

# UTC CONNECTOR

Urban Transportation Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago

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## Transportation Information Clearinghouse Surveys Begins

The first of two surveys is being mailed out in May to collect research for the The Transportation Information Clearinghouse project. The survey is being sent to the 16,000 employers that have 50 or more employees at any one site in the greater Chicago six-county region, plus DeKalb and Kendall Counties. The brief initial survey will help determine what private transportation services employers provide, such as shuttle or van service to their offices from train stations. A longer

follow-up survey will be sent in the summer to those who do provide transportation and will gather detailed information about schedules, routes and costs.

This project is related to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which was enacted to coordinate state and local efforts to get people off welfare and into the workforce. In order to do that, entities called

Workforce Boards were created to assist potential and new employees with all aspects of the transition to work, including job training, child care and transportation. This transportation project will ultimately build a central information source for employment agencies to utilize as they counsel employees on

transportation benefits available to employers.

The project roll-out will be conducted in two major phases. After the first year, when the two surveys are sent out, the second phase of the project entails marketing to employers the benefits of offering transportation assistance to employees. Currently, the federal

incentives for employers to offer transit benefits only relate to public transportation, and one of the goals of the study is to develop marketing and business plans to extend

these benefits to private transportation services as well.

This two-year project began in December of 2001. It is funded 50 percent by a federal grant from Job Access and Reverse Commute and matched by the Regional Transit Authority. The project is staffed by Karin Allen, Shamus Misek, Joe DiJohn, Monica Akins and Norma Pena-Rivera.



transportation options to various employers.

The Workforce Boards also took advantage of this mailing to distribute information about their services to this large pool of employers. They included a fact sheet about their services and encouraged employers to seek them out as a resource for potential employees. A second flyer (pictured above) was included to highlight the pretax

## Urban Transportation Center Faculty & Staff

**Sue McNeil, Ph.D.**  
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**Vonu Thakuriah, Ph.D.**  
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**Joseph DiJohn, MBA**  
METSI Director  
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**Paul Metaxatos, Ph.D.** Research  
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**Kazuya Kawamura, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor

**Karin Allen, MA**  
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**P.S. Sriraj, Ph.D.**  
Research Assistant Professor

**Jung-Taek Lee, Ph.D.**  
Research Assistant Professor

**Shamus Misek**  
Trans. Research Program Mgr.

**Jim Kelly, MPA**  
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**Siim Sööt, Ph.D.**  
Director Emeritus

**Lise Dirks**  
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**George Yanos**  
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**Silvia Becerra**  
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Gabrielle Brown  
Visiting Program Coordinator

### Affiliated Faculty

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Professor CS

**Anthony Pagano, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor of  
Managerial Studies

**David Boyce, Ph.D.**  
Professor, Department of CME

**David Perry, Ph.D.**  
Interim Dean CUPPA

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As each academic year comes to a close, there is a flurry of activity. Students are working to finish class projects, study for exams, find internships or jobs, and defend theses. Faculty are reviewing new graduate student applications, preparing exams, grading, and editing projects and theses. At the same time the faculty, staff and research assistants have ongoing research with its deadlines and deliverables. Balancing the demands of the formal academic program and the research projects is a challenge for all.

Instead of seeing research and education as competing demands, we have attempted to create a research culture at the Urban Transportation Center (UTC). This is an environment in which the research is part of the education. I like to think of a UTC research assistantship (RA'ship) as an immersion experience in an educational environment where the "accidental" conversations are as important as the formal classroom learning. The RA'ship itself is an equally important part of the educational experience. It is not a job. It is not an obligation. It is a learning experience.

For example, RA's have access to data and background material that can be used in class projects. More important is the opportunity to use an RA'ship as a foundation for a project or thesis. While some of our ongoing research projects are very applied there are many opportunities to ask the question, "What are the research issues?"



