

Winter 2016/17

Moving Forward

Newsletter of the Mineta Transportation Institute Alumni Association (MTIAA)



MINETA
TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE
MTI

Created by Congress in 1991

Contacting the MSTM Alumni Association

Visit our web site:

www.MTIconnect.org

E-mail to :

mticonnect@gmail.com

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Save the Date!

MTI Awards
Banquet & MSTM
Convocation:
**Saturday, June 17,
2017.**

Letter from the MTIAA Leadership Team

As we begin the year 2017, we would like to encourage and applaud the students currently pursuing the Master's Degree in Transportation Management (MSTM) from the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) and/or the certificate programs. Keep learning and asking questions. Students enrolling in MSTM 290, please see the Capstone Coach Directory (located at www.mticonnect.org/capstone) for a list of alumni you may call on with research-related questions. We will keep the alumni and current student database up to date with future happy hours or other networking opportunities. Current students, feel free to contact us with your ideas and suggestions at mticonnect@gmail.com.

Alumni (MSTM graduates), do you know that you are now more than 200 in number? Under Rod Diridon's' and Dr. Karen Philbrick's leadership, the educational opportunities continue to grow, cultivated with dedication from Vivian Ferea, Dr. Peter Haas, and the staff at the Mineta Transportation Institute. For their efforts, we extend our greatest appreciation. If you would like to become more involved in the alumni association, we welcome your ideas and input., whether you'd like to step up to write a newsletter article, nominate someone for the Alumni/ Alumna of the Year (AOY) award, or plan a networking mixer in your local area. Or some other idea you may dream up. We are a volunteer organization of busy professionals just like you, hoping to give back a little and keep the network that we built up as students alive and well as we continue in our careers.

Sincerely,

MTIAA Leadership Team

Rachel Donovan ('11), Donna Maurillo ('11), Ann Calnan ('12),
Brandi Childress ('08), Walt Allen ('07), Lee Provost ('03),
Olivia Rocha ('15), Ward Thomas ('15)

Visit our Alumni Web Site: MTIconnect.org

The web site of the MTI Alumni Association (MTIAA) is www.mticonnect.org. It features the Capstone Coach Directory, photos from past Convocation Ceremonies, details on submitting nominations for the Alumnus/Alumna of the Year, upcoming MTIAA events (including the Annual Banquet), and archived copies of the Alumni Newsletter "Moving Forward."

Snapshots from the 2016 MTI Banquet



24th Annual MTI Banquet & Convocation Ceremony

Current students and alumni, if you are looking for a networking opportunity, make plans to attend the annual MTI Banquet and Convocation Ceremony at San Jose State University. This is one of the best ways to meet the movers and shakers in the transportation field. The 24th annual banquet, held on June 18, 2016, included remarks by Congress member **Mike Honda**, California State Senator **Jim Beall**, California State Assembly member **Kansen Chu**, Santa Clara County Supervisor and Chair of Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) **Cindy Chavez**, San José Mayor **Sam Liccardo**, and Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) General Manager, **Grace Crunican**.

The graduating class of 12 MSTM candidates were treated to Keynote Addresses by Transportation Secretary (retired) **Norman Mineta** and California State Transportation Agency Secretary **Brian P. Kelly**. MSTM candidate **Bernadette Lambert** addressed the assembly as class valedictorian, and MSTM alumnus **James Helmer** was named *MTI Alumnus of the Year*.

With hosted wine tasting and a fine banquet provided, not only is this a great way to network with other transportation professionals, but it's also an enjoyable night out and a special event to anticipate year after year. Mark your calendar for the 25th annual banquet on **June 17, 2017**.

Call for Nominations for ALUMNUS OR ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

Now is the time to begin thinking about who you'd like to nominate for the MTI Alumna/Alumnus of the Year Award. This award recognizes an outstanding graduate of the MSTM Program. The honoree should excel in his or her professional development which includes career achievements, continued commitment to the MSTM program, mentorship, and/or distinguished leadership in the transportation industry.

Please take a moment to nominate a deserving alumnus or alumna at <http://www.mticonnect.org/aoy/>. The list of past nominees is featured on the web site. There is no limit to the number of nominations you may submit. All nominations are due by **5 p.m. on April 3, 2017**.

