

## Da Vinci has nothing on UCLA doctoral student Julene Paul...



*Julene Paul (2019 \$5,000 WTS-LA BYD Scholarship Recipient), 2019*

“My transportation education and career have allowed me to bring a different perspective to a field sometimes criticized for lacking in diversity,” explains UCLA urban planning and policy PhD student Julene Paul, the winner of the 2019 \$5,000 WTS-LA BYD Scholarship. “As a Mexican-American woman growing up in Los Angeles, I have long been sensitive to the ways in which ethnicity and diversity affect power and policy. Transportation planning and policies in Los Angeles have contributed to spatial inequality, including along racial and ethnic lines. The history of my family (and myself) exemplifies many of the legacies of urban inequality exacerbated by previous transportation policies. In bringing a diverse perspective to the field, my background allows me to engage with these issues and underserved communities in important ways.”

Julene Paul is a renaissance woman. Carrying a 4.0 GPA in her UCLA doctoral program, she also holds a master’s degree in city and regional planning from Rutgers University, and a bachelor of arts degree (cum laude) from Harvard. Her work experience includes stints at the Federal Transit Administration, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. She has also held research positions at UCLA’s Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS), the Voorhees Transportation Center, Harvard’s WEB Du Bois Institute, the Getty Research Institute, and Harvard’s Education Innovation Laboratory. Yet that in no way captures the breadth and depth of her interests.

“Her impressive academic record is only part of the story,” explains Brian D. Taylor, PhD, a UCLA professor and director of the ITS. He’s also one of Paul’s doctoral advisors. Taylor cites Paul’s stellar work record, then adds, “And here at UCLA, her academic performance has been dazzling; her transcript is perfect, and then some...Ms. Paul comes across as an extremely bright, deeply committed student with a high level of integrity and a wry sense of humor...I already see her as a rising star in the transportation field, in which Latina women are unfortunately all too rare.”

Evelyn Blumenberg, PhD, a UCLA professor and director of the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, as well as Paul’s other doctoral advisor shares Taylor’s assessment of Paul. “She is an excellent student, a wonderful research collaborator, and I believe, well positioned to have a successful academic career in the field of transportation planning.”

Julene Paul makes a compelling case for a modern-day renaissance woman. But to cement the moniker, she adds that she “enjoys driving fast on freeways, watching the Dodgers beat the Giants, and petting dogs.”