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Brittney Gick, Stephen Wong, and Suzie Boxman—co-chairs of the recently formed Young Members Council (YMC) for the Transportation Sustainability and Resilience Group—have a synergy that is getting noticed and *influencing* those around them. Each co-chair represents a different section of the Transportation Sustainability and Resilience Group. “We refer to our council as the YMC–S&R,” offers Gick, who represents the Transportation and Society Section.

“The YMC–S&R is a subcommittee of S&R that also works with the larger Young Members Coordinating Council (YMCC) to share ideas and assist young members across TRB,” explains Wong. “As the representative for the Transportation Systems Resilience Section, I work closely with the committee chairs within the section and am the primary contact and liaison for young members interested in transportation resilience.”

Since their first meeting in June 2021, the co-chairs have coordinated virtually, meeting every six to eight weeks to get ready for the TRB Annual Meeting and determine what direction they would like to see the group take. They’re using online tools—setting up an e-mail account, creating shared documents for coordinating with each other, and releasing online surveys to collect information about the needs of the young members in the YMC–S&R. Notes Boxman, Transportation and Sustainability Section representative: “We all work together.”

“We also try to interact with YMCs in other groups,” Gick adds. “We have a very good working relationship with the YMC in the Aviation Group, which has been instrumental in helping us get off the ground at the group level as a new YMC. We met with our TRB staff representatives Christine Gerencher and Bill Anderson, YMC Chair Ria Kontou, YMC–Aviation Group Chair Jonathan Schneider, and with each other to plan out what YMC–S&R would look like and how we could best handle administrative areas.”

“Rather than assuming what the young members in our group want and need, we’re asking them directly, then act on their requests,” Boxman states. “This is setting us up for good engagement and success.”

The co-chairs’ responsibilities include organizing meetings, setting vision and goals, developing guides and programs for young members, and delegating tasks to other volunteers. “This can quickly become overwhelming,” cautions Wong. “My experience in research management—wearing multiple hats at the same time—has been especially important for my role as co-chair.”

Gick agrees that her prior leadership experience helped her learn the importance of being a good leader and maintaining strong communication channels and professional networks. A former TRB staffer, she admits, “I know a lot of the inner workings and can use that to help young members understand how to fully engage in TRB activities. I have long been very passionate about the need for young members to have a seat at the table.”

“Committee leadership is a great experience and a way to connect with other professionals,” Boxman emphasizes. “You have more to offer than you think as a young professional, and the more that you volunteer and take on similar leadership roles, the more you are able to offer in the future. People want you to succeed, so they will be there to help you if you need it.”

Wong’s advice for young professionals is to first “find a committee that feels like a community. For young professionals in leadership positions, form a team that works well together and moves forward even without your direct supervision. Collaborating and delegating are important, as they reduce the leader’s many tasks while also giving others the opportunity to volunteer, contribute, and learn.”

“My advice for anyone considering taking on this role is to be confident but realistic about the time commitments,” Gick suggests. “While it may be intimidating, it is an awesome experience to be able to help other young members learn about all things TRB. So, don’t be afraid to get out there and get involved!”

To reach the YMC-S&R, send an e-mail to ymcsustainabilityresilience@gmail.com.

Transportation Influencer highlights the journey of young professionals active in TRB. Have someone to nominate? Send an e-mail to TRNews@nas.edu.

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