



Meeting of the WCTRS General Assembly
13:45 to 15:00 on Wednesday 19th July 2023
Level 5 Room 517CD, Palais de Congrès, Montréal

Minutes

1. Welcome (Greg Marsden – Secretary General)

The meeting was declared open and the Secretary General thanked the organisers for their work in making a successful conference.

2. Minutes of the General Assembly held 28th May 2019 at IIT Bombay

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a fair record of the 2019 General Assembly and approved. A comment was made that it was not clear when Members could ask about the progress on specific items in the minutes. This discussion was encouraged during the updates from the President and Secretary General.

3. President's Report on the Society's professional activities 2019/23 (Tae Oum)

The President reviewed progress against his goals set out in 2019. Full details are available in the appendix slide deck. Key highlights have been the work of the Covid-19 Task Force and the Subway Efficiency Benchmarking Task Force. The Chinese license programme is experiencing delays despite much work. Stronger ties are being forged with international organisations. The work of WCTRS-Y and the SIGs and the continuing strong performance of the Society's journals were also identified.

4. SCC Chair Report on the Innovations in Scientific Matters (Lori Tavaszzy)

The Chair of the Scientific Committee summarised some key progress. The Scientific Committee has 75 members: chair/vice-chairs (6) + Topic Area leads (9) + SIG leads (60) which stimulates the scientific activities between conferences as well as organising the review process and sessions in the conference. In 2022 the on-line WCTR conference was held with a week of sessions across two time zones. 1872 people attended from 107 countries and this will be looked at to potentially repeat in some form. There were 1125 submissions, 800+ papers in the program, 1000+ attendees and 290 sessions. Publications in Elsevier Procedia and 20+ other special issues will be achieved. A new initiative, launched by Professor Ashish Verma to lead a new journal with Taylor and Francis (Sustainable Transport & Livability) was also flagged as the Society will shortly discuss an affiliation agreement.

5. Report from the Society Journals

The Secretary General reminded members that the Journal of Transport Policy is owned by Elsevier and the society is affiliated to it whereas Case Studies on Transport Policy is owned by the Society and published by Elsevier on our behalf. Full details of the publication statistics and journal performance is shown in the accompanying appendix slide deck. Key points from each journal are set out below.

a. Report of the Journal of Transport Policy (Haijun Huang)

Professor Huang apologised for not being able to come to Montreal due to visa issues and the Secretary General summarised the main findings. The journal now has an Impact Factor of 6.8 which makes it a Q1 Journal in Transportation and Economics.

b. Report of the Journal of Case Studies on Transport Policy (Xiaowen Fu)

Professor Fu reported that the journal has received its first Impact Factor of 2.5 and that this performance was largely thanks to previous Editor in Chief Rosario Macario who had steered the journal since its inception until mid 2022.

Both E-i-Cs reported very high, and growing, submission rates. This resulted in high desktop rejection rates because it is impossible to send too many papers out. Finding good reviewers is increasingly challenging, although processing times remain good.

6. Report of Secretary General (Greg Marsden)

a. Financial Position

The Secretary General set out the finances (see Annex) and explained the incomings and outgoings. An anticipated balance of around £200000 will be available once the registration fees are processed from the conference. However, during Covid there were risks that this could have been as low as £120000. The annual income from the Elsevier journals now makes the society somewhat less vulnerable to shocks from conference attendance. It is hoped that this will provide some headroom for investment in scientific activities over the next three years, although high inflation rates mean that there has been very little real terms growth.

b. Audit (Antonio Musso)

Professor Musso presented his audit of the Society's accounts, concluding that the data reported to the General Assembly is a true reflection of our current financial position and that the Society has a healthy operating reserve.

c. Fees

The fees for the Society had remained unchanged since 2013 until the 2023 conference where a 13% increase for developed countries (\$150 to \$170) and an 11% increase for developing economies (\$90 to \$110) had been applied. Student fees had remained unchanged (\$60). The increases were below the maximum 20% which the GA had approved in Mumbai, despite extending the membership period for everyone by one year because of Covid.

The General Assembly was again asked for the flexibility to increase fees by up to 20% should it need to do so. The motion was passed unanimously.

d. Change of registration

The General Assembly was informed that WCTRS is formally legally registered in the Canton de Vaud in Switzerland. Because of changes to support available from EPFL a new arrangement for registration needs to be made. This involves two steps:

First, a motion to cancel the registration of the Society with the Canton de Vaud was passed unanimously.

Next, options which had been reviewed by Steering Committee were presented. Other societies similar to WCTRS are not formally legally registered. Professor Andreas Wittmer from the University of St Gallen will act as the Swiss Representative, replacing Michel Brielaire from EPFL. Steering Committee had looked at formal legal registration or a simpler affiliation process. The latter option was recommended.

