

S U M M E R 2 0 0 5

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Call for Articles and Newsworthy Items

This newsletter depends on your input.

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ITE TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

 Institute of Transportation Engineers

Update From The Chair

Dr. Jodi L. Carson, Texas Transportation Institute

This is an exciting time to be involved in ITE, with unparalleled attention being put towards the challenge of workforce development. The ITE Transportation Education Council, with its member expertise and enthusiasm, has the potential for significant contribution in addressing this challenge.

Rather than philosophizing about the societal impacts of leaving this challenge unaddressed, I want to take this opportunity to both update you on new and recurrent council activities supporting workforce development and provide a note of "thanks" to the volunteers that have contributed. I am pleased by the activities that we have accomplished thus far and am tremendously encouraged by the level of volunteerism that the membership has exhibited. Thank you!

Short on time? Check out "The Update" below for an abbreviated list of activities and status.

THE UPDATE

Policy

ITE's Transportation Education Council: Redefining its Vision, Mission and Strategy

- See page 5, draft under review, provide comments to j-carson@tamu.edu.

ASCE Policy 465

- Watch for it in a future issue of *ITE Journal*.

Awards/Competitions

Outstanding Student Chapter and Paper Awards

- Thank you to the judges! Contact j-carson@tamu.edu to become a judge.

ITE Transportation Education Council Award for Innovation in Education

- Thank you to the judges! Contact j-carson@tamu.edu to become a judge.

Concrete Canoe-Like Competition

- Contact b-bochner@tamu.edu with ideas or to get involved.

Projects/Products

Practical Problems in Transportation: A Living Repository for Use By Faculty

- Problem solicitation and Web site development currently underway; thank you to the volunteer reviewers and beta testers!

Web-Based Directory of Transportation Engineering Course Syllabi and Materials

- Visit www.webs1.uidaho.edu/transed/.

A Survey of the Knowledge Base Expectations of Transportation Employers

- Watch for forthcoming results.

Support ITE

- Watch for periodic e-mail requests.

continued on next page

Policy

ITE's Transportation Education Council: Redefining its Vision, Mission and Strategy. During the past 6 months, the Education Council's Executive Committee has worked to redefine, or really "define," the council's vision, mission and strategy. Several factors motivated this activity:

1. The Education Council has typically had a very broad and vaguely-defined focus that has challenged significant contribution in education-related products or services.
2. Its broad focus has resulted in a diverse membership composed of academic faculty, academic researchers, professional trainers, practitioners from public and private sectors and students. Despite having 126 registered members, participation in the Education Council has been critically low.
3. With such diversity in membership and lack of clarity in focus, the identification, development and implementation of education-related products or services has historically occurred ad hoc, without benefit of a "strategy" to identify and prioritize member needs and responsive products and services.
4. ITE is focusing significant resources to workforce development initiatives; cooperation and coordination with the Education Council will ensure concurrent and consistent direction, avoid duplication and maximize potential for success.

The results of this activity, in the form of a draft statement, are included in this newsletter. The proposed statement is prefaced by: (1) description of the motivating factors, (2) description of the redefining process and (3) justification for any of the proposed changes. This document is currently under review by ITE. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me (j-carson@tam.u.edu).

Many thanks to Daniel Dulaski (University of Massachusetts), Kathleen Frankle (University of Maryland), Keith Knapp (University of Wisconsin) and Marty Lipinski (University of Memphis) for their efforts in developing this document. The breadth of backgrounds and interests represented by these individ-

uals helped to ensure diversity and representation in the statement.

ASCE Policy 465. Under Policy 465, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) supports the concept of the master's degree or equivalent as a prerequisite for licensure and the practice of civil engineering at a professional level. "ASCE encourages institutions of higher education, governmental units, employers, civil engineers and other appropriate organizations to endorse, support and promote the concept of mandatory post-baccalaureate education for the practice of civil engineering at a professional level. The implementation of this effort should occur through establishing appropriate curricula in the form of education experience, appropriate recognition and compensation in the workplace and congruent standards for licensure."

For educational institutions, ASCE Policy 465 could significantly affect the ability to recruit students to the profession, administrative resource allocations, the nature of graduate curricula, etc. Watch for Marty Lipinski's (University of Memphis) article in *ITE Journal* to learn more; the article is currently awaiting publication.