Sue McNeil  
UTC Director

We have also tried to enrich the RA experience through other UTC activities. In the fall we conducted a six-week long orientation program. The orientation was conducted on

Friday mornings and covered Geographical Information Systems and statistical analysis skills. We then held two additional sessions at the beginning of the spring semester. Throughout the semester Dr. Sriraj organized seminars with both student and outside presenters. Students participated in numerous local transportation events including our Symposium on Sprawl: Transportation and Housing, the Metropolitan Conference on Transportation Research, the Freight Planning Workshop and the Women's Transportation Seminar lunches. Fourteen students attended the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January, with partial

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## UTC Connector

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UTC Connector is produced by the Urban Transportation Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Audrey Wittemann, Editor, at [awitte1@uic.edu](mailto:awitte1@uic.edu).

### UTC's Mission

"To improve the quality of life in the Chicago Metropolitan Area and other urban areas through the creation, dissemination, and application of transportation knowledge."

The Urban Transportation Center is structured as a research unit within UIC's College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA).

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## Research Highlights

### Truck Weight Study

The study was completed and submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation. It estimated the total cost to upgrade county and township roads to 80,000 pounds would be approximately \$60 billion for Illinois' 84,000 miles of local roads.

### Intermodal Freight

A joint study with Northwestern University has received funding from the National Science Foundation to undertake the development of decision support tools for freight infrastructure planning and operation.

### Regional Freight Planning

UTC staff continue to work with the Chicago Area Transportation Study and other organizations in a project to reduce rail freight congestion and develop a regional freight plan for the region. Sue McNeil and Kazuya Kawamura each chair a subcommittee of the Interagency Task Force on freight planning and finance, respectively.



### Public Transportation Projects

The Intercity Bus Strategic Plan was completed and a draft study submitted to IDOT for review and approval. The Computer Aided Scheduling and Dispatching Systems project, which is undertaking a needs assessment of the state's paratransit scheduling systems, completed a survey of operators in Illinois. In another project, UTC staff are assisting the Department of Transportation in developing a state job access reverse commute program.

### Kane County Transit Opportunity Assessment

In order to obtain input from the public and elected officials, a workshop/charrette was held on January 24 in Geneva. The half-day meeting was well attended and included a planning exercise. In addition, surveys were distributed in the local newspapers for residents to complete about of their transit needs. Phase one of the project, which will identify supportive land use policies and potential transit opportunities, will be completed this summer.

## Surveys on Transportation and Low-Income Populations Underway

The project on transportation and low income populations funded by the Federal Transit Administration, USDOT includes a series of surveys to be conducted with users of Job Access Reverse Commute services such as paratransit. The survey is currently in the pretesting stage and will be ultimately be conducted nationally in multiple states by the end of June.

A second component of the project is the poverty research website. "This site is intended to serve as a complete repository of data, research and statistics related to socially excluded, or marginalized, groups," said Vonu Thakuriah.

A demo version of the website for preview is at <http://condor.utc.edu/~fta>. The final site is expected to be launched in the summer.

## ACT Awarded EPA Grant

The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) was recently awarded an EPA grant for \$125,000 to provide commuter choice education workshops in up to 20 markets in the U.S.

Two UTC staff were instrumental in ACT obtaining this grant: Shamus Misek, who serves as the organization's vice president, and Karin Allen, who is a board member at large.

## FACULTY PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

### Joe DiJohn

Presentation on the history of the region's transit systems and governance to Atlanta Transit Officials, May 9. Attendees included the mayor of the city of Atlanta as well as transportation, business and municipal leaders from Atlanta. The session also included a workshop in Arlington Heights on transit-oriented development.

Other presenters included RTA Executive Director Rick Bacigalupo, Metra Deputy Executive Director Rick Tidwell, CATS Associate Executive Director Don Kopec, Arlington Heights Mayor Arlene Mulder, and Professor Siim Sööt.

Presentation with Jung-Taek Lee on model simulation for transit signal priority systems to Norwegian Visiting Scholars, February 14 and 15. The presentation

included an overview of the RTA Regional Transit Signal Priority project and the region's transit systems.

