The future growth and success of statewide mobility management networks are predicated on three factors: Increasing the number of professionals in the field through a national certification program, ongoing education and creation of a formal membership organization; more resources to communicate the role of mobility management to external stakeholders; and, allocation of a greater amount of dedicated funding. These were the key recommendations presented in “Statewide Mobility Management: Factors Affecting the Creation and Success of Networks,” the second phase of a study completed by the Urban Transportation Center in December on identifying practices designed to improve transportation for all passengers.

The research team, led by UTC Director Dr. P.S. Sriraj, conducted phone interviews and online surveys with mobility managers from U.S. states that have an existing mobility management network.

One conclusion from the study is that the foundation for more effective mobility management networks exists: “Although there is no single blueprint for implementing a successful network – and definitions of ‘success’ vary widely – the research and analysis demonstrate that there exists a growing body of best practices around mobility management that can greatly benefit existing and nascent networks.”

The study was completed through funding provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the National Center for Mobility Management.

UTC faculty, staff and PhD/graduate student researchers also have these and other transportation studies nearing completion or underway:

- For the Illinois Department of Transportation, the UTC conducted telephone interviews of DOT staff in selected states for an ongoing study on understanding the role of planning in a DOT. On another IDOT study, the UTC team completed a literature review and several interviews of grant recipients of the Economic Development Program. This study will provide recommendations to IDOT about streamlining the EDP application and evaluation process.
- Researchers advanced work on a study led by Dr. Nebiyou Tilahun to analyze last mile dimensions of trips within targeted locations in Cook County.
- A project on rail crossing delays led by Dr. Kazuya Kawamura incorporated traffic counts data on main arterial roads to finalize a simulation model.
- On a study for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, researcher Dr. Joseph Fazio synthesized data from Metra and PACE to ascertain public transportation usage in the...
Chicago Airports, Capital Funding, Micromobility Focus of UTC Fall 2019 Seminar Series

Three outstanding presentations that focused on Chicago’s two international airports, the outlook for capital funding for transportation in Illinois and the growing concept of micromobility comprised the UTC Fall 2019 Seminar Series.

All events were held in the Great Cities Institute conference room at CUPPA Hall and attracted a large and spirited audience of UIC faculty, staff, students and guests. Here are the details.

**O’Hare 21 and Midway Modernization on the Local Economy**

The O’Hare 21 program and Midway modernization will drive metro Chicago’s growth for years to come, generating billions of dollars to the local and regional economies through visitor spending, construction and day-to-day traveler activities. That was the focus of the first presentation held September 26. Jeffrey Wytaniec, Civil Engineer IV — Design & Construction, with the Chicago Department of Aviation, noted that the ongoing redevelopment and improvements at Chicago’s two international airports was driven in part by a projected surge in international air traffic over the next two decades. Through a very compelling and detailed presentation, Wytaniec outlined major work completed or underway at O’Hare, which includes expansions of Terminal 3 and Terminal 5, improved multimodal and cargo facilities, runway expansion and modernization and construction of new hotels. At Midway, key improvements center on expanded security check points and redevelopment of the concession areas. Along with the economic benefits, O’Hare and Midway improvements will generate thousands of jobs over the next decade.

**The Impact of the Illinois Capital Bill on Transportation**

Earlier this year, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed a capital spending plan that includes $33.2 billion for improving roads, bridges, mass transit and pedestrian and cyclist projects over the next six years. The impact of the Illinois capital bill on the long-term future of transportation in the state was the focus of the second presentation on October 17. Featured speaker was Douglas House, Deputy Secretary at the Illinois Department of Transportation and a transportation professional with more than 35 years in the industry. House, who was appointed in April of this year, said his primary responsibilities are working to advance federal and state legislation and direct communications between IDOT and stakeholders. As plans unfold for rebuilding Illinois’ transportation infrastructure, House said IDOT will work closely with local government authorities to better maximize the effectiveness of new construction and redevelopment projects statewide. A stalwart supporter of career opportunities in transportation, House encouraged students in attendance to consider working in the profession, citing solid job opportunities in both the public and private sectors.

**Mobility Grows Up: E-Scooters in Chicago and Other U.S. Markets**

More than 100 U.S. cities -- including Chicago -- now offer e-scooters as a shared mobility option. Scooters are inexpensive to deploy and support a multimodal transportation network, but they also have challenges, including safety, equal access and enforcement. In 2018, scooters as a micromobility shared use transportation mode soared, roughly equaling trips made on dockless and station-based bike share. Those were among the topics and issues presented by Colin Murphy of the Shared Use Mobility Center on November 19 during the final UTC Seminar Series event of the fall semester. According to analysis from SUMC, Chicago’s six-month pilot e-scooter program resulted in more than 800,000 trips or some 1,740 per day. However, the number of rides declined from around 60,000 at the start of the program to around half that number when the pilot ended October 15. The city will analyze statistics from the pilot before making plans for scooters in 2020. Murphy noted that SUMC recommends expanding the program to the entire city (with special provisions for use downtown), having fewer scooter operating companies, expanding education and outreach of scooters, exploring safety improvements and growing workforce development.