Awards/Competitions

Outstanding Student Chapter and Paper Awards. Each year, the Education Council recruits volunteer judges for the Outstanding Student Chapter and Outstanding Student Paper Awards. Providing recognition of student research and activities accomplishments is a powerful strategy for encouraging continued participation in ITE and the larger profession. Many thanks to Eric Donnell (Pennsylvania State University), Alfred Hakkert (Israel Institute of Technology), Mike Knodler (University of Massachusetts), David Noyce (University of Wisconsin), Wayne Sarasua (Clemson University), William Sproule (Michigan Technological University), Amiy Varma (North Dakota State University) and Rhonda Young (University of Wyoming) for providing this service.

ITE Transportation Education Council Award for Innovation in Education. For the first time, the Education Council is recognizing inno-

vative ways of attracting, developing or retaining transportation professionals. The inaugural ITE Transportation Education Council Award for Innovation in Education will be presented at the TexITE (District 9) Summer Meeting and Exhibit. Thanks to Kathleen Frankle (University of Maryland), John Mason (Pennsylvania State University), William Sproule (Michigan Technological University) and Gary Thomas (Texas Transportation Institute) for serving as judges. A very special thanks also go out to Gary for developing the award and coordinating the selection process.

Concrete Canoe-Like Competition. Currently underway, Brian Bochner (Texas Transportation Institute), Shashi Nambisan (University of Nevada-Las Vegas) and William Sproule (Michigan Technological University) are putting their collective heads together to develop a concept for a comparable "concrete canoe" competition with a transportation focus. Key elements for the competition are that it must: (1) be technically challenging, (2) encourage student involvement with professionals and/or attendance at ITE meetings and (3) be fun! There may be the potential to partner with or build from the Future Cities Competition program (www.futurecity.org/), targeting college or university students. If you have ideas and would like to get involved in this activity, please contact Brian Bochner (b-bochner@tam.u.edu) or me (j-carson@tam.u.edu). We would appreciate the help!

Projects/Products

Practical Problems in Transportation: A Living Repository for Use by Faculty. The Practical Problems Repository project is off and running thanks to all of the feedback and support provided. The project proposes the development of a "living repository" containing a library of topic-oriented practical problems in transportation for use as class exercises by faculty. Each repository entry will be based upon an actual transportation project and will contain a: (1) standardized problem description, (2) complete data set to support analysis or conclusions (as required) and (3) final technical report detailing the project's actual outcome. The repository will be populated by member practitioners willing to share project experiences.

This project has wide-reaching benefits:

1. Faculty, particularly new faculty, will be able to greatly enhance the classroom experience, providing the opportunity to work with real-life situations rather than only textbook exercises.
2. Students will develop and maintain an interest in transportation and gain valuable practical experience and exposure to activities that they will be expected to perform in the profession.
3. Practitioners, through limited promotional “advertising” (such as company logo), will heighten awareness of their company and enhance recruitment of top graduating students.
4. Through this mechanism, practitioners can assume a more active role in assisting with the workforce development challenge and developing relationships with academia.

The status of the project is as follows. Brian Bochner (Texas Transportation Institute), Keith Knapp (University of Wisconsin) and Gary Thomas (Texas Transportation Institute) provided a “prototype” practical problem. Using this prototype, Zach Pleasant (ITE Headquarters) has developed a preliminary Web-based repository and user interface that will allow faculty to search the database by topic, course level and problem duration. A solicitation for additional practical problems was distributed to Traffic Engineering Council members. Thanks to William Sampson (University of Florida) for serving as a volunteer liaison between the Traffic Engineering and Education Councils in this effort. Candidate practical problems for this first year are due July 1, 2005. Following a preliminary review, the practical problems will undergo “beta testing” in September/October 2005. Thanks to the 22 volunteers who already have offered to assist with either the preliminary review or beta testing! If you haven’t yet volunteered but are interested, please contact me (j-carson@tamu.edu). Also, we will be looking to team with other ITE councils for future practical problem submittals. Let me know if you are a member of another council

and are willing to be a spokesman/liason for this effort. Lastly, use of the repository will be limited to Education Council members. If you are not currently a member, plan to join in November!

