

CEE @ Illinois



News from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



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[Research Aims to Smooth the Way for High-Speed Trains](#)

Railway track transitions at bridges, crossings and stations frequently experience differential movement, or bumps in the track. This movement is especially problematic for high-speed rail infrastructure, because bumps are accentuated at high speeds and can lead to car uncoupling, derailment, bridge damage, or passenger injury. A \$1.7 million study by CEE researchers, funded by the Federal Railroad Administration, aims to minimize this differential movement and smooth the way for high-speed trains. Researchers led by CEE professors Erol Tutumluer and Timothy D. Stark will study new and existing high-speed railway transitions in the Midwest and northeast corridor. [More about the High-Speed Rail Transition Study](#)



[Yeh Student Center is Dedicated](#)

The department's brand new M.T. Geoffrey Yeh Student Center in Newmark Civil Engineering Laboratory was formally dedicated on September 23. Hundreds of alumni returned to campus for the event, at which speakers included U of I President Michael Hogan and lead donor Geoffrey Yeh (BS 53), a developer and philanthropist from Hong Kong. [\(Video\)](#) The \$7 million, 20,500-square-foot addition to Newmark Lab provides state-of-the-art classrooms, meeting rooms and informal gathering space for the department's 1,300 students. The project was funded entirely through private gifts, a particular accomplishment given the economic challenges of recent years, said Professor Amr S. Elnashai, CEE department head. [Read more about the Yeh Dedication](#)



[Distinguished Panel Reviews CEE](#)

A distinguished panel of engineering educators, academic leaders and practitioners conducted an external review of CEE at Illinois Oct. 23-25. They praised the department's faculty, research, academic programs, and students and offered recommendations for continued excellence. The six-person panel—all members of the National Academy of Engineering—spent two days at the department, touring facilities, meeting with College of Engineering and department leadership, faculty, staff and students, and hearing presentations on research, programs and procedures. Before leaving Urbana, they prepared a report of their observations and recommendations. [More about the external review](#)



[Data-Sharing System will Link Physical and Social Scientists](#)

Effective solutions to problems of sustainability require collaboration among scientists and researchers in the physical and social sciences, but information-sharing across disciplines can be problematic. Now an Illinois team, led by Professor Praveen Kumar, will help to develop better methods for data-sharing in the new and growing field of sustainability. The work is part of a cooperative effort by four major universities, funded by the National Science Foundation with a two-year, \$2 million grant. "We will help define and prioritize the data needs for understanding the coupled human-nature interaction for advancing sustainability science," Kumar said. [More about the data-sharing project](#)



[Al-Qadi Named Member Emeritus of TRB Committee](#)

Professor Imad Al-Qadi has been appointed as a Member Emeritus of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Committee on Sealants and Fillers for Joints and Cracks (TRB AHD25). TRB established the emeritus membership category to recognize the significant and long-term contributions of individuals who have provided outstanding service through participation in TRB standing committees. Al-Qadi's teaching and research interests include civil engineering materials, pavement mechanics and advanced modeling. He is a Founder Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Director of the Illinois Center for Transportation. [More about Al-Qadi and TRB](#)



[Work Wins Prestigious Thesis Award](#)

Assistant Professor Daniel B. Work was awarded the 2011 Best Ph.D. Dissertation Award at the 14th International Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Conference on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in Washington, D.C., on October 6, 2011. The award is given annually for the best dissertation in any ITS area that is innovative and relevant to practice, according to the organization. Work joined the CEE department in December 2010. His research interests are control, estimation, and optimization of transportation systems, mobile sensing, and inverse modeling and data assimilation. [More about Work and the IEEE](#)



[Leadership and Legacy: Book Tells History of the Department](#)

CEE at Illinois published a book in September about its history. "Leadership and Legacy: A History of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Illinois," edited by Professor Emeritus William J. Hall and Professor and Head Amr S. Elnashai, features the writing of many distinguished contributors, as well as archival photos and a timeline of significant events. [More about the department history book](#)



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The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
205 North Mathews Ave., Urbana, IL 61801-2352 • 217-333-8038 / FAX: 217-333-9464 • civil@illinois.edu