SPTC TRANSPORTATION LEADERSHIP COUNCIL – UTEP CHAPTER

MISSION STATEMENT: The Transportation Leadership Council (TLC) Student Chapter at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) encourages students of all disciplines interested in the ever encompassing transportation field to develop technical and professional skills needed to succeed in their careers. Through professional guest speaker lectures, technical tours, student paper presentations, and career-building workshops, UTEP students not only enhance their learning experience but also foster the growth of strong teamwork, leadership, and networking skills.

INTRODUCTION: UTEP has developed the TLC leadership organization with help from the SPTC and The Center for Transportation Infrastructure Systems (CTIS) (Figure 1). The TLC is student-driven and encourages research in the area of transportation. The Chapter was launched in January 2016 and has 35 members, 6 officers, one student advisor and 3 faculty advisors.

STUDENT CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

Monthly meeting The TLC Student Chapter conducts monthly meetings that include transportation-related activities such as hosting professional presentations from local industry and providing information about scholarship/fellowship opportunities and volunteer events.

Seminars TLC promotes seminars that create an opportunity to explore topics more in-depth while sharing ideas in a way that will inspire students to think outside of the box. Students who attend the seminars are exposed to the ongoing research in the transportation area and gain a different perspective about conducting research to pursue a Master or a Ph.D. degree (Figure 2).

Lab Tours TLC members provide tours of the CTIS material testing and research laboratories, Soil Lab and Asphalt Lab, for students and teachers from local schools to demonstrate research in transportation (Figure 3). These tours motivate high school students to enroll in civil engineering programs. In addition, these tours help the TLC members develop communication skills. In April 2016, the TLC members provided tours for students from El Paso High School and visitors from the University of Guadalajara, Mexico for US-Mexico Bidirectional Study Abroad Program on Smart Cities.

TRB Annual Meeting Three officers and eight members of TLC attended the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 95th Annual Meeting (2016) to learn about the ongoing research in the transportation sector (Figure 4). Amongst those students, TLC’s President, Prajwol Tamrakar said, “The experiences and knowledge that I gained at TRB enhanced my research capability and my professional development”.

Figure 1: UTEP TLC officers and members

Figure 2: Seminar on Smart Mobility by Dr. Yi-Chang Chiu

Figure 3: Students of El Paso high school in a Lab tour

Figure 4: TLC students at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) 95th Annual Meeting

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UTEP L.I.V.E. TLC members attended the UTEP L.I.V.E. Event on Friday, February 26th. UTEP L.I.V.E. is a university-wide student award that provides students with opportunities to create a leadership development experience while networking with students and professionals in diverse areas.

Professional Mixer On Thursday, April 7th, 2016, TLC invited a group of companies to UTEP for a networking event. During this event, students had the opportunity to talk to local professional engineers, in an informal setting, about the civil engineering work force and about possible summer internship opportunities.

Project Move TLC has partnered with Engineers Without Borders (EWB) – UTEP Student Chapter to participate in Project MOVE, a university-wide event in which students perform community service events all over the city of El Paso.

Food Drive In May 2016, many non-profit organizations were involved in a food drive program. As a part of community service, TLC also launched a food drive program at UTEP to support people in need. The collected food was donated through the local USPS office. The officers at the USPS office appreciated the efforts of TLC for serving El Paso community.

SPTC paper and poster competition TLC nominated four UTEP students for 2016 SPTC Student Paper and Poster Awards. These awards have been established to recognize scholarly research contributions made by students in engineering or a closely related field on transportation. Two students, Mr. Victor Garcia and Ms. Alejandra Escajeda, received the award (Figure 5). Victor is a graduate student and research assistant at CTIS working toward his Master’s degree in civil engineering. He received this award for his paper titled “Understanding Sources of Variability of Overlay Test Procedure.” Alejandra is an undergraduate student and research assistant at CTIS working toward her bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. She was awarded for her poster titled “Service Life of Hot Mix Asphalt using PERMIT”.

Support to Students TLC was established to promote transportation related research, to link academic path with industry, to provide a platform for students to learn, share and network, to inspire students in research oriented activities, and more. As a part of professional development of students, TLC plans to support students for attending conferences and professional workshops. Recently, TLC sponsored Ms. Andrea Gutierrez for attending the International Conference on Transportation & Development 2016 at Houston, Texas. Andrea is an active member and student advisor of TLC.

For additional information about the TLC chapter at UTEP, please contact Imad Abdallah at emadn@utep.edu.