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SJSU Research Center  
210 N. Fourth St., 4th Fl.  
San José, CA 95112

Tel // 408.924.7560  
Fax // 408.924.7565

[www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu)

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[maurillo@mti.sjsu.edu](mailto:maurillo@mti.sjsu.edu)

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Riki Rafner  
415-597-6712  
[riki.rafner@gmail.com](mailto:riki.rafner@gmail.com)

## Mineta Transportation Institute Publishes Study on Recruiting Candidates into Transportation Careers

*Researchers Agrawal & Dill investigate factors that could lead planning and engineering students to specialize in transportation-related work.*

**San Jose, Calif., September 14, 2009** – The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) has published Report 08-03, [Paving the Way: Recruiting Students into Transportation Careers](#). This report examines the factors that lead civil engineering undergraduates and urban planning masters' students to specialize in transportation, as opposed to other sub-disciplines within the two fields.

“As Baby Boomers reach retirement, the transportation industry faces a growing shortage of professional engineers and planners,” said Dr. Asha Weinstein Agrawal, a principal investigator for the study. “One key strategy in solving this problem will be to encourage more civil engineering and urban planning students to specialize in transportation while completing their degrees. This way, employers will have a larger pool of quality recruits.”

However, very little is known about how these students choose a specialization. This report addresses that knowledge gap. The primary data collection methods were web-based surveys of 1,852 civil engineering undergraduates and 869 planning masters' students. The study results suggest several steps the transportation industry can take to increase the number of civil engineering and planning students who wish to specialize in transportation.

Some of the report's primary recommendations include broadening the students' view of the transportation profession; developing course modules that highlight the interdisciplinary nature of transportation planning; providing more and better publicized scholarships and research assistantships; changing women's perception of the transportation profession as unwelcoming to them; having women transportation planners as guest speakers and mentors; and several other recommendations.

Besides Dr. Agrawal, the other principal investigator for the study was Dr. Jennifer Dill.

The free document can be downloaded from [www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu). Click “Research” and then “Publications.” Scroll down to the report.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

**ASHA WEINSTEIN AGRAWAL, Ph.D.**

Dr. Agrawal is an Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at San José State University, as well as Director of the MTI National Transportation Finance Center. Her research and teaching interests include transportation finance, pedestrian planning, and planning and transportation history. She has a B.A. from Harvard University in Folklore and Mythology, an M.Sc. in Urban and Regional Planning from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

**JENNIFER DILL, Ph.D.**

Dr. Dill is an Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University, and the Director of the Center for Transportation Studies at PSU. Her research and teaching interests focus on transportation and environmental planning, travel behavior, air quality, and transportation-land use interactions. Prior to entering academia, she worked as an environmental and transportation planner for government and non-profit organizations in California. She has a B.S. in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning from the University of California, Davis, an M.A. in Urban Planning from University of California, Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

**ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE:**

The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU. The institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grant, contracts and donations. MTI also has contracts with the US Department of Homeland Security. The US DOT selected MTI as a national "Center of Excellence" following a 2002 competition.

The Institute has a Board of Trustees whose internationally-respected members represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management came from a board assessment of the industry's unmet needs and led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. MTI conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer focusing on transportation policy and management topics and issues. Visit [www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu)

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