Transportation Engineering Endowed Excellence Fund

UT’s Transportation Engineering Program would like to thank all of the contributors to the recently established Transportation Engineering Endowed Excellence Fund. This fund was created by friends, alumni, and corporate sponsors of the program as a resource that will serve the needs of the program and its students in perpetuity. Distributions from this fund will support a plethora of activities in the department, including but not limited to UT activities at the annual Transportation Research Board Meeting, travel awards for graduate students, graduate student activities, and community building within the Transportation Program.

The endowment fund, which has a goal of $250,000, recently reached the pledge total of $25,000 required to establish the fund with the UT Board of Regents. Additional pledges to the fund will boost its value, and may be paid over three calendar years. Contributions to the fund can be made by mail using the form on page 5, or online through the “Support Transportation Engineering” section of the Program’s website (see last page for web address).

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Ms. Erin Flanigan, MSCE 1994, the lead alumna on this effort, and to all who have already donated to the fund, listed on page 2.

Summer TexITE

By Steve Boyles

This June, four transportation students traveled to Amarillo, TX for the summer meeting of the Texas district of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (TexITE). At this meeting, these students represented our chapter by attending technical sessions and networking with transportation professionals. Our students also accepted several awards presented by TexITE: Rachel Copperman won an Outstanding Student award, Steve Boyles won the Student Paper Competition, and our chapter as a whole won an award for the best annual report. Congratulations! Also, as part of the conference’s social program, the students saw the outdoor musical "Texas," a story of the settlement of the Texas Panhandle, shown at Palo Duro Canyon just south of Amarillo. Thanks to TexITE for organizing a great conference, and for helping support our students!

As always, we had a great group of interns this past summer! Feeling relieved after their final presentations, they assembled for a last picture. From left to right: Melissa Thompson, Danielle Steinke, Andrew Karl, Eleni Pappas, Migdalia Carrion, John Lowery, and Renee Alsup.
TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Are you a college sophomore or junior? Be sure to check out information about UT’s Undergraduate Summer Internship in Transportation (USIT)! Applications are available online: www.caee.utexas.edu/dept/area/trans/undergrad_opp/usit.html

Transportation Engineering Endowed Excellence Fund Contributors
Thank you for your donations!

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Dr. C. Mike Walton

Finally victorious after three seasons: Our intramural flag football team, AGT (Any Given Thursday), clobbered another team 28-3 in a surprise victory!

Distinguished Lecture Series,
Fall 2007:
Dr. Clyde Lee & Mr. Amadeo Saenz

By Alison Conway

Dr. Clyde Lee

On Friday, September 14th, The University of Texas Transportation Engineering Program welcomed our first distinguished lecturer for the year, Dr. Clyde Lee, the Nassir I. Al-Rashid Centennial Professor Emeritus in Transportation Engineering. Dr. Lee served as a professor in UT’s Department of Civil Engineering from 1959 until he became a professor emeritus in 1999. While at UT, Dr. Lee built the transportation program from only a few courses to one of the nation’s leading teaching and research institutions.

Dr. Lee spoke with students, faculty, researchers, and staff about the history of transportation engineering in the state of Texas and at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Lee described the major legislative changes that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s at national and state levels that spearheaded the growth of the field of transportation engineering research and explained how these drove the development of academic research centers in Texas. Additionally, Dr. Lee shared stories

(see Lecture Series, continued on page 4)

Five students from our student chapter of ITS volunteered one of their summer Saturdays to help out with Austin’s Habitat for Humanity. From left to right: Ricardo Aiken, Steve Boyles, Aris Pantelias, Jose Pablo Aguiar, and Jason West.
By Jeff LaMondia

In October, transportation grad students swapped their books for knives in the Iron Chef: Grad School Premiere Battle. The event was based on the Food Network cooking competition of the same name, in which teams of chefs are given a surprise “secret ingredient” and then expected to create a multiple course meal highlighting this ingredient.

The Iron Chef: Grad School competition began with five teams of two grad students / friends meeting at a local grocery store where the grad-school-themed secret ingredient was drawn out of a hat. Once the ingredient was announced (coffee beans!!) the teams had only two hours and forty dollars to create one appetizer and one entrée, collecting ingredients and cooking enough food to feed the panel of judges. The panel of judges, which included Rachel Copperman, Ashley Haire, Alison Conway, Eric Spurgeon, and Kate Flanagan, visited each of the teams while they were cooking to evaluate their progress.