Big Ten Universities Transportation Seminar, April 29. UIC hosted the annual conference of universities providing campus transportation. UIC staff George Yanos, Jim Limber, Audrey Wittemann and Kiran Tandri gave a presentation on the real-time information location monitoring of the UIC bus system. In addition, DiJohn gave a presentation of the region's public transit Intelligent Transportation Systems.

Milwaukee County Transit-On March 5, Shamus Misek and Joe DiJohn met with Tom Kujawa, Director of Milwaukee County Transit to discuss vanpools and Welfare to Work transportation.

Presented an update of the Kane County Transit Opportunity Assessment to the Kane County Council of Mayors on April 24 in Batavia.

### Shamus Misek

Participated in the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) board meeting, TEA-3 reauthorization task force meeting and the Transportation Demand Management Institute's board meeting at the ACT conference in Los Angeles on April 4 and 5.

### Sue McNeil

9th World Congress on ITS, Chicago, Oct., 14-17 2002. Title: "A Performance Specification for Transit Bus Side Collision Warning System." Coauthored with Chuck Thorpe, David Duggins, Christoph Mertz,

and Arne Suppe.

### Paul Metaxatos Presentation

9th World Congress on ITS, Chicago, Oct., 14-17, 2002. Title: "Computer-aided Scheduling and Dispatching System: Impacts on Operations and Coordination."

Siim Sööt was invited to give a presentation in April at a conference on economic redevelopment in Görlitz Germany. The presentation was translated into German and Polish.

### Vonu Thakuriah

Symposium on ITS in Emerging Markets hosted by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and ITS America. Title: "ITS in Emerging Economies."

## October ITS Conference

Mark your calendar for the 9th World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems October 14-18, 2002 at Lakeside Center at McCormick Place in Chicago. Additional information is available at [www.itsa.org/worldcongress.html](http://www.itsa.org/worldcongress.html).

## Two Students Defend Theses

**Eve Pytel** defended her thesis entitled "Policy Implications of Alternative Trip Definitions" on May 1. Her research involved a simulation of six trip-making scenarios that were conducted to understand the policy implications of trip definition in the context of the welfare-to-work population. The scenarios were simulated through the trip planning website hosted by the Regional Transit Authority. The trips were then compared by their monetary and time travel costs. The

comparison illustrated the mismatch between transit needs and transit services. It also evidenced the need for further research into trip definition.

**Anusha Seetharaman** defended her thesis, entitled, "Assessment of the Economic Impact of Freight Policy: A Study of the Chicago Six County Region" on March 8. Her research sought to quantify the economic benefits of freight policy for the recommendations made by the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan for Chicago's

Six County Region. To do this she translated the RTP projections on savings in consumption of fuel and decrease in delay, and thus savings in labor costs, into change in output for the motor freight industry. She calculated the total direct economic impact of the RTP policies on the industry at \$270 million annually.

Seetharaman was awarded the outstanding Masters Student Project Award for 2002 at the convocation on May 5.

If you are interested in being added to the METSI mailing list, contact Joe DiJohn at (312) 996-1458.

## OTHER NEWS

### UTC's Award-Winning Students

**Juan Ortega** was awarded a fellowship to attend the tenth annual Leadership Development Conference convened by the Eno Transportation Foundation. Held in Washington, D.C. in May, this week-long conference brings together a single outstanding student from each of the major graduate transportation programs in the country. The week includes educational programming, meetings with legislators, sessions on transportation policy, and culminates in a mock Congressional hearing.



received a second scholarship award of \$3,000. She will be presented the award at the association's annual meeting in Minneapolis in May.



**Norma Pena-Rivera** was one of six students nationwide who received a George Krambles Transportation Scholarship Award of \$2,500. This award, named for the former Executive Director of the Chicago Transit Authority, was established to encourage young people to embark upon professional careers in public transportation.



**Eve Pytel** was awarded the Chancellor's Award for Student Service for 2002-2003. This award is given annually to students who have devoted their time and energy through exceptional volunteer service. She was presented her award at a ceremony at UIC on April 16.