Web-Based Directory of Transportation Engineering Course Syllabi and Materials. Recently developed by Michael Kyte (University of Idaho), this Web site (www.webs1.uidaho.edu/transed/) indexes transportation engineering courses that are taught in colleges and universities throughout the United States. The Web site is searchable by subject, institution, or instructor and links users to course syllabi and other course materials that are maintained on college and university local Web sites. This information will allow university faculty to more effectively share information regarding the courses that they teach and will be particularly helpful to new faculty developing course materials.

A Survey of the Knowledge-Base Expectations of Transportation Employers. Currently underway and nearing completion, Gary Thomas (Texas Transportation Institute) has conducted a survey of public and private transportation employers to determine what expectations they have of new civil engineering graduates (bachelor’s and master’s degrees) with respect to transportation knowledge. This information will support faculty when tailoring course content and offerings to address employer needs (as appropriate), undergraduate students in selecting elective coursework and graduate students in developing a program of study. Watch for the forthcoming results of this survey.

Support to ITE

The Education Council has been active in supporting the larger workforce development activities of ITE. Jerry Hall (University of New Mexico), William Sproule (Michigan Technological University) and Carlos Sun (University of Missouri) provided useful sources for transportation-related ethics examples from academia (Internet use and plagiarism, software licensing, cheating, etc.), at the request of Phil Caruso (ITE Headquarters).

In addition, a number of Education Council members responded to a survey distributed earlier this year by Aliyah Horton (ITE Headquarters). The intent of the survey was to better understand the breadth of courses offered in transportation engineering at both the undergraduate- and graduate-levels, as well as in continuing education. The survey solicited information related to the types of courses being offered, the frequency and student enrollments. The survey also solicited information regarding academic textbooks and/or supplementary references currently being used and requested suggestions for additional instructional resources that would assist in teaching these courses (PowerPoint slides, practical exercises, case studies, etc.).

In the near term, Education Council members have been and may continue to be prompted to provide expertise and guidance in support of a Federal Highway Administration/National Highway Institute effort to determine the merits of developing a Distance Learning Certificate Program for Transportation Education. ITE is on an Advisory Task Force for this effort.

Whew! Please don’t hesitate to contact me, any member of the Executive Committee, or any “activity leader” if you would like to get involved, provide suggestions, or simply ask questions. That is what we are here for. I am looking forward to working with you on these activities and more. Thanks again for all you have done so far and, in advance, for your help with forthcoming activities! We are making great progress!

The Education Council Redefines its Vision, Mission and Strategy

During the past 6 months, the Education Council's Executive Committee has worked to redefine, or really "define," the council's vision, mission and strategy. The results of this activity, in the form of a draft vision, mission and strategy statement, are shown here. The proposed statement is prefaced by: (1) a description of the motivating factors, (2) a description of the redefining process and (3) justification for any of the proposed changes. This document is currently under review by ITE. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please forward them to Jodi Carson at j-carson@tamu.edu.

Several factors are motivating the current re-examination and potential redefinition of ITE's Transportation Education Council's vision, mission and strategy:

- The Education Council has typically had a very broad and vaguely-defined focus that has challenged significant contribution in education-related products or services. Unlike ITE's other councils, which are largely focused on a single technical aspect of the profession (such as Traffic Engineering Council, ITS Council, Pedestrian/Bicycle Council, etc.), the Education Council cross-cuts all aspects of the profession, further challenging its focus.
- Its broad focus has resulted in a diverse membership composed of academic faculty, academic researchers, professional trainers, practitioners from public and private sectors and students. Despite having 126 registered members, participation in the Education Council has been critically low. Diversity in membership may offer some explanation; any products or services directed at a subset of members will hold little interest to remaining members.
- With such diversity in membership and lack of clarity in focus, the identification, development and implementation of education-related products or services has historically occurred ad hoc, without the benefit of a "strategy" to

identify and prioritize member needs and responsive products and services.

- ITE is focusing significant resources to workforce development initiatives. Action items include conducting a needs assessment, developing a business plan, expanding existing professional development programs, encouraging student pursuit of transportation engineering, influencing K-12 interest in technical subjects, etc.

With these factors in mind, this document describes: (1) the Education Council's existing vision, mission and strategy, (2) key discussion points raised during the re-examination process and (3) the proposed vision, mission and strategy for the Education Council.

Existing TEC Vision, Mission and Strategy

The current focus of the Education Council, as posted on www.ite.org, is as follows:

The Transportation Education Council covers all issues related to and enhancing the professionalism and education of transportation professionals, including the exchange of technical information between transportation educators and other transportation professionals.