Two hectic hours later, the teams and judges converged to share their food with each other. The results were nothing short of incredible! Every team prepared not only creative but also deliciously good eats. One judge even exclaimed, “It is like eating a ten-course gourmet meal!” Like the original Iron Chef, each team could be awarded up to 20 points by each judge; consisting of 10 points for taste, 5 points for plating (the appearance of their presentation), and 5 points for the originality of their dishes. The competition was extremely close, with only a few points separating first and last place. The winners of the premiere battle were Jen Duthie and Patrick Goetz with their Pounded Yams and Croquettes a la Coffee. All told, the premiere battle was a great success (in spite of the intense coffee buzz everyone felt for the following forty-eight hours) and left everyone eagerly awaiting the next culinary battle in the spring.

Teams and Culinary Creations

Jen Duthie and Patrick Goetz
Pounded Yam with coffee sauce and chives
Croquettes a la Coffee with tomatoes, basil, and peach

Dave Ezrailson and Dave Kogan
Coffee-Battered Shrimp on Fried Plantains
Coffee-Marinated Steak with coffee reduction sauce

Steve Boyles and Avinash Unnikrishnan
Eastern Hummus with a sprinkling of coffee
Western Jerk Chicken with a coffee rub

Kristen Svicarovich and Mike Davidson
Coffee Ice Cream Sandwiches with chocolate graham crackers
Coffee Raisin French Toast with fresh apple slices

Jeff LaMondia and Steven Marfitano
Coffee-Infused Risotto
Coffee-Encrusted Steak with sweet potato mash

(From left to right) Avinash carefully prepares his hummus from scratch. Mike gets creative with French toast as Kristen prepares to grind more coffee beans for their ice cream concoction. Jeff watches his coffee risotto to keep it perfectly al dente.
Many THANKS to our corporate partners!!
Your involvement in our program is appreciated!

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Lecture Series (cont’d from page 2)

Of his own efforts to build the program here at The University. In the earliest years of his career, when UT’s transportation program consisted of only a few undergraduate classes, Dr. Lee personally recruited students from the staff of the Texas Highway Department (now Texas Department of Transportation), the City of Austin, Bergstrom Air Force Base, and other state agencies to build a graduate program. During the 1960s, after passage of federal legislation that required states to use some of their allocated funds for planning and research, Dr. Lee worked tirelessly to build ties between UT’s program and the Texas Highway Department. His efforts culminated in the 1965 passage of a bill creating UT’s Center for Highway Research (now Center for Transportation Research). Dr. Lee served as the director of the Center until 1980.

In addition to his successful efforts to elevate UT’s academic and research programs to among the nation’s elite, Dr. Lee is also nationally renowned for his own research efforts, particularly his work on development of vehicle weigh-in-motion systems. Students thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to hear Dr. Lee’s experiences in teaching and research and to discuss with Dr. Lee his views on the past, present, and future of transportation and research.

For a more detailed account of Dr. Lee’s lecture, please visit the CTR website:
http://www.utexas.edu/research/ctr/about/news_items/lee_presentation.html

Mr. Amadeo Saenz

On October 10, 2007, the Transportation Program was very pleased to welcome back Mr. Amadeo Saenz, P.E., newly appointed Executive Director of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), as our second Distinguished Lecturer of this academic year. Mr. Saenz earned his bachelor’s of Civil Engineering from the department in 1977. Since 1978, Mr. Saenz has served in a number of roles at TxDOT, and on September 28, 2007, was appointed to the Department’s highest position. Mr. Saenz is the Department’s 19th Executive Director, and the first Hispanic to serve in this role.

More than 60 students, faculty, CTR researchers, and staff gathered at CTR to hear Mr. Saenz speak. In his lecture, Mr. Saenz discussed the challenges the state’s transportation system will face in the future and the innovative solutions that will be required to address them. The audience was very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the state’s most important transportation issues with the state’s transportation leader. In addition to his technical lecture, Mr. Saenz implored students to consider careers in government service.

For more detailed information about Mr. Saenz and his lecture, visit the CTR website:
http://www.utexas.edu/research/ctr/about/news_items/saenz_presentation.html

Congratulations to our December Graduates!

Have something you would like printed in the next issue of the transportation department’s newsletter? Email it to the editor, Ashley Haire, at haire@mail.utexas.edu.

http://www.caee.utexas.edu/dept/area/trans/trans.html