



## SAFER-SIM Excellence Award Graduate Winners

One student from each of the SAFER-SIM Institutes was awarded our Excellence Award, who have the following:

- Received financial support from the UTC program for at least two semesters prior to receiving the award
- Completed with a grade of B or better at least 12 hours of graduate course work at the time the selection is made and have a graduate GPA in excess of 3.25 (out of 4.00).
- Displayed accomplishments in the 3 following areas:
  - Technical Merit and Research Capability
  - Academic Performance
  - Leadership

### Recipients:

#### **Jinghui Yuan** – *University of Central Florida*

“ His Ph.D. dissertation was the first study that investigated the relationship between real-time crash risk on urban arterials and traffic, signal timing, and weather characteristics. He proposed an advanced real-time crash risk prediction algorithm based on deep learning approach. Furthermore, he also investigated high-resolution microscopic data and advanced deep learning algorithms to improve the prediction performance for future application. The results and conclusions are very important in real-time safety applications in the context of Integrated Active Traffic Management (IATM) and connected vehicle technologies. He was involved in multiple research projects funded by FDOT and USDOT, including a SAFER-SIM project (Operational and Safety-Based Analyses of Varied Toll Lane Configurations), where he published a scientific paper in Transportation Research Part F. In addition, Dr. Yuan also published 7 papers in other top transportation journals, i.e., Transportation Research Part C, Transportation Research Part A, Accident Analysis & Prevention, and Transportation Research Record. Dr. Yuan contribution to the USDOT Safety Visualization challenge was significant. The UCF SST team is one of 2 finalists among 54 submissions. I can think of no person who better satisfies the award’s criteria than Jinghui Yuan, and I would like to nominate him with the highest level of enthusiasm and support.”

## **Morgan Parr – University of Iowa**

“Morgan hit the ground running as soon as she arrived at Iowa and became quickly engaged in the Hank Virtual Environments Lab. She is already the lead on two large projects and has partnered with a computer science student on a third project.... this is an extremely strong level of productivity in the lab, which has nicely positioned Morgan for several excellent publications. As a result of her outstanding performance thus far, last year Morgan won the J.R. Simon Early Scholarship Potential Award in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. This award is given to the second-year student who has demonstrated the greatest potential for a successful career as a teacher, researcher, and all-around good citizen in a top- ranking academic department....As you can see from her CV, Morgan is off to an outstanding start to her professional career. She has also excelled in her coursework and clinical training. She has been a terrific team member in the lab, and has made many contributions to multiple projects.”

## **Francis Tainter – University of Massachusetts-Amherst**

“...‘Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death,’ is but one in the myriad of famous Einstein quotes. This quote underscores the commitment that leaders often take when seeking opportunities to expand themselves. In my opinion, it also embodies one of the greatest attributes that Mr. Francis Tainter, a future leader in the transportation profession, possesses.... Francis has continually contributed to a myriad of Safer Sim initiatives. Francis has actually been involved with Safer Sim since the inception (dating back to his time as an undergraduate student) and has been actively involved in all facets of the UTC. By my count, Francis has played an active role in roughly 10 research projects – ranging from data collection to experimental design through being the student lead and primary author.... Some of the more distinguished attributes of leaders include expanding the intellectual climate of their academic area through noteworthy original research as well improving the quality of life of others. It is with these notions in mind that my reference for Francis is strengthened. Francis exhibits many of the attributes an ideal student leader should possess.”

## **María Xelena Rojas Ibarra – University of Puerto Rico- Mayaguez**

“María is one of the best students that I have had in my career.... After learning the details of scenario creation, with the combination of commercial and proprietary software, Mrs. Rojas participated in three of our SaferSim projects. As expected, María did an excellent job in all these projects.... María has participated in the development of the peer-reviewed publications.... María is a fast learner student. She mastered all the procedures followed in our simulation laboratory with ease. Moreover, she has a gentle personality that allowed her to get along very well with all her peers and help them in various stages of their research work. She is actively looking for opportunities to continue her graduate studies at the top level to develop the ideas in her mind while contributing to expanding the state of knowledge in transportation engineering. We are convinced that María has the capabilities, enthusiasm, and willingness required to be a successful professional in the transportation field.”

***Congratulations to our winners!***