Career guidance, professional development and concerns of transportation educators are the areas of focus for the ITE Education Council. The council typically supports and sponsors events at both the ITE Technical Conferences and Annual Meetings designed to educate and inform transportation education professionals on such issues as building better leaders in transportation and innovative transportation education tools. In addition, the Education Council's newsletters have examined or informed on a variety of issues, including: whether transportation should be a required course for all civil engineering students, the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual, getting student members involved in ITE

meetings and research that could impact education and training.

With such a broad focus, the Education Council has historically struggled to make significant and progressive advancement in developing products or services to sufficiently support member needs.

Members. Current membership in the Education Council consists of approximately 40 percent faculty (12 percent academic researchers, 5 percent LTAP/TTAP personnel) and 44 percent non-academic professionals (60 percent public sector/40 percent private sector). Approximately 126 individuals are listed as members of the Education Council, though significantly less are active participants.

Products and Services. Recent products and services developed by the Education Council have included:

- Practical Problems in Transportation Engineering Repository. This "living repository" contains a library of topic-oriented practical problems in transportation for use as class exercises by faculty.
- Web-based Directory of Transportation Engineering Course Syllabi and Materials. This Web site links to course syllabi and other Web-based course materials to allow university faculty to more effectively share information regarding the courses that they teach.
- Training Opportunities Clearinghouse. This Web site links to seminars and course information in the areas of intelligent transportation systems, traffic operations engineering, transportation planning and transportation safety.
- Student Membership Listserv and Monthly E-Newsletter. A listserv of all student members of ITE facilitates the distribution of information pertinent to student members.
- Student Leadership and Faculty Advisor Listserv. A listserv of student leadership and faculty advisors promotes the exchange ideas for student chapter programs, pro-

vides a forum to field answers to questions and encourages the definition of future services.

- Student Chapter and Student Paper Award Program Enhancements. Equitable cash awards and travel stipends for the student paper award and student chapter award winners will increase attendance at the ITE Annual Meeting and Exhibit.
- Award for Innovation in Education. This newly developed award recognizes unique or innovative ways of attracting students to or retaining professionals in the field of transportation engineering.

These products and services, although of value, were selected and implemented without benefit of a strategic planning process to identify and prioritize member needs. Also, little feedback has been received regarding the utility of these products and services.

Key Discussion Points

To overcome the previously identified Education Council shortcomings related to breadth in focus, low member participation and a lack of “strategy” for products and services and to accommodate the significant focus on workforce development by ITE Headquarters, revision efforts were initiated. The ITE Transportation Education Council Executive Committee: (1) exchanged ideas internally, (2) solicited input and opinions from ITE staff, elected officials, council chairs, select members and others and (3) looked to ITE’s other non-technical councils for example and guidance. Through these discussions and reviews, the following alternatives emerged early in this “re-defining” process:

1. Narrow the focus of the Education Council by excluding all student recruitment activities. ITE would assume student recruitment activities as part of its workforce development initiatives. The council would be renamed the ITE Transportation “Educator” Council, with a new focus on faculty and professional trainer products and services.
2. Narrow the focus of the Education Council by excluding all continuing education/professional development activities. ITE technical

councils are currently, and would continue, to conduct their own continuing education/professional development activities.

3. Maintain the current (broad) focus of the Education Council but define “primary” and “support” roles concurrently with ITE’s staff to avoid duplication of efforts.

Each alternative has distinct advantages and disadvantages (described below).

Alternative 1. Narrow Focus by Excluding Student Recruitment Activities

Excluding student recruitment activities from the Education Council’s vision, mission and strategy would seemingly narrow the focus of the council. However, student recruitment is inherent in the role of educators at all levels. At primary and secondary school levels, teachers recruit high-aptitude students to participate in advanced classes or in technically-focused fairs or competitions. At colleges or universities, faculty recruit students to graduate school or graduate elective courses, participate in research projects or assist with service activities. As such, the focus on student recruitment may be inextricable in the provision of products and services for “educators.”

In addition to asking “how” student recruitment activities would be distinguished from the proposed narrowed focus on educators, the question of “why” is also raised. Educators, by nature of their chosen profession, have an aptitude and dedication to student-centered initiatives. In addition, they have unparalleled access to this ITE audience. Educators are able to interface more frequently, often daily, with students and over time, develop a trusting and respectful relationship. Advice or guidance from a trusted and respected educator has a much greater influence than advice or guidance provided by an infrequent professional.

