

Shanjiang Zhu, Dr.

Assistant Professor
George Mason University
Department of Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering
4400 University Drive MS 6C1
Fairfax, VA 22030



Re: Call for Nominee for 2014 COTA Board of Directors

Dear COTA Members:

I am writing to nominate myself for the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Chinese Overseas Transportation Association (COTA). I have been an active COTA member for several years and I enjoyed my experience in this community. I have also seen the tremendous work that the BODs have done over the years for COTA and the benefits their efforts have brought to all COTA members. I was inspired by their achievements and started to help with COTA activities in several ways, including organizing COTA events and serving as area editor for COTA conferences. As COTA grows, I have also grown from a student to an Assistant Professor at George Mason University. In my career, I have benefited significantly from COTA. I feel it is time for me to give back and make more contributions to the organization. I believe my experiences serving in COTA events and my strong passion for its future growth make me a strong candidate for the COTA BOD.

Qualification and Commitment

I graduated from Tsinghua University with a Bachelor's degree in 2003 and a Master's degree in 2005. Like many COTA members, I came to the United States for more education, receiving my Ph.D degree from the University of Minnesota in 2010. During my Ph.D study, I had very limited opportunities to interact with professionals in transportation. I was unclear on the many questions that are crucial for a young student to make important decisions at the beginning of their career. For example, how is a career in a small transportation consulting firm different from that in a big firm? What are the different qualifications required for a faculty position from that for an industrial one? Information online helps, but true insights always come from conversations with people in the field. Luckily, COTA provided a platform for Chinese professionals from different fields in transportation to meet and interact. I benefited a lot from conversations I had with people in many fields during the COTA TRB reception. I was able to meet more Chinese transportation professionals from this single event than any other channels.

Benefiting from this event myself, I want to keep this opportunity beneficial for other COTA members. Two years in a row, I took the lead to organize the COTA receptions during the TRB

annual meeting. Each time, the number of attendees set a new record for the organization and I am very happy with the expanded attraction and influence of COTA.

COTA also provided an excellent platform for Chinese transportation professionals working overseas to interact with people in China; we see more conversations during the TRB annual meeting. The annual COTA International Conference of Transportation Professionals also attracts more and more domestic and overseas participants. Last year, I served as the area editor of the conference proceedings. I saw the positive impact that the COTA conference had on building collaborative efforts between domestic and overseas researchers.

Looking into the future, I believe COTA should continue with its past success with the two big annual events. George Mason University is located in the Washington D.C suburb; this location advantage allows me to better serve the needs of COTA in organizing events during the TRB annual conference. I also believe COTA could further improve its service for members through regular activities beyond these two events. COTA members can now receive more information, including new job openings, through regular email, COTA E-News, and its website. All these improvements and successes represent huge efforts volunteered by COTA BOD members and the support they won from all COTA members and friends. I am passionate for the future growth of this platform from which I have benefitted greatly in my career and I am committing time and efforts to ensure its future success.

Endorsement:

Dr. Clara Fang, Current COTA BOD Member, Associate Professor of Civil, Environmental, and Biomedical Engineering, University of Hartford

Dr. Henry Liu, Current COTA BOD Member, Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Minnesota

Dr. Xuegang (Jeff) Ban, COTA Member, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute