

# NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

November 19, 2021

*This meeting was held via Microsoft Teams teleconference.*

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members of the Commission present: Public Voting Members: Gunjan Doshi, InRhythm, Chairman; Debbie Hart, BioNJ, Vice Chair; David Pascrell, Gibbons, Treasurer; Charlene Brown (AT&T, Retired); Dr. Joel Bloom, President, NJIT; Dr. Alain Kornhauser, Princeton University, Ex-Officio Voting Members: Dr. Brian Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education; Brian Sabina for Tim Sullivan, CEO of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority; and Gilbert Gonzalez for Angelica McMillan, Commissioner, DOE.

Legislative Member - Non-Voting present: Senator Andrew Zwicker.

Member of the Commission absent (Non-Voting): Legislative Members - Senator Robert Singer, Senator Paul Sarlo, Assemblyman DePhillips; and University Members - Dr. Nariman Farvardin, President, Stevens Institute of Technology; and Dr. Jonathan Holloway, President, Rutgers University.

Also present: Greg Townsend for Stevens Institute of Technology; Raymond Cottiers from Assemblyman DePhillips' office; Petra Gaskins from Senator Zwicker's office; Ralph Hoag, DOE; Judith Sheft, Executive Director, CSIT; Elizabeth Kern, Deputy Attorney General; Jamera Sirmans, Governor's Authorities Unit; EDA: Danielle Esser, Director; Pallavi Madakasira, Director; Mahako Etta, Program Manager; and Muneerah Sanders, Board Liaison.

Per the Chairman's request, Muneerah Sanders read the Open Public Meetings announcement and performed the roll call of the Commission.

Prior to commencing the meeting, Chairman Doshi asked Ms. Esser to read aloud a statement regarding the process for public comment at the board meeting for any members of the public on the call. No members of the public presented themselves at this time

## PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The first item was the approval of the September 24, 2021 meeting minutes.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Dr. Bloom                      **SECOND:** Mr. Pascrell                      **AYES: 7**

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY:** The next item was the presentation of the Chairman's Report to the Commission.

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY:** The next item was the presentation of the Executive Director's Report to the Commission.

*Dr. Kornhauser joined the meeting at 10:21am.*

Chairman Doshi congratulated Senator – Elect Zwicker on making history, becoming the first Democratic Senator in the Sixteenth Legislative District after previously serving as the first Democrat in the General Assembly from the 16th.

Chairman Doshi asked Ms. Sheft to present the following approval items before the Board:

**Item:** Approval of MOU with Rutgers University on SBIR/STTR Support

**Request:** To approve a 12 month Memorandum of Understanding with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey to support the NJ Small Business Development Center (NJSBDC) for provision of technical assistance to NJ entrepreneurs that have applied to or are considering an application to the federal SBIR/STTR program in substantially final form, provided further that the Executive Director is authorized to make such changes, insertions, deletions or omissions to or from the form of the MOU, as may be necessary or appropriate, with the advice of the Office of the Attorney General. Under the MOU, CSIT will provide \$40,000 of funding to the NJSBDC to provide these technical assistance services to NJ entrepreneurs.

Additionally, to approve delegated authority to the CSIT Executive Director to extend the MOU by an additional 12 months as permitted by the MOU.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Mr. Sabina                      **SECOND:** Ms. Hart                      **AYES: 8**

**Item:** Approval of Round 1 Catalyst Seed Grant Program

**Request:** To approve the following items for Catalyst Seed R&D Grant program 1, Notice of Funding for the Catalyst Seed R&D Grant program (\$1,500,000 grant program); 2, Evaluation method; and 3, Scoring criteria

Additionally, to approve delegated authority to the CSIT Executive Director to 1, Decline and issue declination letters to applicants with Applications that are deemed incomplete following the resubmission deadline; 2, appoint a Hearing Officer for appeals, if necessary; and 3, to adjust dates for opening of grant submissions prior to publication of the Notice of Funding.