Because of their unique position, educators can be a valuable conduit; providing information to and receiving feedback from students. Additionally, educators can monitor trends within educational institutions (such as increasing numbers of students enrolled in advanced place-

ment math classes, a reduction in transportation-related graduate elective course offerings, etc.) to provide early warnings to ITE and suggest target programs for recruitment.

A second area of concern relates to the dynamic nature of the transportation profession and subsequently, the areas of focus for ITE. Presently, workforce development is a priority for ITE, however, changing leadership, legislation, funding opportunities, etc. may result in a change of priorities. Conversely, the Education Council vision, mission and strategy are intended to be consistent and stable in the long-term (meaning, not redrafted every 3 years). Excluding student recruitment activities from the Education Council’s focus and including these activities in ITE’s workforce development plan presents a risk when new priorities emerge.

A consistent and long-term student recruitment “champion” (through the Education Council) can help to ensure that the “workforce crisis” cycle is not repeated each time priorities change and resources are redirected. The Education Council has worked successfully in the past with ITE to introduce several initiatives at the international level to encourage students to the profession by including membership dues reductions, award recognition, financial subsidies for meeting registration, meals, etc. and student-only sponsored events. These types of initiatives are not adequately addressed in current student programs (the Student Chapters program).

Alternative 2. Narrow Focus by Excluding Continuing Education/Professional Development Activities

Again, excluding continuing education/professional development activities from the Education Council’s vision, mission and strategy would seemingly narrow the focus of the council. However, at the college and university level, faculty frequently provide continuing education/professional development as part of their overall academic role. In addition,

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educational institutions often employ professionals whose primary role is training, either through a university-based research, LTAP, or TTAP center. As such, the Education Council must include some aspect of continuing education or professional development activities to adequately address the potential activities and consequent needs of its members. Instead of assuming a diminishing role in continuing education/professional development activities, the Education Council should have a significant “voice” in ITE’s workforce/professional development activities (through direct representation and involvement on ITE task forces, initiatives, etc.), given the expertise and enthusiasm of its members for these types of activities.

This alternative however, raises an excellent point regarding the potential for increased coordination with ITE’s technical councils. Increased dialogue between the Education Council and various technical councils can help to identify continuing education/professional development needs and co-develop educational tools that jointly benefit all members.

Alternative 3. Maintain Existing Focus

The third prevalent alternative raised for discussion is to maintain the existing focus of the Education Council. Differing from a “do nothing” alternative, this approach would provide the opportunity to clarify the existing focus and develop an accompanying strategy for prioritizing member needs. This redefined vision, mission and strategy would provide an improved framework for coordinating activities with ITE as it moves its workforce development initiatives forward. Because of the aforementioned advantages and insensitivity to changing ITE priorities, this alternative is preferred and forms the basis for the proposed modifications below.

Proposed ITE Transportation Education Council Vision, Mission and Strategy

Modeled after other non-technical councils within ITE, including the Public Agency Council who focuses on “identifying, developing and delivering relevant products on management, leadership, organizational, institutional and related issues affecting ITE members in their employment in or interaction with the public sector” and the Consultants Council who is responsible for “overseeing the development of technical and management issues affecting consultants engaged in transportation and traffic engineering,” the proposed vision and mission for the ITE Transportation Education Council are as follows:

Vision: The vision of the ITE Transportation Education Council is to provide: (1) a focal point for identifying and addressing the needs of educational institutions as they emerge and evolve and (2) contribution to cross-cutting needs of ITE, in partnership with ITE’s technical councils. A cooperative alliance of administrators, faculty, researchers, professional trainers, practitioners, students, or others will lead the vision by actively pursuing initiatives to encourage involvement in the profession and ITE.

Mission: The mission of the ITE Transportation Education Council is to identify, prioritize, develop and implement products and services to support ITE members in their employment in or interaction with educational institutions. ITE members employed at educational institutions may include administrators, faculty, researchers, professional trainers, or other. The interests of college or university students and pre-college students (through interaction with primary and secondary school teachers) are inherently represented.

