

2013 CITY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

*Industry Leaders Developing Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce*

In this age of technological wonders, the Careers in Transportation for Youth (CITY) Interns learned a key lesson: when it comes to meeting new people, there is no substitution for face to face contact. At COMTO's (Conference of Minority Transportation Officials) 42<sup>nd</sup> National Meeting and Training Conference, held in July in Jacksonville, Florida, eighteen CITY Interns exchanged business cards and conversations with the transportation industry's top echelon.

Some of the key senior leaders they met included **Peter M. Rogoff**, Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); **Phil Washington**, General Manager of the Denver Regional Transit (DRTD); **Christian Kent**, Assistant General Manager to the Department of Access Services for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); former COMTO Board Chair, **Shirley DeLibero**; and CITY Program Manager, **Betty Jackson** of the FTA.

During their three days at the conference, the interns participated in numerous workshops on key issues facing the industry. However, it was their own leadership development workshops that drew the attention of many industry leaders, who came and shared their own stories, challenges and successes alike. **Keith Parker**, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit (MARTA) advised the interns "to build relationships, network," and echoing a refrain heard throughout the conference, "treat everyone, from top to bottom, with respect and dignity."

**Robert H. Prince, Jr.**, Vice President of AECOM and COMTO Board Chair, together with **Michael P. Melaniphy**, President and Chief Executive Officer, of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), touted the benefits of a "kitchen cabinet" -- a small number of close friends to advise you through thick and thin, professional and personal.



"I really can't put into words how amazing I felt at the conference," said **Shantae Isabell**, senior business major at Clark Atlanta University and COMTO CITY Intern at the Federal Transit Administration in Atlanta, "the only way I can describe this entire experience is PRICELESS!"

Like many of the interns, **Jarren Williams**, an engineering major at Morgan State University, was unsure what to expect at the conference. Sitting at the back of the room listening to the lectures and discussions he said, “Never did I imagine shaking hands with former White House advisor **Michael Blake**.” Mr. Blake gave the keynote speech addressing the entire conference, and afterwards, he met and talked directly to the interns in a private session.



"This conference is the only place where you will hear the stories of CEOs, vice presidents and veterans in the transportation industry," noted **Amanda Mascarenas**, who is interning for her second year in Denver with EES Engineering, a DBE firm and COMTO member, "and all of them will give you the same tools and advice they were given to succeed."

For senior **Mycheal Crafton**, majoring in civil engineering at Columbia University and interning at CH2M Hill in New York City, "Being a COMTO CITY Intern has been nothing short of an enlightening experience."



Headed into its 9<sup>th</sup> year, the objective of this unique partnership between the FTA and COMTO is to attract the best and brightest young talent of underrepresented youth to the public transportation industry and to promote the wide variety of career opportunities within the industry. Most agree that a *workforce crisis is brewing within the transportation industry*. Industry professionals, predominantly baby boomers, are retiring in large numbers, leaving a void of experienced leaders

for the 21st century labor force. Addressing this issue directly, the CITY Internship Program infuses new talent into the industry workforce pipeline. Facing the challenges of the next century, the program's ultimate goal is to ensure that the nation is equipped with a diverse, technically savvy workforce that is reflective of the country's changing demographics.

"We are all capable of great things if given the opportunity," says University of California Berkeley senior **Adrian Quiroz**, interning at the FTA's office in San Francisco. "The CITY internship program has given me the opportunity to get firsthand experience in the field of transportation, and as a result, I have begun my professional career and have become a better-rounded student and individual."

"Attending the annual conference was an unforgettable experience," said **Jonathan Martinez**, a junior majoring in civil and environmental engineering at Rowan University and interning at the FTA's Philadelphia office. "I was able to build bridges and establish liaisons that otherwise would not have been possible. Being a COMTO CITY intern has put me on track to becoming a leader."

