Fernanda Leite has a passion for teaching and technology. A tenure-track assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin, she clearly delights in the research her graduate students are doing.

Leite's current research, recognized this year by FIATECH with its Celebration of Engineering & Technology Innovation Award for outstanding early career researcher, involves prevention of backing fatalities in construction work zones for the Construction Industry Institute and the Construction Users Roundtable, among other research projects.

Leite talks with University of Texas grad students about a design coordination research project using building information models.

"Fernanda is unique because she has optimism and sees new opportunities," says Prof. Sharon L. Wood, department chair. "When she comes to my office, it's because she has an idea for teaching a new course or collaborating with another department."

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She sometimes finds time for lunch at São Paulo's, a Brazilian restaurant near campus, and vouchers for its authentic cuisine. Born in Recife in northeastern Brazil, Leite, 34, followed in both her father's and grandfather's footsteps. Her father was a research scientist who brought his family with him while earning advanced degrees at Texas A&M. Her grandfather was a housing developer, a self-made businessman who took young Fernanda with him making his first foot steps: Her grandfather's.

In the department of civil, architectural and environmental engineering, Leite teaches an undergraduate course in project management and economics and a graduate course in building information modeling for capital projects, mentors graduate students, works on her own research projects, writes proposals for new grants and contracts, and works on university and professional committees.

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Hardhat Hell: Stuck Between a Rock and a Hard Place

By: tudor_vanhampton
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Project Leads/Pulse

Gives readers a glimpse of who is planning and constructing some of the largest projects throughout the U.S. Much information for Pulse is derived from McGraw-Hill Construction Dodge.

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