Goals: Annual goals of the ITE Transportation Education Council are as follows:

1. Initiating and increasing the participation of educational institutions at all levels in ITE and the profession (demonstrated by in-

creased membership in ITE or the Education Council, attendance at ITE conferences or Education Council meetings, participation in pre-college outreach events, etc.);

2. Improving the depth and breadth of services offered to educational institutions (demonstrated by the products or services delivered);
3. Sponsoring education-related sessions of interest to members at ITE’s Annual Meeting and Exhibit;
4. Encouraging representation of educational institutions in leadership roles in ITE (demonstrated by the number of educational institution employees assuming leadership roles in ITE);
5. Supporting ITE in identifying early warnings or target program areas that deserve special attention or resources; and
6. Providing a significant “voice” and expertise in ITE’s workforce/professional development activities through direct representation and involvement on ITE task forces, initiatives, etc.

Strategy: Each year, the ITE Transportation Education Council will follow a general five-step process that will support attainment of its goals and facilitate coordination with ITE’s workforce development initiatives. This process consists of identifying and prioritizing member needs, developing and implementing responsive products or services and soliciting feedback to ensure constant improvement.

1. **Identify member needs.** Member challenges and resultant needs may vary widely depending on the nature of employment.

Administrators face pressure from the transportation community to:

- Offer a required transportation course at the undergraduate level but face legislative constraints that cap credit requirements for graduation and competing course topics;
- Offer an increased number and variety of transportation elective courses but must ensure these courses are populated to make them cost-effective; and

- Encourage greater faculty involvement in service activities but recognize that teaching and research are the metrics for successful promotion and tenure.

Faculty are challenged by:

- Lack of support from administrators to participate in service activities;
- Limited travel funds to attend ITE conferences and annual meetings;
- Lack of teaching “tools” beyond the traditional textbook; and
- Competing research publication venues outside of *ITE Journal*.

Researchers are challenged to either:

- Secure, and often compete for, the brightest students to employ as research assistants; or
- Provide sufficient funding to support research assistants.

Professional trainers face pressure to:

- Keep pace with the dynamic state-of-the-practice;
- Accurately anticipate and identify training needs; and
- Develop materials that are effective for adult learners with varying backgrounds and skill levels.

While these topics generally characterize educational institution challenges in aggregate, members will be surveyed annually to identify emerging or evolving needs. These responses will form the basis of the projects that are undertaken each year, providing greater member ownership in the activities undertaken by the Education Council.

2. Prioritize member needs. When prioritizing member needs, problems will first be categorized as:

- Not “reasonable” to correct;
- Appropriate as volunteer effort; and
- Requiring additional ITE resources.

Some of the needs identified by Education Council members may be unreasonable to assume. An example would be the restructuring of the academic promotion and tenure process to provide greater recognition of service activities. Needs of this nature will be eliminated from further consideration. Remaining needs will be characterized as appropriate for a volunteer effort or requiring additional ITE resources. Those that can be accomplished solely as a volunteer effort or with minimal assistance from ITE will be directly pursued. Those identified as requiring additional ITE resources will be forwarded to appropriate ITE staff members for consideration. In these instances, the Education Council will provide recommendations for moving the project forward and will be “on-call” for assistance and guidance throughout the process.

3/4. Develop and implement responsive products and services.

Either singularly, or in cooperation with or in support of ITE, the Education Council will develop and implement education related products and services identified by the membership as a priority. Development and implementation requirements will vary depending on the unique nature of each product of service.

5. Solicit feedback to ensure constant improvement.

When feasible, the Education Council will implement performance monitoring methods to: (1) gauge the success of the various products and services offered and (2) allow continual responsiveness to changing needs over time. These performance monitoring activities will not be pursued if they unduly tax ITE’s resources.

Web Text

At educational institutions nationwide, engineering enrollment is decreasing while the demand for skilled transportation engineers is increasing. The ITE Transportation Education Council provides a focal point for identifying and addressing emerging and evolving needs of educational in-

stitutions. Membership in ITE’s Transportation Education Council is composed of a cooperative alliance of administrators, faculty, researchers, professional trainers, practitioners, students and others interested in actively pursuing initiatives that will lead to greater involvement in ITE and the profession. The interests of college or university students and pre-college students (through interaction with primary and secondary school teachers) are inherently represented by this council.

