A Win for Women in Transportation Engineering | College of Engineering

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July 27, 2020 — Utah State University graduate student Ferdousy Runa will receive a $4,000 scholarship for her work studying pedestrian activity. Runa’s research will help inform transportation planners and lead to safety improvements at busy intersections.

Runa is a master’s student of transportation engineering, studying under the direction of faculty advisor Patrick Singleton. Earlier this month, she received the Matt Riffkin Legacy Scholarship from the Northern Utah Chapter of the Women’s Transportation Seminar, known as WTS. The organization promotes a more diverse, inclusive and equitable transportation industry through the global advancement of women.

The main objective of Runa’s research is to validate pedestrian traffic signal push-button data as a measure of walking activity at signalized intersections.

“Every time a person presses the push-button at a crosswalk, this activity is recorded,” she explained. “We collected data from about 90 intersections to help validate pedestrian actuation data against observed pedestrian counts, which we collected from watching video recordings at the intersections.”

By comparing the push-button actuation data with the observed data from the video, researchers hope to better correlate push-button activity to actual pedestrian activity.

The WTS scholarship is the second win for USU. Last year, transportation engineering graduate student Yi He won a $1,000 WTS scholarship.

Runa says she’s honored to receive the award. Later this year, she will attend Pennsylvania State University to pursue a PhD in transportation engineering.

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