http://www.utc.uic.edu/
The impact of autonomous vehicles on modern society was debated by leaders from the public and private sectors September 19 at the 2019 UIC Urban Forum, the half-day event dedicated to exploring trends and developments in urban communities. The theme of this year’s Forum — “Are We There Yet? The Myths and Realities of Autonomous Vehicles” — resulted in often lively discussion during the two panel presentations, and participants gained knowledge of governmental policies related to autonomous vehicles from the opening keynote presentation by Finch Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation, and at the later talk delivered by Erin Aleman, Executive Director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Key issues addressed include: The consumer market potential for autonomous vehicles and their safety on streets and highways; adaptation by walking, cycling and other non-carbon forms of transportation; the potential for autonomous vehicles to replace traditional transit modes, thereby increasing congestion; and, how transit agencies are preparing for AV usage. More than 400 members of the UIC community, local planning organizations and area businesses attended the 2019 Forum, which has roots that date back to 1995. UTC Director Dr. P.S. Sriraj served as Co-Program Director with CUPPA Dean Michael A. Pagano.

UTC RA Alumni Update: Thoughts from Liz DeChant and Kevin Peralta MUPP

Working as a graduate research assistant at the UTC can lead to career opportunities that transcend transportation, as noted in these two alumni profiles.

Liz DeChant, Economic Development Coordinator for the Village of Winnetka.

I am responsible for guiding and administering the Village’s business development programs. I implement transportation and parking policies, and help design and plan commercial district streetscape projects. I also research and advance best practices for economic development, and develop strategies and policies to create a sustainable and resilient long-term commercial base.

The in-depth research I conducted at UTC on the resiliency of transportation networks prepared me for the intensive policy research required at my job. UTC exposed me to the regional interconnectivity of transportation networks that I wouldn’t have learned otherwise. I was inspired by the interviews our team conducted with dozens of emergency management officials and became FEMA certified in emergency management and continuity planning.

Kevin Peralta, MUPP, Program Analyst at Chicago Housing Authority

At the CHA, my roles is to analyze processes and data in large quantities, identify issues and develop recommendations, and then present those recommendations to staff, stakeholders, residents, and upper management. I have the unique advantage of being able analyze quantitative data as well as to connect with CHA residents on their lived experiences; this allows me to have additional perspectives and to draw unique conclusions based on my findings in the analysis of data and processes employed by the Authority.

Although my job at CHA isn’t related to transportation, the skills I learned and enhanced during my time at UTC helped prepare me for this career. Some of the projects I was placed on while at UTC involved collecting and analyzing large amounts of data and information; these projects allowed me to expand upon my toolbox of analytical skills that I now employ in my new position at CHA.
By Dr. P.S. Sriraj, Director

As UTC completed its 40th year, 2019 was in some ways a celebration of the glorious history of the Center. We undertook several important research initiatives, graduated several of our research assistants, continued our educational mission, and hosted prominent events on relevant topics. The UTC since inception has always prided in providing opportunities for student researchers to hone their skills and train to be contributing members of the workforce. Conversely, the student researchers have always contributed to UTC’s research in a positive manner.

On December 12, the Center hosted a reception for alumni, staff, friends and UIC colleagues in the newly re-modeled CUPPA Hall Lower Level. More than 70 people attended and enjoyed light refreshments, networking and conversation. It was inspiring to rekindle relationships with the many men and women who contributed to the success of the UTC over the past four decades. (A similar event is being planned during the Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, in Washington D.C.)

The emergence of autonomous vehicles (AV) is expected to bring a paradigm shift in the way people and goods are transported. To understand the potential impacts of AV, the UTC co-hosted the 2019 UIC Urban Forum, where experts from the public and private sectors participated in panel discussions to an audience of more than 300 people. Finch Fulton, Deputy Assistant Secretary at US DOT, and CMAP Executive Director Erin Aleman gave keynote addresses.

Earlier this year, the Center hosted presentations on transportation and infrastructure with two Chinese business groups who were touring major cities through a program managed by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. On August 8, the delegates representing the Chinese National Development & Reform Commission; and, on September 12, we met with members of the China Urban Infrastructure Development Delegation. Both meetings were organized by Koeppen, Elliott & Associates, a Washington, D.C. firm that organizes and manages international trade events. Former UTC Executive Director Steve Schlickman joined me in engaging with the visiting delegates.

In late November, four scholars from National Institute of Technology Warangal in India visited Chicago and went on tours of the Illinois Tech, Northwestern University and of course, the UIC campus. The scholars attended the November 21 Seminar Series event, then met with CUPPA Dean Michael Pagano, where they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the university. The outcome will be future collaboration and research on transportation.

With a new year ahead, I and UTC colleagues prepare to participate in the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board the week of January 12. The TRB meeting ushers in not only the new year, but also the opportunity to learn, grow and return with knowledge and experience that will help prepare for taking on new research to address transportation challenges ahead.