

Guadalupe Huerta: Building Equity in Transportation from the Inside



Guadalupe Huerta (WTS-LA \$5,000 Fehr & Peers Leah Guerreiro-Ramos Memorial Graduate Scholarship recipient), 2019

“Los Angeles, though demographically diverse as a whole, is one of the most socially stratified regions in America,” declares WTS-LA \$5,000 Fehr & Peers Leah Guerreiro-Ramos, Memorial Graduate Scholarship winner Guadalupe (Lupita) Huerta. “Through various social and economic mechanisms, the city is divided up geographically, bearing semblance to a caste system. Service workers and their families, like my own, live on the outer edge of the city and onward, further east and south, while the majority of upper income communities and wealth is concentrated towards the west, and further north in the San Fernando Valley. As a rider of LA Metro’s Route 2 bus, I saw these dynamics play out firsthand...My experience on the 2 sparked my interest in planning, and spurred critical thinking on how planning has failed many communities, and thus stratified regions. I began to think about how transportation can be used as a tool to dismantle inequity in our cities.

“As a transportation student, I constantly think about how these inequities shape our communities, specifically low-income communities of color, due to lack of access to transportation, or due to unintended consequences of transportation development. I thus plan to use my planning degree to work towards transportation systems, and therefore regions, that are equitable and serve all facets of the population.”

Seeking a June 2020 master’s degree in regional and urban planning—with a concentration on transportation policy and planning—from UCLA, Huerta also holds an undergraduate degree in international development from UCLA, where she’s no stranger to the Dean’s List. Huerta also possesses impressive work experience. Currently, she’s a graduate intern at Metro, and she’s also worked for Councilmember Mike Bonin, in the Harvey Mudd Upward Bound Program, and several other prestigious roles. Her skills, smarts, and achievements have not gone unnoticed.

UCLA urban planning professor Evelyn Blumenberg believes, “Ms. Huerta shows great initiative and leadership. Working with other students, she re-established the WTS chapter at UCLA. She currently serves as a co-chair of the chapter...Ms. Huerta shows great promise, not only as a professional but as a leader in the field. She has a strong academic record and is committed to pursuing equity.”

Fifth Council District Director Debbie Dyer Harris adds, “She always handled complicated issues in a thoughtful, professional manner, seeking out answers and information...Her positive attitude, natural intelligence, and willingness to help, coupled with her incredible work ethic, greatly impressed both myself and the community...and I knew she would be a tremendous asset to anyone who was lucky enough to work with her.”

Post Date : Oct. 11, 2019