Professor elected to California transportation board

By Jared Servantez · Daily Trojan

Posted August 31, 2010 (2 days ago) at 11:29 pm in News

The California Transportation Foundation elected James E. Moore II, a professor at the Viterbi School of Engineering, to its board of directors this month as the first appointment of an academic member to the board.

The CTF, a non-profit benefit corporation founded in 1988, focuses on fulfilling California’s transportation needs that are not met by state-run programs.

Moore said his appointment distinguishes USC as a university dedicated to research and professionalism.

“CTF is largely oriented toward professionals rather than academics, and for us to be able to place a faculty member on that board, it’s an implicit endorsement of the attention that USC gives to professions that it serves,” Moore said.

The foundation increased its focus on education in an effort to strike a balance between the professional and academic aspects of transportation, said Heinz Heckeroth, executive director of the CTF. Offering Moore a spot on the board strengthened its educational abilities, Heckeroth said.

“We provide scholarships and mentoring programs, so we felt that Moore would be helpful in terms of understanding student requirements and student needs,” Heckeroth said.

Moore has been a faculty member at Viterbi since 1988 and serves as chair of the Daniel J. Epstein Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

“I was a little skeptical initially because the board tends to be more oriented towards professional personnel rather than academic personnel, but it was clear that they had a very deep respect for the education enterprise,” Moore said.

As a scholar in the field of transportation research, Moore plans to further the cause of transportation education while serving his three-year term on the CTF board.
The foundation hosts an annual symposium for undergraduate students of civil engineering and urban planning, in which Moore was heavily involved before his election. USC typically sends three students under Moore’s direction to the symposium, where they work with leading experts on mock transportation projects.

“There’s a special degree of attention at USC and our professional schools to making sure that our work and our educational programs meet the needs of professions as those needs emerge and change,” he said.

In addition to the undergraduate student symposium, the CTF also hosts an annual conference on California transportation policy, sponsors agency personnel to attend other conferences and scientific meetings, and organizes an annual competition to award and recognize the state’s top transportation projects and officials.

“I think the foundation does important work and it contributes in a significant way to transportation scholarship,” Moore said. “I wanted to be able to participate and support them and to try to keep the resources of that foundation oriented towards serving universities.”

Moore believes USC is at the forefront of universities involved in transportation research.

“We’ve always been oriented toward research — we want to do good scholarship and contribute to literature and move the frontier of knowledge ahead,” Moore said. “But in addition to that we’re also very interested in remaining relevant to the professions we’re serving.”

His election to the CTF board of directors, Moore said, reflects favorably on the university as a whole.

“The message I get is that USC is seen as a research institution that takes the professions we serve very seriously,” Moore said. “We’re able to bring the full strength of the institution to transportation problems and questions.”