

Kate Amissah: Training for Rail Advancement

MEMBER PROFILE



Kate Amissah, Photo © John Livzey, 2014

Abigail Adams said, “Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.” Nothing better describes how Metro trainee Kate Amissah pursues her transportation career.

“Metro has a training program for entry-level transportation professionals. And I joined the Metro Regional Rail Group as a trainee in July 2013. So I’m learning about commuter and passenger rail and contributing to the delivery of exciting projects of regional significance.

“The ELTP [Entry Level Training Program] is a great program where fresh graduates, like myself, are given the opportunity to gain professional work experience while being mentored by seasoned professionals. I feel like I’m being trained very well to become a transportation professional. So the program is a great transition from academia.”

A self-described “transportation enthusiast,” Amissah boasts a bachelor of science in civil engineering and transportation from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in her native Ghana. She also recently earned her master of science in civil engineering with a major in transportation from the University of Southern California (USC). Studying at USC was a pivotal experience in her transportation journey, and Amissah proved to be a most serious, effective, and talented student.

“Kate Amissah is one of the most engaged graduate students the USC Astani Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering has ever had the opportunity to work with. She is astute, quick to recognize and pursue an opportunity, and very professionally oriented,” explains James E. Moore, II, WTS-LA board member and USC Viterbi School of Engineering Vice Dean for Academic Programs.

“She knows academic excellence is a necessary condition, but you have to combine technical skills with networking acumen if you are serious about success, and she is plenty serious. Immediately after she arrived at USC, she systematically and methodically set about to understand the avenues that would bring her into the professional sphere she wanted to enter. She embraced WTS-LA events and quickly shifted from participant to consistent volunteer.”

Moore is right. Once she was exposed to WTS-LA, Amissah immediately knew it would become an integral part of her transportation training as well.

“I received my master’s in transportation at USC. But a big part of my education was also WTS-LA. I’ve been involved with WTS right from the get-go. Professor Moore introduced me to the chapter. He said

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that if I wanted to know about transportation in the US, then WTS was the place to be. So I signed up while I was still a student. And I got involved in everything I could, even in small ways like helping with registration at programs. But things like that are actually extremely valuable. For example, by helping with registration I got to know everyone who attended the events. Without a doubt, WTS was a very big part of my training as an emerging transportation professional.”

WTS-LA played another important role in Amissah’s professional life.

“In Ghana, there are very few women in transportation. So it means a great deal to me to see so many women in transportation, especially playing key roles as decision makers. WTS-LA is really a source of encouragement and inspiration.”

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