Southern Miss Center Receives U.S. Department of Transportation Designation

The University of Southern Mississippi Center for Logistics, Trade, and Transportation (CLTT) has been named and funded as a U.S. Department of Transportation Research and Innovative Technology Administration University Transportation Center (UTC).

The CLTT is part of the Tier I: National Center for Freight and Infrastructure Research and Education (CFIRE) consortium led by the University of Wisconsin-Madison and includes the University of Memphis, Vanderbilt University, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, University of Toledo, University of Illinois-Chicago, and Michigan Technological University.

A $5.5 million grant from the UTC to the consortium, including the CLTT, is directed toward research and education that will improve the nation’s freight transportation system in order to promote economic development and develop the next generation of transportation professionals. Of the $1.5 million University Transportation Center applications received, 14 grants were awarded. Forty-eight of the applicants competed to be one of the 10 Tier I Centers.

Dr. Taha Sahraoui, associate professor and graduate program director for Southern Miss’ School of Construction, serves as director of the center. Department of Economic and Workforce Development assistant professor Dr. Chad Miller serves as assistant director of the CLTT and is a principal investigator of the UTC grant project for Southern Miss.

“Receiving funding as part of the CFIRE consortium will open up great opportunities for our students interested in transportation, and allow us to work with some of the best transportation research professionals in the world to promote freight-based economic development in Mississippi,” Miller said.

The CLTT is a joint effort of the university’s School of Construction and the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, and seeks to provide a competitive advantage to industry and government agencies through its multidisciplinary activities. It was developed to respond to Gulf Coast government and industry stakeholders’ need for the creation and dissemination of practical, cutting-edge, inter-disciplinary knowledge and technologies to advance logistics, trade, and transportation; foster economic development; and promote an integrated freight system within the Southeast.

Some of the activities of the consortium will include efforts to make freight-oriented communities more resilient, evaluating the impact of the Panama Canal expansion on the nation’s freight system, improving the safety of transportation infrastructure, applying advanced technology to improve the performance of inland waterways, estimating the effects of climate change on freight transportation, improving distribution of local and regional food, and enhancing rail connectivity to underserved rural communities.

For more information about the Southern Miss School of Construction, online visit http://www.southernmiss.edu/construction. For more information about the university’s Department of Economic and Workforce Development, online visit http://www.southernmiss.edu/devep/.