



Brad Little, Governor  
Tom Kealey, Director

**IGEM Council Meeting**  
November 29, 2023  
Idaho Department of Commerce  
Clearwater Conference Room

<b>IGEM Council Members:</b>	<b>Idaho Commerce Staff:</b>
Rick Stott, Chair	Jeremy Chase, Marketing and Innovation Administrator
Tom Kealey	Carmen Achabal, IGEM Program Manager
Juan Carlos Duque	Cathy Perry, Grants Analyst
Damond Watkins	
Rep. Jeff Ehlers	
Dr. Marianne Walck	<b>Members of the public</b>
Dr. Christopher Nomura	None
Shawn Keough	

**Call to Order**

Rick Stott called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. The teleconference information was published in the public domain. Idaho Commerce Innovation Administrator Jeremy Chase and Shawn Keough were physically present in the Clearwater Conference room. Rick welcomed Shawn Keough to the Council and provided an overview of the Council’s responsibility and mission.

Eight members of IGEM Council present. Quorum met.

**Action Item: Approval of Minutes**

**Motion: To approve the minutes from the IGEM Council meeting minutes on 06-08-2023.**

**Moved:** Damond Watkins

**Seconded:** Tom Kealey

All in favor, no discussion.

**Motion approved.**

**Grant Award Review and Discussion**

Carmen provided a recap of round 1 FY24. 5 applications were submitted. In total a request over \$1.3 million. (\$1,355,078).

BSU APP #6194 – Too early stage for IGEM Commerce consideration

UI APP #6195 – Need a business plan.

UI APP #6199 – Too early stage – proof of concept

UI APP #6200 – Difficult to understand and needed a clear business plan

UI APP #6203 – Great partnerships, however needed a clear business plan.

## **Two No Cost Extensions for Consideration**

FY21 APP-004672

Boise State University - Optical Fiber Coatings & Sensors

This project team is requesting additional time to submit project information to a journal, that wishes to publish the project findings. The project team is requesting a 4 month extension to 03-31-2024. This would prevent the project from being encumbered – carried over into the next fiscal year. The 4 additional months provides the team with the ability to utilize the remaining \$23K.

Motion: Approve NCE to 03-31-2024

Moved: Juan Carlos Duque

Seconded: Damond Watkins

All in favor, no discussion.

Motion approved.

FY22 APP-005135

University of Idaho

Rare Earth Elements Drilling & Extraction

This project team is requesting a six month extension to complete the following: (1) Conduct 48 plant species survey for rare earth extraction for Idaho-sourced soil, (2) Develop a continuous sono-bioleaching setup for scaling up the extraction process, (3) Develop metallurgy extraction to convert mixed REEs powder to mixed rare earth metals, (4) Characterize the extracted materials, using ICP-MS machine, and (5) Disseminate the results and grant proposal submission. This request moves the end date from 06/30/2024 to 12/31/2024. The 6 additional months provides the team with the ability to complete the project as needed.

Motion: Approve NCE to 12/31/2024

Moved: Dr. Marianne Walck

Seconded: Juan Carlos Duque

All in favor, no discussion.

Dr. Christopher Nomura recused himself.

Motion approved.

## **Program Updates:**

Carmen welcomed Rick Stott as the newly appointed IGEM Chair. Carmen provided an update on IGEM industry partners and ties to the IGEM program. Doug and Shelly Sayer were honored and inducted into the Idaho Technology Council's Hall of Fame for their work in helping other industries to grow and thrive. Doug served as the inaugural Chairman of the IGEM Council.

Hempitecture and Pitch Aeronautics, both IGEM grant industry partners, were named finalists in the Idaho Technology Council's Idavation Awards. HempWool Thermal Insulation manufactured by Hempitecture, is a plant-based insulation product for walls, floors and ceilings. HempWool is nominated for the Peregrine Innovative Technology award, which showcases an innovative technology that has been launched successfully. Pitch Aeronautics produces a unique drone "Astria" for installations, maintenance and up-close inspections. They are nominated for the Hells Canyon Award, which is granted to a company that has experienced a daunting journey to achieve success.

Aigen, a Seattle-based startup, has secured \$12 million in funding to further develop and launch its solar-powered robot for weed control. Aigen, who partnered with the University of Idaho on their IGEM grant, unveiled the Aigen Element, that is equipped with two robotic arms that are capable of removing unwanted plants from farms. Unlike other agricultural robots, the Aigen Element can operate continuously for up to 14 hours without needing to be plugged in.

Inergy, provider of the world's most adaptable and easy-to-use renewable energy storage solutions, launched an Equity Crowdfunding Campaign. To date, it has raised \$487K.

Inergy also announced it has been selected by xTechSBIR CleanTech for a SBIR Phase II award valued over \$1.7 million focused on the Flex P3,ä Solar Generator to investigate its potential to fill capability gaps in the U.S. Army. The xTechSBIR Clean Tech competition is sponsored by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology).

Free to Feed was awarded a quarter of a million-dollar National Science Foundation grant to bring the first at-home breast milk allergen test kits to market in the US. This grant will allow Free to Feed to advance their work in real-time allergen detection technology for dietary proteins transferred to human milk. The allergen test kit will empower parents to experience a faster and more efficient journey to identify their infants' food allergy triggers and resolve their infants' symptoms at the root cause.

As this was Carmen's last IGEM Council meeting, she shared it has been an incredible journey managing this program, helping Idaho companies, and technologies. Truly an honor to help Idaho companies, start ups, and bolster Idaho's economy! In her new role, she will be helping to advance another Idaho icon – Micron, managing the Northwest University Network. The Council thanked Carmen for her dedication to the program, the companies she has helped, and the State of Idaho.

**Action Items:** None

**Action item: Adjournment**

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting**

**Moved:** Tom Kealey

**Seconded:** Dr. Christopher Nomura

All in favor, no discussion.

**Motion approved.**

**Rick Stott adjourned the meeting at 1:53 pm.**