The Alumna/Alumnus of the Year Award winner will be honored at the 25th Annual MTI Banquet & Convocation Ceremony at San Jose State University. For questions, please write to the alumni association (mticonnect@gmail.com).

Congratulations to the MSTM Class of 2016! Photo on Page 3:

The Eno Leadership Experience

Bernadette Lambert, JD (MSTM '16)

Editor's Note: We asked Bernadette to share her experience as an Eno Fellow, so that other students may learn from her and perhaps be inspired to try for an Eno Fellowship, too.

In June 2016, I had the privilege of representing San Jose State University at the Eno Center for Transportation's Future Leaders Development Conference in Washington DC. The Eno Center for Transportation (Eno) is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank whose mission is "to cultivate creative leadership and to impact emerging issues for the nation's multi-modal transportation system" by offering policy forums, publications and professional development programs to the transportation industry.

For the past 24 years, Eno has been recognizing the top graduate and doctoral

students in the nation who are pursuing transportation-related careers by inviting them to attend the Future Leaders Development Conference (Conference) and be inducted as Eno Fellows. Students are nominated by their universities and selected on the basis of their outstanding academic achievements as well as their demonstrated leadership abilities and interest in national transportation issues. I am grateful to Dr. Peter Haas for his nomination!

This year's Conference was a whirlwind five days of meetings with federal officials and prominent transportation leaders from across the transportation industry. We kick-started the week on Sunday evening with a welcome presentation and overview of the program, followed by a dinner and social event to help us get acquainted with our Eno hosts and fellow participants. As excited as we all were to be there, most chose to retire early to get a good rest before embarking on the frenzied week of meetings to begin the following day.

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On Monday morning our course took us directly into two seminars on the State of the Transportation Union and Sustainable Transportation Funding – this was no gentle introduction but hit us full-on with timely and controversial issues affecting the industry. The panelists, which included Brian Pallasch, Managing Director of Government Relations & Infrastructure Initiatives for the American Society of Civil Engineers and Sarah Puro, Principal Analyst, U.S. Congressional Budget Office, spoke frankly about their views. We were admonished, as we were to be throughout the Conference, that, in exchange for our panelists uncensored thoughts and opinions, we would not quote them outside of the Conference. This gave us our first sense the privilege our speakers would be granting us by treating us as colleagues and trusting us with their open and honest perspectives.

I can't possibly name all of the amazing public officials and industry leaders who gave their time to the program, but just to show the caliber of the speakers that Eno assembled for us to hear – and who in their own enthusiasm to promote leadership in transportation volunteered to meet with us – following an afternoon panel discussion on Sustainability and Climate Change in Transportation, we received a Capitol Hill Briefing from Kathy Dedrick, Staff Director, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, Minority Staff; David Napoliello, Director of Infrastructure, Committee on Environment and Public



Works and Shannon Hines, Senior Professional Staff Member, Office of Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

And that was just the first day!

Tuesday morning started early with a Metro trip to the U.S. Department of Transportation for several sessions giving overviews of federal transportation policies and issues. The afternoon found us hearing about Local Level Transportation issues, such as the

importance of setting priorities, which we were advised generally can be identified by where money is being allocated at the federal and state levels, and the challenges of working and expanding within a built environment. The panel discussed the need to foster development near transit and Amtrak representatives

later gave us a tour of Union Station to give us a front-seat look at the retail uses within the station as well as hear about its future development plans.

The business day over, we then joined the local Young Professionals in Transportation for a networking & trivia event at a local pub. The enthusiastic energy of those working transportation professionals was inspiring – if not a little intimidating given their quick responses to some rather esoteric transportation questions. I think the only contributions I made to my team answers were the meaning of FAST in “FAST Act” and the type of car the Dukes of Hazard drove. (Although how I pulled Dodge Charger out of my memory banks confounds me even now.)

On Wednesday the sessions addressed policy issues, including digital technology in the transportation industry and the aviation and freight industries. Being interested in rail transit, I was surprised and pleased at how engaging and interesting these topics were to me. In particular, as a self-labeled (only slightly tongue-in-cheek) neo-luddite, I was pleased to find that the panel on Digital Cities approached technology policy from the viewpoint of responsibly envisioning the types of communities that we want and only then using technology to achieve that.

We closed the day with a docent-led tour of the America on the Move exhibit at the National Museum of American History.

