

Congratulations to Allison Fischer, 2020 WTS-LA Ava Doner Memorial Scholarship Winner



Allison Fischer (2020 WTS-LA Ava Doner Memorial Scholarship Recipient)

For 2020 WTS-LA \$10,000 Ava Doner Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship winner Allison Fischer, to err is human, to research those errors divine. “My career interest was sparked by my participation in the Airport Cooperative Research Program’s University Design Competition, which I began last fall. Up until April 2020, I worked with my design team to articulate a way to better analyze and collect data following a runway incursion or excursion event. Although put on hold due to the COVID-19 outbreak, this project has demonstrated that human factors are the root cause of many of these aviation mishaps, something that fascinates me as an industrial and systems engineer in the transportation field. The importance of human factors in transportation design, as well as the data analysis tools I’ve learned in my engineering courses...have also influenced my career goals. I am interested in becoming a data analyst or human factors engineer to ensure the efficiency and safety of public transportation.”

A junior studying Industrial Systems and Engineering (ISE) at the University of Southern California (USC) with a 3.96 GPA, Fischer looks to graduate in May 2022. From there, she plans to pursue a master’s degree in transportation engineering, furthering her studies in data analytics, human factors engineering, and transportation. She also aspires to design bespoke transportation systems using both technical and non-technical approaches to truly serve ridership and operator needs. That sounds ambitious. But that degree of ambition suits Fischer perfectly.

“Allison is a very active participant in USC’s Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) student chapter...Allison volunteered to help organize and deliver the 2020 Western ITE Student Leadership Summit in January...the largest such annual event to date,” explains USC Professor James E. Moore, II, USC Transportation Engineering Program Director and WTS-LA and California Transportation Foundation board member.

“Allison spoke in front of the group about how to make ITE student chapters a welcoming place for all majors, both technical and nontechnical. She has a commitment to inclusivity and a vision for the future of transportation. After in-person ITE meetings were suspended due to the COVID-19 crisis, Allison arranged for the USC ITE student chapter to rely on virtual meetings so that the group could submit a design for ITE’s Micromobility Sandbox Design Competition. Her leadership in this project and commitment to ITE, to the field, and to her peers led her to be selected as vice president of the student chapter for the 2020-2021 academic year.”

But that's not all he had to say.

“As a second-year undergraduate student, she worked alongside graduate students on an interdisciplinary team to develop a novel solution to reduce the number of runway excursion and incursion events [in the University Design Competition]. Coordinating with FAA airport inspectors and operators, Allison strove to ensure that the solution her team designed was feasible and met the needs of airports. Her initiative throughout the competition moved the team ahead and kept them together and focused.”

Professor Moore also notes that Allison is, “Highly ranked in her class in USC's Epstein ISE Department, and is pursuing course work that positions her to work in the transportation problem domain in multiple capacities. She is committed to making meaningful contributions to the transportation industry in her professional career, or for that matter as a student.”

To err may be human, but researching those errors and learning how to prevent them is proving most divine for USC's Allison Fischer.