



STARS 2017

Innovation Letter: Autonomous Vehicle Program

March 3, 2017

To whom it may concern,

SCU is devoted to modifying its infrastructure, operations, and student/employee behaviors to decrease energy consumption and use more sustainable (low-carbon or carbon-free) methods of transportation. The most effective way to minimize transportation-associated emissions is to support the development of an interconnected, distributed, and convenient public transportation network to minimize the use of single-occupancy vehicles for commutes to, from, and around campus.

SCU is transforming our campus into a pedestrian- and public transit-friendly community. We have removed roads and replaced them with permeable paver pedestrian malls. This transformation incentivizes the use of sustainable transportation options on campus (walking, biking, and small electric vehicles).

SCU has partnered with Santa Clara startup Auro Robotics who provided the first autonomous Polaris GEM outfitted with cameras, lidar, GPS sensors/controls, and deep-learning software in November 2016 to launch the project. The vehicle currently runs in a loop through campus. Our campus community and visitors can catch a free ride in the autonomous shuttle, while Auro Robotics continuously monitors and improves their product. SCU's relentless support of new technologies to improve our carbon footprint, decrease driving and improve student experience will hopefully soon be available to campuses nation wide through this partnership.

SCU is a major advocate of planning for the integration of last-mile solutions that would connect the Santa Clara Transit Station (a transit hub for Valley Transit Authority, Caltrain, and soon the Bay Area Rapid Transit, across the street from campus), SCU, other local employers, and the future Downtown Santa Clara being developed west of campus. Currently, these autonomous vehicles cannot operate on or across public roadways. However, we hope the project will advance sufficiently to serve as a last-mile solution using driverless shuttles to connect people from our public transit hub to their destinations, making the commute by public transportation more comfortable, more convenient, and hopefully more popular.

Sincerely,

Chris Shay

Vice President, Finance and Administration (Interim)

Assistant Vice President, University Operations

Santa Clara University