

Joseph Sussman Receives Transportation Research Forum Distinguished Researcher Award

In March, Professor Joseph M. Sussman of MIT became the 30th recipient of the Transportation Research Forum's (TRF) Distinguished Researcher Award. Professor Sussman has a dual appointment with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Engineering Systems Division at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the JR East Professor, a chair endowed by the East Japan Railway Company. This award recognizes individuals who have distinguished themselves throughout their careers as research scholars in transportation. For more than 40 years, Professor Sussman has been a leader in various fields of transportation research, and he has been especially effective in building long-term collaborative research/education programs with both public and private support. He is author of "Introduction to Transportation Systems," a graduate text published in 2000 that is used at many universities in the U.S. and abroad.

At MIT, Sussman has served as the Director of the Rail Group, the Head of the Transportation Systems Division, Head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Director of the Center for Transportation Studies, and Interim Director of the Engineering Systems Division. In all of these positions, he has been a strong supporter of systems research and a developer of research and educational programs that deal with the overlapping engineering, operating, managerial, financial and institutional issues that make transportation such an interesting - and difficult - field of study.

Professor Sussman has been active in professional organizations, including the Transportation Research Forum, the Transportation Research Board (TRB), and ITS America. In addition to serving on several TRB committees and task forces, he served a term as Chair of the TRB Executive Committee.

His research interests have been very broad. After spending much of his early career investigating rail freight issues, he developed another strong interest in Intelligent Transportation Systems, not from the perspective of OR and algorithms, but from the perspective of public policy and implementation. In recent years, he has led research into transportation problems of megacities, with extensive work in Bangkok and Mexico City. He has continued this research as part of major MIT collaborative programs with Cambridge University in the UK and with various universities in Portugal. He has research ongoing in regional strategic transportation planning and the international opportunities in high-speed rail (HSR).

The first winner of the TRF Distinguished Research Award was Lewis K. Silcox in 1977. Previous winners of this prestigious award include Nobel Laureate William S. Vickrey (1987), deregulation advocate Alfred E. Kahn (1984), and pioneering transportation economist John Meyer of Harvard. Prior winners from MIT include William J. Harris, Alan A. Altshuler and Carl D. Martland,. Members of TRF may nominate people for this award. Recipients are selected by a committee composed of previous winners and past presidents of the Transportation Research Forum.