

Ma'ayan Dembo: Tomorrow's Transportation Visionary Today



Ma'ayan Dembo (WTS-LA \$5,000 Fehr & Peers Leah Guerreiro-Ramos Memorial Graduate Scholarship winner), 2019

“Growing up in the Bay Area, I was privileged to access high-quality public transportation networks before I had a driver’s license,” explains Ma’ayan Dembo, the WTS-LA \$5,000 Fehr & Peers Leah Guerreiro-Ramos Memorial Graduate Scholarship recipient. “Public transit allowed me to experience independence at a relatively young age. In college, I utilized these networks to access work opportunities, see family, and explore the place I call home. My desire to work in transportation stems from these formative experiences where I traversed beyond my city limits and saw different people, lifestyles, and cultural landmarks. As such, I strongly believe public transportation has the potential to be a great unifier, connector, and equalizer.

“In Los Angeles, I’ve worked in transportation demand management and explored the behavioral side of traffic mitigation. Working one-on-one with commuters, I saw the barriers deterring people from utilizing alternative modes of transportation and wet my feet with data analysis from commuter surveys. I decided to go back to school to learn more analytical tools, and pivot to a career with a larger impact on mobility at the intersection of planning and engineering.”

Dembo is quite the force to be reckoned with. With a bachelor’s degree in urban studies from Stanford University in hand, she will graduate with a master’s degree in transportation policy and planning from UCLA in June 2020. Her GPA at both institutions topped 3.7. In addition, Dembo serves as the events chair at WTS-UCLA and she’s a Creative Arts Fellow with LADOT’s Vision Zero Initiative, where she incorporates art into the community. She looks to work at a public transit agency, introducing technology into public mobility infrastructure. Every indication shows she will succeed.

Citing her maturity, drive, and passion for improving transportation for everyone, UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies Deputy Director Madeline Brozen believes, “Ma’ayan stands out among her peers because she knows what she wants and wastes no time putting in the work to achieve it. She makes connections, studies hard, and uses all of the tools at her disposal to deliver quality work...She embodies a well-rounded future transportation professional.”

UrbanTrans North America Director Aaron Gaul agrees. “Ma’ayan approaches all assignments, tasks, and relationships with an unrivaled energy, focus, and determination to succeed...Her tireless determination is not only found in her client-facing work but also internal to our organization’s development and contributions outside of work...What often strikes me most about Ma’ayan is the depth of character and breadth of her interests...Perhaps most simply stated: Ma’ayan is going to do amazing things in her career and lifetime.”