

## Cassie Halls: WTS-LA 2019 \$7,500 Myra L. Frank Memorial Graduate Scholarship Recipient



*Cassie Halls (Myra L. Frank memorial graduate scholarship), Photo by John Livzey*

Cassie Halls, this year's winner of the \$7,500 Myra L. Frank memorial graduate scholarship, traces her transportation origin story to a bike ride in Chicago. As a volunteer at a nonprofit bike shop in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago, she helped organize bike rides to advocate for improved transportation options on the Southside. She had the opportunity to ride with active transportation and racial equity leaders, who inspired her to think about how transportation can be a catalyst for change. For her, this was a seminal moment.

Today, Cassie pursues a master's degree in urban and regional planning at the University of California, Los Angeles's (UCLA) Luskin School of Public Affairs with a concentration in Transportation Policy and Planning. Projected to graduate in 2020 and currently carrying a 3.89 GPA, Cassie previously earned a bachelor's degree in the Comparative History of Ideas from the University of Washington in Seattle. And in addition to her academic achievement, she's earned numerous awards and scholarships, including the 2018 \$5,000 Stantec WTS-LA Scholarship. But it's her affinity for transportation that figures most prominently in her work and studies.

For example, she's currently serving as a research fellow in Metro's Office of Extraordinary Innovation, a graduate researcher at the Institute for Transportation Studies in Los Angeles, and in the past, worked at the Shared-Use Mobility Center in Chicago. Collecting varied and deep transportation knowledge and experience, Cassie is very much following in the tradition of Myra L. Frank, including her desire to play an important role in transforming Southern California into a more economically vibrant and transit-oriented region. And her work has garnered considerable notice.

According to UCLA professor of Urban Planning Evelyn Blumenberg, "She has a focused interest in transportation planning—particularly as it affects low-income residents—and extensive professional planning experience," and was, "one of the top applicants to our master's degree program...her experience and drive suggest that she will play a leadership role as a transportation planner in the years to come."

UCLA associate professor Michael Manville agrees, "I can say without reservation that Cassie is highly motivated, and deeply interested in transportation policy...I think Cassie is a great student in our department, who in short order will be a very promising member of the transportation community."

By every indication, Myra L. Frank would certainly agree.