The ITE Transportation Education Council seeks to initiate and increase the participation of educational institutions (at all levels) in ITE and the profession, improve the depth and breadth of services offered to educational institutions, encourage representation of educational institutions in leadership roles in ITE, support ITE in identifying education-related early warnings or target program areas that deserve special attention or resources and provide a significant “voice” and expertise in ITE’s workforce/professional development activities through direct representation and involvement on ITE task forces, initiatives, etc.

Policy

The ITE Transportation Education Council carefully monitors education-related policies in the interest of its members. One example is ASCE’s Policy 465 Academic Prerequisites for Licensure and Professional Practice in which ASCE supports the concept of the master’s degree or equivalent as a prerequisite for licensure and the practice of civil engineering at a professional level. This policy has direct implications for graduate-level enrollments and institutional resource requirements at colleges and universities.

Awards

Each year, the ITE Transportation Education Council provides judges for the Outstanding Student Paper and Outstanding Student Chapter Competitions. In addition, the council recognizes unique or innovative ways of attracting students to or retaining professionals in the field of transportation engineering through its Award for Innovation in Education.

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Products

The ITE Transportation Education Council has developed and maintains three notable on-line products:

- **Web-Based Directory of Transportation Engineering Course Syllabi and Materials.** This Web site provides links to course syllabi and other Web-based course materials to allow university faculty to more effectively share information regarding the courses that they teach.

- **Practical Problems in Transportation Engineering Repository.** This “living repository” contains a library of topic-oriented practical problems in transportation for use as class exercises by faculty.
- **Training Opportunities Clearinghouse.** This Web site links to seminars and course information in the areas of intelligent transportation systems, traffic operations engineering, transportation planning and transportation safety.

Publications

In 2003, the ITE Transportation Education Council revised the ITE *Student Chapter Manual* which still serves as the premier guidance document for student leaders initiating and operating a Student Chapter Program at their respective educational institution.

To join the ITE Transportation Education Council, contact Wendy Leyes at 202-289-0222, ext. 114.

Texas A&M Program Wins Inaugural “Innovation in Transportation Education” Award

The Education Council is pleased to announce that the winner of the first ever Innovation in Transportation Education Award is the Mentors Program at Texas A&M University. The Mentors Program, headed up by Dr. Conrad Dudek, provides graduate students with the opportunity to meet, work closely with and obtain technical and professional advice from top-level transportation professionals from private enterprise and government. The program provides training and builds confidence on the part of students when communicating with prominent persons as they succeed in the transportation profession.

The activities begin in early spring when the students review papers prepared by previous participants in the program and then prepare a Power-Point presentation summarizing the reviewed papers. The students meet with the course instructor and other faculty in early April and make formal presentations of the reviewed papers. The presentations are evaluated by the students’ peers and the course instructor. One of the objectives of the gathering in the spring is to prepare the students for presentations that they will make to mentors in the summer.

Six top-level transportation professionals from private enterprise and departments of transportation are invited to serve as mentors during the summer portion of the program.

The summer program begins when the mentors arrive on campus in early June to visit and interact with the students for 3 full days. There

are four parts to the program during this initial visit: (1) student presentations, (2) symposium, (3) forum and (4) workshop.

Following introductions and initial discussions with the mentors, the students make presentations on the papers that they reviewed in the spring. The primary objective of this portion of the program is to give each student an opportunity to make a formal presentation to transportation administrators/practitioners.

The second major activity during the mentors’ first campus visit is the Symposium on Advanced Surface Transportation Systems during which each mentor presents up to two lectures on topics related to ITS, traffic operations and traffic management. Students from several universities in the region are invited to attend this portion of the program.

The third major activity is the forum. The forum provides another opportunity for each student to visit with any of the mentors that he/she desires in order to finalize ideas for the term paper.

A workshop is then held with the students, mentors and course instructor. The workshop begins with each student formally presenting his/her research topic and briefly describing the intended approach to accomplish the objectives of the paper. At this time, the mentors and instructor critique the topic and study approach and identify potential resources (persons, reports, organizations) for the student to pursue.

Following the student presentations, student-mentor assignments are made in a private meeting between the mentors and course instructor. Each mentor supervises up to two students; in some cases, a mentor may serve as a secondary mentor to additional students. The workshop is then reconvened and the mentors spend time one-on-one with each assigned student discussing the paper topic, focusing on achievable objectives, and discussing the study approach and resources. The course instructor moves among the discussion groups, provides input as needed and ensures that the students are focused and that major questions are answered.