**Anusha Seetharaman** won the Helene M. Overly memorial graduate scholarship awarded by the Women's Transportation Seminar. After winning the Chicago chapter award of \$1,500, Seetharaman went on to be named the national winner and

**David Kralik** won Second Place in the Transportation Planning Division's Student Paper Competition for his paper on "Legislative and Policy Implications of Carsharing." A fall 2001 RA, David is now a planning analyst at Metra.



### Message from the Director *(from p. 1)*

support from UTC.

An important part of the experience is the working relationships among faculty and students. The faculty are not shy about providing career advice. We are also willing to make introductions and provide contacts. This year we made a resume book and distributed it to over 25 individuals and companies.

We are proud of our research assistants. They consistently win awards, they regularly seek opportunities to volunteer their time for transportation related activities, they work hard and they are eager to learn. As UTC continues to grow, we hope to be able to institutionalize this culture.

### Modeling Project for BTS Nearly Complete

UTC has nearly completed the Bureau of Transportation Statistics project to develop algorithms that will help to integrate heterogeneous databases. "The initial application will be with motor-carrier safety data," said Vonu Thakuriah. This work will ultimately provide the capability to link data in multiple databases that may reside in different states or are owned by different law enforcement agencies. An example of the application is that if a truck is in a massive traffic accident, it will be possible now to search databases nationally to see if the vehicle had any prior inspection or traffic violations. This type of cross-database search had not been possible previously.

The second part of the project is data imputation, which is the development of an estimation method to fill in missing values in databases so that the data will be complete.

## OTHER NEWS

# UTC Has Strong Presence at TRB Annual Meeting

Approximately 20 research assistants and the UIC transportation faculty attended the Transportation Research Board's Annual Meeting in January in Washington, D.C. Many of them gave platform or poster presentations:

- Kazuya Kawamura and Anusha Seetharaman - Data Requirements for Trade Project Impact Evaluation
- Sue McNeil and Paisit (Jad) Herabat - Analysis of the Impact of Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM) on the Airport System Infrastructure.
- Vonu Thakuriah, Jung-Taek Lee and Sanya Niumpradit - Data Quality Evaluation of an Integrated Data Repository on Motor Carrier Safety.
- Paul Metaxatos, Anthony M. Pagano and Mark King - The Impact of Computer Assisted Scheduling and Dispatching Systems on Paratransit Service Quality.
- Siim Sõöt - Toward Improved Traffic Safety: Road-Use Perception and Behavior in Estonia.
- P.S. Sriraj and Shaumik Pal - Evaluation of Near Transportation Private Sector Asset Management.
- Hyeon-Shic Shin and Kazuya Kawamura - Public/Private Partnerships in Regional Freight Planning: Implications for the Future.
- David Boyce, Der-Hong Lee, and Bin Ran - Analytical Models of the Dynamic Traffic Assignment Problem.
- Yue Li, Thonasis Ziliaskopoulos,



CUPPA alumni hosted a reception for UTC students and friends at the restaurant 1900 at the Hilton. Attendees at the reception included: (left to right) Mike Schiffer; CTA; David Zattero, IDOT, ITS Office, Sue McNeil, UTC; Darwin Stuart, CTA

David Boyce - A combined Model for Time-Dependent Trip Distribution Assignment.

## Robin Hambleton New CUPPA Dean

Robin Hambleton, a professor of city management and associate dean in the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of the West of England, was named dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs. His appointment was approved March 14 by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, and he will assume his new position in July.

"UIC's identity has become that of a global university in a global city. The College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs plays a vital

role in developing and maintaining that reputation," said Chancellor Sylvia Manning. "We place a high value on the international perspective that Robin Hambleton brings with him to UIC."

For much of his career, which spans more than 25 years, Hambleton has been engaged in transatlantic comparative research on urban and public affairs. Five of his 10 books have explored the topic, as have many of his 200-plus published articles.

