ESRI User Conference in San Diego, CA from July 11 - 15, 2022.

1.3 Conclusions

COVID restrictions prevented the completion of the originally envisaged student leadership conference at KU in 2020, and even after delaying for one year the lockdown restrictions were held in place by many universities well into 2022, preventing students from traveling to events on campuses. Non-university technical conferences began being held well before university events, and so after consultation with MATC leadership this grant was changed to allow KU students to attend these conferences. This met the spirit of the University Transportation Centers program by helping train the transportation professionals of the future.