The next few days following the departure of the mentors from campus, the students work with the instructor to finalize research paper proposals. The proposals must be explicit to ensure that the objectives can be achieved during the 1.5 months that the students have to conduct the research and to prepare a draft paper. In addition to meetings with the instructor, the students work directly with the mentors throughout the term while preparing their papers.

The mentors return to the Texas A&M University campus near the end of the summer term to hear and critique the students’ presentations. The mentors and course instructor provide written critiques to the students. The students have only a few days to incorporate the comments into their papers. The revised papers are sent to the mentors for final review.

Continued on next page

The students then incorporate additional comments into the final manuscripts. The culmination of the Mentors Program each year is the publication of the students' papers in a *Compendium of Papers on Advanced Surface Transportation Systems*. In most cases, it is the first

publication for each student who can then add the paper to his/her official resume. A wide variety of topics and issues are addressed by the students.

Dr. Dudek reports that the Mentors Program has been instrumental in attracting students into the transporta-

tion engineering graduate program at Texas A&M University and in developing skills for the future leaders in the transportation profession.

Traffic Signal National Report Card: Media Reponse

On April 20, 2005 the National Transportation Operations Coalition (NTOC) released the National Traffic Signal Report Card. The results contained in the Traffic Signal National Report Card were based on a traffic signal operation self assessment released by NTOC in the Summer/Fall of 2004. More than 370 agencies responded representing 49 states. The number of signals represented by the responding agencies represent about one-third of all signals in the United States. There was good distribution among cities, counties and state and among signal system sizes. Overall, findings from the National Traffic Signal Report Card indicate that traffic signal operation in the United States scores a "D-." The full report is available at www.ite.org/reportcard/.

The objective of the National Traffic Signal Report Card was to provide a baseline for assessing traffic signal operations and bring attention to the need for more resources for signal operations. Therefore, a media release was planned at the outset of the project. The media release of the National Traffic Signal Report Card followed an extensive outreach effort to the transportation community to make both participants and non-participants in the signal self assessment aware that a public release was coming. At the time, the project team was not sure that there would be any media interest in this story. One of the big surprises was the overwhelming interest and extensive coverage the report card received. The National Traffic Signal Report Card press conference generated significant media attention and was covered extensively by print, television and radio outlets across the country and even in other parts of the world. Highlights include:

- A national Associated Press story that was picked up by several hundred daily newspapers, radio and television stations and Web sites across the country;
- A story on page 3A of *USA Today*;
- Major national coverage including segments on: ABC World News Tonight and Good Morning America, CNN Headline News, FOX News Live with Brian Wilson, CBS's Osgood File with Charles Osgood; and
- More than 400 local television stories.

The extensive media coverage was the result of behind the scenes work by the public relations consultants who worked as part of the project team. Some of the efforts to prepare included careful reading (and rereading) of the executive summary so that it would be easy to understand for a non-technical audience. Also, message points were developed and provided to all spokespersons for the sponsoring associations. The message points were simplified and distilled so that the essence of the message could be conveyed succinctly and with minimal distortion. The executive summary, technical report, message points and a Power-Point presentation are also available at www.ite.org/reportcard/.

The story had amazing staying power. A week after the news conference an average of five calls a day from reporters working on future stories were still being received.

There were many lessons learned but the biggest lesson learned is that people care about transportation and traffic signals. They are sincerely interested in how signals work and would like to see signals work better. People heard and understood the need for more resources. In one case, a county commissioner heard the story on the news, called his county and state DOT, asked questions about signal retiming and ultimately added funds to its budget for signal timing for the next 3 years.

At times the project team and members of the sponsoring associations were uncomfortable with the media exposure. The team learned that it was an important part of the overall effort and was key to achieving the desired goal. If the transportation profession isn't willing to talk publicly about its work, challenges and needs—who is?

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The full text of the March/April 2005 TR News "School Transportation: Securing the Best Options" is available on the Web for free access. A number of informative articles are included such as security, sidewalk connections, school location, AVL for buses and the impact of the built environment on physical activity.

trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=4974

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Wednesday, October 12 12:00 noon–1:30 p.m., EDT <i>PTOE Refresher Course: Traffic Control Devices</i>	\$250	\$275	\$
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Thursday, September 15 12:00 noon–1:30 p.m., EDT <i>Signal Timing Fundamentals</i>	\$250	\$275	\$
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