

2018 \$5,000 Stantec WTS-LA Scholarship Winner: Cassie Halls



Cassie Halls (2018 \$5,000 Stantec WTS-LA Scholarship Recipient), Photos © John Livzey, 2018

A master's degree candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in urban and regional planning with a concentration on transportation policy and planning, Cassie Halls began her fascination with transportation and its intrinsic societal importance through a somewhat circuitous route. "My passion for urban planning first emerged from varied interests, including education and anthropology. I earned my degree at the University of Washington in an undergraduate major called 'Comparative History of Ideas,' an interdisciplinary program that combines theory from philosophy and history." From there, Ms. Halls participated and conducted diverse research for a number of organizations, including a nonprofit called the Shared-Use Mobility Center (SUMC). And that's where things really changed for her.

"At SUMC, I conducted research, oversaw programs and events, as well as coordinated organizational operations, including fiscal and project management. I also widened the breadth of my organization's knowledge by leading multiple research projects. One important research I managed was a study of shared mobility services in Europe commissioned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). I am primary author on the final report, entitled 'Shared Mobility, a Review of European Practices,' which is a forthcoming publication in the FHWA's research library. A key takeaway from this study was that public transit agencies in major European cities are investing in shared mobility startups to enhance public transportation service, a topic that I would like to explore further in my graduate studies." Given the chance to examine European transportation systems, Ms. Halls caught the transportation bug. In addition, her superlative work garnered notice.

According to SUMC executive director Sharon Feigon, "Cassie has worked across all aspects of our work. She started at SUMC as a Communications Intern shortly after she completed her undergraduate degree, advanced to a Project Associate and is now the Project Manager of our National Summit, which occurred this spring. She is eager, curious, smart, creative, and very dedicated to her work. She is a fast learner, taking on new projects as needed. She has worked on a variety of our research projects. She often prepares my presentations for speaking engagements across the country, where I explain complex research and innovative ideas...She has been a great team player, working with two other more senior staff, taking the lead on organization of the project as well as leading virtual interviews with academics, City planners, and staff of shared mobility companies across many European cities. She was able to synthesize a wide variety of information into a succinct draft and final report." Ms. Feigon goes on to describe a host of other Ms. Halls's accomplishments. But she finishes her remarks by adding, "I have known a lot of staff over my many years in the nonprofit world and I can tell that Cassie is someone who has the spark, intellect, and follow through to be successful in her endeavors."

For her determination and dedication to transportation and her commitment to its use for the betterment of society, Cassie Halls richly deserves to be named the first recipient of the 2018 \$5,000 Stantec WTS-LA Scholarship.