The General Assembly was asked to approve a motion to move the registration to the St Gallen Canton and to not seek formal legal registration. The motion was passed unanimously.

e. Migration of secretariat

The Institute for Transport Studies has hosted the Secretariat of WCTRS since 2013 and the Secretary General announced his intention to step down in 2020. An open call for Institutions to apply to host the Secretariat was made and a committee of Greg Marsden, Martin Dresner and Susan Shaheen was formed to evaluate bids. University of California Davis was selected with Professors Dan Sperling and Giovanni Circella as Secretary General. Both were invited to the stage and shared their excitement at taking on the role. The transition will happen over the period to December 2023 and members should not notice the transition in their interactions with the Society.

7. Election of President (Martin Dresner)

Professor Martin Dresner set out the process for the nomination of the Society President. A President can only serve a maximum of two terms and must indicate that they wish to seek re-election before the end of their first term. The current President indicated that he would like to seek a second term and a Presidential Nomination Committee was established (Professors Martin Dresner, Susan Shaheen and Shinya Hanaoka) to review his achievements and make a recommendation to the Steering Committee for approval.

The PNC reaffirmed the high quality research and impact track record of the President and his experience of serving the Society. Progress with the Covid-19 and Subway Benchmarking Task Forces were particularly important although it was noted that more limited progress had been made on equality and diversity issues raised at the previous General Assembly.

The Steering Committee had supported Professor Oum's nomination with 21 in favour, 1 abstain and 1 against. The PNC therefore sought the approval of the nomination through a vote.

Interjections from the floor queried whether this was the right place to raise issues raised at the last General Assembly which had not been addressed such as gender diversity and it was confirmed that this was such a point in the agenda.

It was asked why nominations for Presidents are only made by the Steering Committee rather than from the whole membership. This would be key to ensuring that the Steering Committee opportunities are open to a wide range of qualified people.

The limited progress in Equality and Diversity was raised as a problem and it was stated that this was the third General Assembly where this had happened. The Secretary General reported on actions that had been taken. Progress included on the Journal Editorial Teams which are well balanced. The SCC has the same gender balance as the general

membership and STC has not yet achieved this. It is only possible to do this by electing STC members at the Assembly as, whilst there is some additional flexibility after the conference, the Committee is large and so the impact of further additions is small. The Secretary General noted that there are a number of aspects of the Equality and Diversity practices which have been agreed by the Steering Committee, which have not yet operationalised or prioritised for action.

Further interjections from the floor suggested that this lack of representation was making the Society fall behind and would alienate many members. Initiatives such as providing childcare at conferences were being overlooked, perhaps because all male selection committees were in place. It was noted that there should be no all male committees according to our policies.

At this point, a vote was taken on the recommendation of the PNC that the President be renewed through to 2026.

The vote was passed with 87 in favour and 8 abstentions. No votes were recorded against.

8. Future Plans of President

Professor Oum thanked the Presidential Nomination Committee and the Assembly for approving his candidature. He set out six key promises for the coming three years:

1. Strengthen our scientific base where have been very strong: i.e., organizing major conferences, journal publications, papers and books
2. Further expanding international expansion, work and partnership
3. Strengthening and reformulating the three Task Forces
4. Continue to build and strengthen WCTRS-Y because they are future engine of the WCTRS
5. Build and strength our North American bases: US, Canada and Mexico
6. Building developing country bases: SE Asia, S. America, Africa

9. Election of Steering Committee

Professor Oum proposed his Steering Committee for approval by the General Assembly (names listed below).

An interjection from the floor questioned the proposed list, which failed to significantly improve the gender imbalance. Whilst flexibility was asked for 5 additional members this did not address the wider structural concern about greater ability for members to participate in electing people who govern their Society. The absence of a clear priority to address gender diversity in the Presidential priorities was also identified as an issue.

Following discussion, a vote was held on whether to approve the Steering Committee proposed. The vote was passed with 65 votes for and 14 abstentions. No votes against were recorded.

10. Any Other Business

It was suggested that the Society should take advantage of the means now available to open up nomination processes, to conduct electronic votes and to enable members to engage. The incoming Secretariat said it would address this for the 2026 conference.

ACTION: Secretariat

It was suggested that more must be done to connect with members so that they feel they have a real voice and want to attend the General Assembly.

In response Ali Huzayyin noted that the Steering Committee carefully followed its Operating Practices and that these were robust in enabling the President to build their own team.

The Secretary General concluded by remarking that this was the third General Assembly where issues of diversity and widening participation in the management of the Society had been raised, each time more significantly. Efforts to reform processes within the Steering Committee had not been fully adopted. There are real risks that the Society will disenfranchise members if significant changes are not made. The direction of change is clear and we are lagging behind other Societies in responding to that. He stated that the Society must avoid losing good people because it did not listen and act.

The meeting was closed.

Certified as a record of the meeting



Signed and Dated
30/11/2023

Professor Greg Marsden (Secretary General)

Professor Tae Oum (President)