

2017 Ava Doner Undergraduate \$7,500 Scholarship Winner: Camila Salomon Gnecco



Camila Salomon Gnecco (Civil engineering major at USC Viterbi School of Engineering), 2017

For many, graduating college is the culmination of learning. For USC's Camila Salomon Gnecco, it is the first step in what promises to be a long, productive career in transforming the world through transportation. A civil engineering major in the Viterbi School of Engineering, Gnecco has gained incredible experience to match her academic training in a very short time. For example, she conducted outstanding research on bamboo and its structural applications at Nanjing Tech University; worked as an analyst assistant in the Georgetown University Utilities Department; and at USC she served as vice president of External Relations for the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, president of the Ecology Club, and as a student ambassador for the Viterbi School. Without question, she's industrious. But the other elements that make her so deserving of an award that carries Ava Doner's name extend beyond just an unyielding work ethic.

"I hope to further apply the knowledge of a civil engineering background to create a lasting impact on the way we navigate our surroundings, interact with each other, and treat the environment. As our population increases, so does our social responsibility to adapt our infrastructure in innovative and environmentally conscious ways...If done so holistically, transportation infrastructure has the potential not only to mobilize people, but also for social and environmental change...These are not common dreams for a Hispanic girl...I was not brought up to pursue engineering, but somehow my interests led me here, and I'm excited to continue my studies to positively influence communities through transportation. Receiving this scholarship would be motivation and validation to dedicate more time and effort towards my transportation studies and ideas. More importantly it is an open invitation for me as a Hispanic female to participate in a larger community and conversation about the future of transportation." Ava Doner couldn't have said it better herself.