

### TRANSPORTATION EDUCATION COUNCIL INNOVATION IN EDUCATION AWARD MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S SOCIOMOBILITY TEAM



Congratulations to Pete Savolainen, P.E., and Michigan State University's Sociomobility Team for being selected to receive the 2022 Transportation Education Council Innovation in Education Award for its Sociomobility Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) site. The REU site trains future thought leaders for careers that are focused on the development of innovative, multidisciplinary solutions that jointly address both the technical and societal aspects of Automated Vehicles (AVs).

AVs offer the potential for significant improvements in the mobility, safety, accessibility, and sustainability of transportation systems. As the automotive industry continues rapid advances in the technical domain, there are myriad associated social consequences that will result from large-scale deployment.

However, these consequences are not well understood, and there is an imminent need to train students in sociomobility—an area of research at the intersection of engineering and the social sciences.

The program will achieve several objectives, including facilitating the following: (1) examining social, political, legal, and economic concerns that may affect the widespread adoption of AVs; (2) assessing issues related to social equity and the accessibility of AVs to groups with limited mobility alternatives, including adolescent, elderly, low-income, and disabled individuals; and (3) studying the implications of AVs on public health, urban planning, workforce development, and the environment. The site will provide research experiences leading to technological advances with potential for near-immediate adoption by public agencies and private industry, while the scientific findings will help to shape emerging policies and programs.

The REU engages 30 undergraduate students in a rigorous program that provides exposure to a diverse range of educational and research opportunities under the sociomobility theme. Student cohorts are recruited with emphases on technical and social diversity, and the program leverages existing campus resources as part of a robust initiative. The 10-week program allows participants to play an active and meaningful role in a series of multi-disciplinary projects under the direction of faculty from various departments and programs. Projects are developed collaboratively with a diverse range of public and private industry stakeholders while supplementing ongoing campus-wide mobility research efforts. Students will gain immersive, hands-on experience in addressing sociomobility issues, furthering our understanding of both the technological capabilities and societal implications of new mobility solutions that are introduced in complex social systems.

Congratulations to Pete Savolainen and the MSU Sociomobility team on this achievement! Read [more](#).