Interning for ten weeks during the summer, the interns gained experience with industry stakeholders in eight cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, Denver, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, DC. Members of the 2013 class hail from 16 different colleges and universities, and represent an array of majors, including: business, communication, engineering, economics, French, history, Japanese studies, and sociology. "All of these skills and many more disciplines are needed in the transportation industry," explains **Rita E. Daguillard**, Director of Office of Research Management at the FTA.

**James Cheeks, Jr.**, COMTO DC Chapter President and Chief Traffic Engineer for the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, supervised intern **John Malachi** for a second year. "I advised John, a Japanese studies major, to use his language skills in the international arena or perhaps transportation research."

### 2013 Careers in Transportation for Youth (CITY) Interns

Name	Year	School	Major	Host Agency
<b>Atlanta</b>				
Justin Harris	Senior	Cornell University	Economics/Africana Studies	FTA
Devonte Ferrell	Junior	South West Poly	Civil Engineering	MARTA
Shantae Isabell	Senior	Clark Atlanta	Business	FTA
Lawayne Long	Junior	Clark Atlanta	Business	MARTA
<b>Baltimore</b>				
Jarren Williams	Senior	Morgan State	Engineering	MDOT
<b>Dallas</b>				
Aspen Chandler	Senior	Cornell University	Developmental Sociology	FTA
Dejaunae Smith	Junior	Texas Southern	History	MV Transit
<b>Denver</b>				
William Carter	Junior	Univ of New Mexico	Business/ Management Info Systems	DRTD
Amanda Mascarenas	Senior	Colorado School of Mines	Civil Engineering	EES Engineering
<b>District of Columbia</b>				
Aubrey Buckner	Senior	VCU	Electrical Engineering	WMATA
John Thomas Malachi	Senior	Hawaii	Japanese	DDOT
Alexandra Westerband	Senior	University of Arizona	French, Communication	FTA
<b>New York</b>				
Mycheal Crafton	Senior	Columbia University	Civil Engineering	MTA- NYCT
David Sanchez	Junior	Boston University	Economics	CH2MHILL
<b>Philadelphia</b>				
Desmon Hickson	Senior	Temple	Computer Engineering	AECOM
Jonathan Martinez	Senior	Rowan	Civil & Environmental Engineering	FTA
<b>San Francisco</b>				
Phillip Lang	Senior	Morehouse	Sociology	SFMTA
Adrian Quiroz	Senior	UC Berkeley	Civil & Environmental Engineering	FTA



“The CITY Program is a great return on investment and the lifeblood of COMTO,” says **Charles Cave**, of COMTO Houston and an intern mentor. “It’s great to have our former interns come back each year and work with the current class.” 2013 was no different. Honoring

their commitments to stay involved with the CITY program, four former interns returned to assist the program staff and to help mentor this year’s class.

Three of the alumni are already working in the transportation industry and one other is nearing graduation. “I am always happy to give back to the program; all of you have done so much to help me,” says **David Folarin**, who graduates in June 2014 from Prairie View A&M University with a civil engineering degree.

Former Interns	Year	Chapter	Host Agency
David Folarin	2011	Dallas	DART
James Gerrald	2011	DC	WMATA
James Lynn	2012	Houston	Houston
Jasmine Narcisse	2012	Philadelphi	FTA

Returning for his third year, **James Gerrald** says, “The CITY Internship program has shaped my life. Thanks to this wonderful opportunity, I am now, totally committed to working in the transportation industry.”

“Thank you for having me back once again,” says **James Lynn**. “It was an even better experience than my year as a CITY intern, as I was able to give back to the program and help mentor young adults. I will definitely stay in touch, and I believe next year’s COMTO conference in Atlanta will be an even better experience as this program continues to improve.”

“As James said, I am sure the program in Atlanta will be even better and that the mentors can serve an even larger role especially when it comes to offering advice on making the transition from college to full time employment in today’s economy,” says **Jasmine Narcisse**, who just recently joined a Philadelphia based transportation firm.

In summary:

“The future is bright; we have such strong young leaders on the horizon,” said **Julie Cunningham**, COMTO President/CEO. “Our interns and scholars are such phenomenal young professionals and we have every confidence that the future of our industry is in good hands.”

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