As associate dean responsible

for research and consultancy in the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of the West of England since 1995, Hambleton took the lead in developing a research culture and advancing the overall success of the Built Environment in funded research. During his tenure, externally funded research in his academic units increased more than six-fold. He also helped to create five new research centers, including the multifacility Center for Local Democracy, where he also serves as the director.

# UIC TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCES

## MCPTR to be held at UIC June 7

The Metropolitan Conference on Public Transportation Research (MCPTR) will feature prominent keynote and luncheon speakers, as well as multiple presentations and posters from area transit experts and local students. The keynote address, "A Quantitative Analysis of Public Transportation's Economic Impact," will be given by Robert Stanley of Cambridge Systematics. The lunch address, "What's Ahead for Public Transportation: Countdown to Reauthorization of TEA-21," will be given by APTA President Bill Millar.

The conference will be on Friday, June 7. Early registration, prior to May 24, is \$40 for general admission and \$25 for students. After May 24 the cost is \$45 for general admission and \$30 for students. To register, send a check to payable to MCPTR, and your name, organization, address, email and phone, to: Catherine Kannenberg, Metra, 547 W. Jackson, Chicago, IL

60661. For additional information, contact Larry Deeter, CTA, at 312/733-7000 Ext. 6773 or LDeeter@transitchicago.com.

A number of UIC students/staff will give presentations at MCOPTR:

- Norma Pena-Rivera - Non-Traditional Transportation Providers Inventory
- Eric Holeman - HOV Lanes and Transit in Chicago
- Anusha Seetharaman - Economic Benefits of Demand Increase in the Trucking Industry
- Paul Metaxatos - Factors Affecting Collisions at Gated Rail-Highway Crossings
- Arzmella Hammond - Innovative Market Strategy to Capture the Former Welfare Recipient
- Monica Akins - Evaluation of the Transit Check Program
- Fahim Mohamed - Transit Solutions for Low Income in Rural Illinois
- Shaumik Pal - Transportation Asset Management

## MRUTC Hosts Freight Workshop

The Midwest Regional University Transportation Center, of the University of Wisconsin - Madison, hosted the first regional level freight transportation workshop in the Midwest at UIC on April 4 and 5. Attendees included representatives from industry, government and education that handle freight planning, programming, operations and logistics.

The invitation-only group was convened to identify critical issues in facilitating regional freight transportation, particularly gaps in current planning and financing methods. The results of the interactive meeting included prioritizing the steps needed in this area and beginning to foster regional cooperation.

### Urban Transportation Center Advisory Board

**Richard Bacigalupo, Chair**  
Executive Director  
Regional Transportation Authority

**Aristide E. Biciunas**  
Executive Director  
Chicago Area Transportation Study

**Thomas Cuculich**  
Executive Director  
Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

**Miguel d'Escoto**  
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Chicago Department of Transportation

**Joel Ettinger**  
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**John Kos**  
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Planning Commission

**William Volk**  
President  
Illinois Public Transit Association

**Thomas R. Walker**  
Commissioner, Dept. of Aviation  
O'Hare International Airport

## *CALENDAR OF EVENTS*

### **FALL TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE -- "Fortuitous Failures or Missed Opportunities: From Hindsight to Foresight"**

The third annual fall transportation conference will be hosted by the UIC Urban Transportation Center on Friday, September 20, 2002. The topic for the conference will be a review of project ideas in the Chicago metropolitan region from the past and what lessons can be learned for future transportation planning.

Attendees will evaluate a range of transportation projects from the Chicago region, including both those that were successfully implemented and those that never made it out of the proposal phase. Project implementers and/or decisionmakers will walk us through the processes they went through. Attendees will then seek to pinpoint some of the common aspects of successful projects and develop a set of "best practices" for future transportation projects in the region.

The conference will be held at the UIC Student Services Building located at the corner of Harrison and Racine. The location is accessible via the CTA blue line train - Racine stop - from which participants can walk south on Racine to Harrison. The two previous conferences focused on the issue of sprawl, transportation and housing. For additional information, contact the Urban Transportation Center at (312) 996-4820.

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