Our final day of the Conference began with a session on Performance Measures of Sustainability and Transportation. Eno saved the best for last with a round of career-building sessions in the afternoon and evening. First we had a roundtable discussion with Phillip Washington, CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Mort Downey, former Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation and Rodney Slater, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation, who talked about transportation as a way to lift a community's economic prospects through access to opportunities, the benefits of long-range forward planning as a lesson-

learned from the State of Good Repair movement, and five megatrends that need to be addressed in transportation today: 1) funding, 2) safety/security/SoGR, 3) demographic shifts, 4) accelerating technological innovations and 5) workforce and lifestyle.

The Conference ended that night with a VIP Reception, giving us the opportunity to meet again some of the speakers who had presented to us during the week and

to network with event sponsors and other transportation professionals, preceding a second reception and banquet. During the banquet, we students, having completed the Future Leaders Development Conference, were officially inducted as Eno Fellows.

That week in Washington DC has left an impression on me that I will carry well into my career. I learned about the breadth

of the transportation industry well beyond my transit experience and, I met an inspiring group of role models who believe in and are committed to advancing the industry and who had the generosity share their time, their thoughts and their enthusiasm with 20 students. I hope that I will have the opportunity to mirror their commitment and generosity as my career unfolds.

Full 2016 Conference agenda at: <https://www.enotrans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016-Eno-Future-Leaders->



MSTM Class of '16
Valedictorian
Bernadette Lambert

Fear of Change Versus Your Future

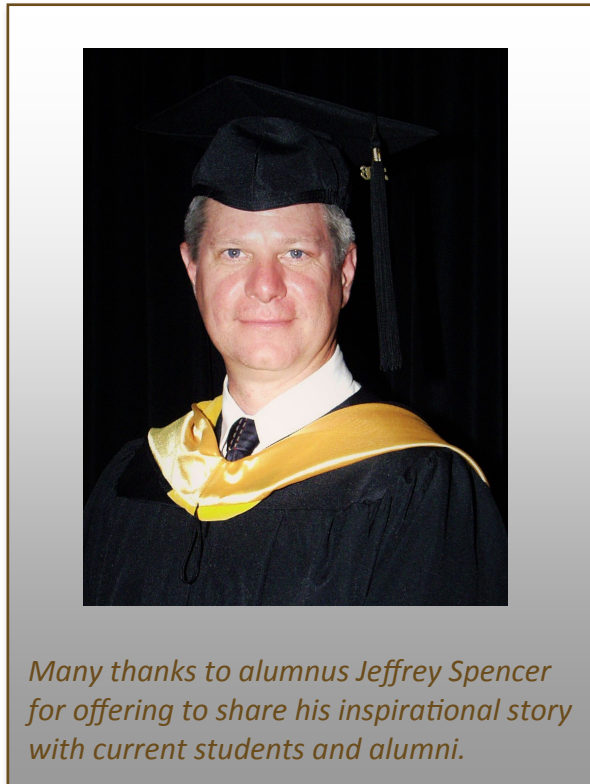
Jeffrey Spencer ('03)

As I attended the MTI Annual Banquet and Convocation Ceremony in 2016, I saw many familiar faces and some I hadn't seen in a long time. This was my first time attending in many years, and I realized the various changes that had occurred. The Student Ballroom and facilities were new, yet familiar. Many of the students and staff were my old friends and colleagues that hadn't changed much over the years. I then suddenly realized what change really means. It is an emotion often filled with grief, fear, and sadness. It can also be a time of excitement and inspiration. Things change. People change. Change is not only external, such as what we can see, but internal as we change in our careers and our outlook. It was a moment of clarity that we should embrace change, and an epiphany I want to share with my fellow alumni.

Realize that taking the step to achieve a Master's degree is a major change. During the speeches, I heard described the struggles of studying at odd hours, juggling family and work time, and the challenges of completing studies. Having the resolution to face that

change resulted in receiving those degrees. I remember the challenges and the change in outlook as we return to our daily lives afterward. Many go back to their jobs and continue their same path. But why?

