

## **ITE Western District Student Endowment Fund Strategic Plan**

### **Background**

The future of the transportation profession depends upon a stable and continuing flow of students who are excited and passionate in the career opportunities afforded by transportation engineering and planning. In an ever-competitive environment to attract students with strong math, science and analytical capabilities, many transportation firms and agencies have had to look for employment candidates outside the region and the US. Over the past five years, the ITE Western District has greatly expanded and reallocated funding for the Student Initiatives Program in accordance with the District's strategic plan which calls for us to:

*Encourage, support and provide opportunities to attract, retain and develop the most talented students into transportation professionals.*

The District's student initiatives have been targeted toward attracting the best and brightest university Civil Engineering students to the transportation profession in the West and have included:

- Regional Travel Scholarships to attend the Western District Annual Meeting
- Support for the Student Leadership Summit
- Funding for the Data Collection Fund
- Funding and awards for the James H. Kell competition held at the Western District Annual Meeting
- Support of travel for our winning Student Traffic Bowl team to the ITE International Meeting
- Support of travel to the ITE International Meeting if a Western District student chapter wins the International Student Chapter Award
- Awards for student chapter annual reports
- Awards for our student paper winner, outstanding graduate and undergraduate students, and outstanding student chapter at the Western District Annual Meeting
- Sponsoring special events for students and professionals

By encouraging active student chapter advisors and increasing student access to the profession (and its professionals) we have achieved substantial progress in increasing the number of engineering students choosing transportation as a career option. We have demonstrated that when we get our professionals in direct contact with students, they excite and inspire students about transportation, making it a real and inviting profession.

In the past, the Student Initiatives Program was modestly funded utilizing existing annual operating and annual meeting budgets. This has limited the scope of the program and resulted in the use of operating reserves. In an effort to avoid increasing dues and to assure continuous, stable funding for the current and future student initiatives, the Student Endowment Fund was established to provide a self-sustaining funding source for this program.

### **Mission Statement**

*The Student Endowment Fund is intended to provide a continuous and stable source of funding for the Student Initiatives Program, the goal of which is to attract, retain, and develop the most talented students into transportation professionals.*

### **Short-Term Goals**

The District initially estimated that it would require at least \$500,000 to accrue enough interest per year to fully fund all of the endeavors undertaken by the Student Initiatives Program.

*Goal: Accrue at least \$500,000 in the Student Endowment Fund.*

Once this goal is met, the interest accrued from the substantial principal in the fund would be utilized to fully support the Student Initiatives Program.

### **Short-Term Initiatives**

To reach the \$500,000 goal for the Student Endowment Fund, the following short-term initiatives will be undertaken by the Endowment Fund Committee:

- Once the fund reaches at least \$210,000, invest \$200,000 of the principal in accordance with the investment policy for the fund with guidance from the Board and other financial advisors to generate maximum interest with minimal risk. The initial investment will be placed in a higher yielding investment for a longer investment period (perhaps 5 years). As additional contributions are received, subsequent investments from the principal in the fund will be made at minimum of \$20,000 increments in rolling investments with shorter investment periods. At least \$10,000 of the principal should be held in reserve for emergencies.
- Before the \$500,000 goal is met, annual contributions should be utilized to subsidize the program rather than liquidating investments. This procedure will allow the fund to continue to grow through reinvestment of the interest/dividends, but may delay subsequent investments of the fund's principal.

- Outreach personally to individual members to encourage contributions to the Student Endowment Fund
- Coordinate with Section/Chapter Presidents to identify liaisons in each Section/Chapter who will in turn encourage contributions to the Student Endowment Fund on a local level
- Attend District Annual Meetings to facilitate personal outreach to members and increase the convenience of the contribution process
- Distribute badge ribbons at District Annual Meetings to recognize contributors and heighten awareness of the fund
- Distribute lapel pins and encourage their use at District Annual Meetings to recognize contributors and heighten awareness of the fund
- Publish bi-monthly EF Spotlights in the WesternITE and on the Endowment Fund website to increase awareness and humanize (“put a face to”) the fund
- Send correspondence promptly to contributors to either thank them for their contributions or remind them of their pledges to contribute (annual billing)
- Distribute annual awards for contributors to the fund to recognize members/groups who have made significant contributions to the fund and engender friendly competition for the awards

The short-term goal of accruing \$500,000 in the Student Endowment Fund was reached in September 2016.

### **Long-Term Goals**

Once the Student Endowment Fund reaches its \$500,000 goal, the interest accrued from the principal in the fund would be utilized to fully support the Student Initiatives Program thereby eliminating the need to utilize the District’s general operating funds.

*Goal 1: Accrue at least \$15,000 in interest on an annual basis to fully support the existing endeavors of the Student Initiatives Program.*

Continued pursuit of the short-term initiatives of the fund will add to the principal and ultimately ensure that the fund is able to generate enough revenue to support the Student Initiatives Program. As the principal in the Student Endowment Fund continues to grow, the program can undertake expanded student initiatives.

*Goal 2: Accrue at least \$20,000 in interest on an annual basis to support the expansion of the Student Initiatives Program endeavors.*

These expanded initiatives include:

- Additional grants for the Data Collection Fund. Currently only 5 grants are awarded each year.

- Travel stipends for students to attend District Annual Meetings to broaden their exposure to the profession

*Goal 3: Continue to expand the Student Initiatives Program endeavors upon subsequent accruals of \$10,000 increments of interest.*

These expanded initiatives could include:

- Grants to student chapter advisors for activities that widen the real world experiences transportation students experience in school (i.e., technical tours)
- Grants for field trip opportunities with professionals to build tangible and local interest in transportation
- Library materials and technical software for student chapters
- Grants to sections that develop innovative programs to attract students to transportation

Additional student initiatives will be considered for inclusion in the Student Initiatives Program upon subsequent accruals of \$10,000 increments of interest.

### **Strategic Plan Evaluation**

This Strategic Plan for the Student Endowment Fund is consistent with the Strategic Plan for the Western District. However, periodic evaluation and update of this plan is required to ensure continued concurrence with the District's Strategic Plan and subsequent Board actions, as well as the Strategic Plan for the Student Initiatives Committee. The frequency of these evaluations should be dependent on the expected timeframe for achieving each of the Plan's goals.

*Short-Term Plan: Evaluate and update the Strategic Plan at least every two years until the short-term goal of the Plan is achieved.*

*Long-Term Plan: Evaluate and update the Strategic Plan at least every five years or upon accrual of \$20,000 in interest and subsequent \$10,000 increments of interest.*