**MOTION TO APPROVE:** Dr. Bloom                      **SECOND:** Ms. Hart                      **AYES: 8**

### **The HUB – New Brunswick**

Ms. Coviello summarized the progress of the HUB project in New Brunswick, saying that the company would be formed from an investment of \$10 million from the Strategic Innovation Centers – Economic Recovery Fund appropriation.

The HUB will be strategically located across from the New Brunswick Train Station, on the NJ Transit/Amtrak main Northeast Corridor, providing access to Rutgers and the State’s life science corridor.

She added that the HUB aims to foster collaboration among proposed anchor institutions or “Core Partners” – Rutgers, Hackensack Meridian, and RWJ Barnabas. The Innovation Center will be comprised of space on the bottom five floors; the Core Partner Space will provide the

proposed “Core Partners” with collaborative office and workspace in close proximity to the Innovation Center on floors two through five.

She noted that the Rutgers University’s Translational Research Facility will occupy the top six floors of the building, and it is hoped that the NJEDA will have offices in the HUB as well.

### **Discussion on CSIT – Next Steps**

Chairman Doshi provided some thoughts about the next steps that the CSIT should take. He stated that we’ve had a targeted focus to help early stage entrepreneurs, developed strong partnerships, and that the ultimate goal was to be the “go to resource” for the Innovation Economy.

He asked the Members to think about the next steps for the CSIT, and to answer one question, “What has made the CSIT work so far, or what is one achievement?”

Ms. Hart said that of all that we’ve done, has had a major impact. She added that Ms. Sheft has done a thorough job of creating a variety of project opportunities, for small technology companies to take advantage of.

Dr. Bloom stated that the programmatic accomplishments have been outstanding, and we’re becoming a lynchpin in the process. How can we better play a role? Whenever we communicate, we should speak about commercialization. and use bigger platforms in the State of New Jersey.

Chairman Doshi agreed that CSIT could do a better job of sharing our outcomes. He asked what is one thing that CSIT should be doing, or what should we be doing more of?

Dr. Kornhauser stated that a big success is that we’ve gone from 1 to 3 staff members. We should have bigger entities bring their R&D to NJ. Also, attract big entities of Silicon Valley.

*Ms. Brown joined the meeting at 11am.*

Mr. Pascrell stated one thing we did right, was the hiring of a phenomenal executive director in Judith Sheft. The experience that she brings is outstanding. Another thing we did right is the collaboration with the EDA, and we could not have done it without the experts. Mr. Pascrell referred back to what Dr. Bloom said about technology transfer and commercialization, and being more inclusive of Higher Education. Senator-Elect Zwicker has two bills that I would like to explore.

Ms. Hart stated that we want to make sure CSIT is working with and hearing from entrepreneurs.

Ms. Brown said, one thing I agree with is the hiring of Judith Sheft. She asked, what are other states doing in this area? Clean Tech is phenomenal. Can we compete with other states? We can replicate and learn from them?

Ms. Sheft agreed regarding benchmarking, and stated that we’re always looking to replicate from other states.

Mr. Sabina sated the EDA has built a very strong market for entrepreneurs. I want to see more for early start ups. Also, more marketing and engagement will take us to the next level.

Dr. Bridges said given Charlene's and Dr. Bloom's comments, CSIT is doing quite a bit, but I don't think a lot of people know about it. We should spend more money on marketing. We can do more on social media in a low cost way.

Chairman Doshi stated that he's very keen on small working groups. There will be a quick survey on what we can do better, and we'll share the results with the Members.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

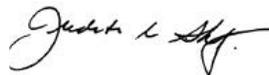
There being no further business, on a motion by Dr. Bridges, and seconded by Dr. Kornhauser, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28am.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date for the Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology is scheduled for January 7, 2022 at 10:00 am, virtually.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The foregoing and attachments represent a true and complete summary of the actions taken by the Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology at its Meeting on November 19, 2021.



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Judith Sheft, Executive Director  
Secretary