

2017 AECOM/Richard G. Newman Graduate \$2,500 Scholarship Recipient: Radin Rahimzadeh



Radin Rahimzadeh (AECOM/Richard G. Newman Graduate Scholarship Recipient), 2017

Radin Rahimzadeh did not initially choose a transportation career. In fact, her UC, Davis undergraduate degree is in economics and international relations (with a minor in Spanish). But she came to see the critical role transportation plays in her interests and the interests of those she wishes to help. “My professional and academic concentration on intelligent transportation systems, smart cities and environmental sustainability comes as an organic shift from finance to transportation. In previous professional roles, working across private-public and nonprofit sectors, I focused on providing economic opportunity to those in the informal sector, recommending smart investing opportunities to clients, facilitating international trade for small to medium size businesses and empowering women and children refugees to thrive in their new communities in the United States. However, be it access to services, opportunities or investing intelligently, I found that access to reliable transportation equates to resilient, economically independent, and in some cases (such as investing in AI) profitable opportunities for those I worked to serve in the P3 space.”

Today, she is not only pursuing her master’s degree in public policy at USC, but she’s also an autonomous vehicle policy intern at Stantec Consulting and the GoMentum Station. Rahimzadeh sees transportation as a great societal equalizer. And that’s a perspective she’s earned. “The diversity of perspective I bring as an Iranian-American woman, is elevated by the diversity of my lived experiences working in male dominated spaces—navigating these spaces highlight the necessity of forging platforms and opportunities for unrepresented individuals to gain voice and visibility. The unique insights that have been fostered by my culture, sex, and experiences, allow me to approach complex problems with flexibility and determination to build inclusive spaces.” And her background informs her work. But that is only the short list of what she’s working on. The larger list includes a wide range of professional experience including international work from Rio de Janeiro to Bangkok. But for Rahimzadeh, all of her knowledge and experience now coalesces around one focus—transportation.

“From Contra Costa County to Los Angeles County and beyond, it is at the local level that transportation is making great strides. I hope to use my domestic and international experiences to better connect our global localities and share best practices and policies—while advocating for greater female participation and diverse inclusion in these conversations. As a graduate student, I will continue to build my competence in the field of policy and planning for transportation systems that better connect our communities. As a community builder, I will work diligently to elevate the voice of those left out of the transportation sphere. As professional, and upon graduation, I will contribute to Los Angeles’ efforts towards its Vision Zero safety goals by sharing knowledge of integrating shared and connected vehicles in its transportation trajectory.” And she will.

According to Contra Costa County Transportation Authority Executive Director Randell H. Iwasaki, “Radin is unique in that she is more than just an individual with strong intellectual facility. Radin recognizes that successful transportation planning requires a generalist mind-set and fierce advocacy for those who do not have a seat at the table. She is a gifted scholar and valuable professional and colleague.”

Richard Newman will be proud that Radin Rahimzadeh received this scholarship.