As I look back at my own career, I had to face the changing world and adapt, or be left behind. I achieved my degree in 2003, but at



the time my employer was facing many funding challenges. I was furloughed and took pay cuts when others received a raise due to such achievement. I had to change my outlook, and weigh what could I do internally. My situation was not going to change unless I changed it. I struggled looking for other opportunities, and when one finally came, it was in Washington, DC. That meant uprooting the family and moving across the country. It was a time filled with both excitement and trepidation.

The new job was the change that helped me gain valuable experience and skills in leadership and management. It promoted my ability to be a leader of change. It also changed my self-confidence in what I can achieve. It was not easy, but well worth tackling the inner fear of change. After working at the USDOT for nearly 7 years,

again I began looking for new growth opportunities. When the opportunity came, it was a position as Executive Director of a major transportation agency – but I had to undergo a major change once again, as it would require a move back to California.

There are still many challenges I face, including the changes associated with a new job, new staff, new contacts, and re-settling again. However, if not embracing these changes, I would not have grown into the leadership role I now have. It is an opportunity to not only exercise the knowledge and skills gained through my education, but the opportunity to really change the industry and have an effect on

transportation. It is my mark on the future of mobility.

Your desire to change must be greater than your desire to remain the same. I ask that you view change as another opportunity for growth. I advise that change is difficult, but necessary to achieve your goals. To get there, we must be able to change our views, both internally and externally. Do not allow the fear of change to stop you from growing and realizing your destiny. It is our duty as the new leaders to transform the industry. Doing this, we will realize the value of our efforts to receive a Master's degree from the Mineta Transportation Institute.

Alumnus Spotlight: Jeffrey Spencer ('03)

Originally from Illinois, Jeffrey Spencer joined the U.S. Army out of high school and served for 8 years. He began college at Sacramento City College, attending nights while working full time for the State of California. Mr. Spencer obtained a business degree in Real Estate, followed by bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Business Management (1998 and 1999). He graduated from the MSTM program in 2003 and went on to become a faculty member at MTI. In 2009, Mr. Spencer retired from state service to take a new job working for the USDOT in Washington, DC. In 2016, Mr. Spencer returned to California and is now serving as the Executive Director at the Sacramento Transportation Authority.

He now resides in Sacramento with his wife and 2 children.



Do You Have Something to Add?

We would love to hear from you! Send your classmate updates to: mticonnect@gmail.com.

Ideas for newsletter articles are welcome, too!



MTI MSTM Alumni
Association
San Jose, California

www.MTIconnect.org
Email us at:
mticonnect@gmail.com

Classmate Updates

Jacob Simmons (Class of '15) was named one of the "Top 40 Under 40" by *Mass Transit* magazine (<http://www.masstransitmag.com/article/12218512/2016-top-40-under-40-jacob-simmons-mstm>) in 2016.

Jacob co-authored a publication with program director Peter Haas in the *Transportation Research Record*, "Impact of Changes in a Route's Span of Service on Bus Ridership," (*Transportation Research Record*, 2539:48-54, 2016).

Jeffrey Spencer ('03 and Former Faculty Member) was named the Executive Director at the Sacramento Transportation Authority.

Allie Scrivener ('15) was hired as an Associate Active Transportation Planner with the City of Coronado in San Diego County, California.

Brandi Childress ('08) was selected as the new Community Outreach and Public Engagement Manager at the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). She will be leading the Public Relations and Community Outreach units.

Current MSTM student **Aaron Vogel** was hired as "Regional Transportation Service Manager," and will oversee all interagency and contracted transportation services at the Valley Transportation Authority.

Then-MSTM student **Jillian Guizado** (now Class of '16) was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship from the Inland Empire chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar (WTS) at its annual awards dinner on January 20, 2016. On February 10, 2016, she was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the California Transportation Foundation at its annual Transportation Forum.

Current MSTM student **Lisa Vickery** was promoted to Transportation Superintendent at the VTA.

Current MSTM student **Jane Shinn** was selected as the MSTM program's 2016 "Student of the Year" for the Council of University Transportation Centers (CUTC). Recently promoted to Senior Management Analyst at the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Jane developed the program for the successful 2016 Measure B sales tax measure for Santa Clara County, which is anticipated to generate \$6.3 billion for transportation projects over a 30-year period.

Current MSTM student **Harriet John** received the 2016 Dr. George M. Smerk Scholarship (\$5,000) at the annual conference in Los Angeles in on September 13, 2016.