Florida International University Student Receives 2021 HSIS Excellence in Highway Safety Data Award

*Awards program encourages students to prepare for a career
in highway safety by using high-quality data and prioritizing safety in research.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 9, 2021)—Florida International University graduate student Henrick Haule received first place in the 2021 Highway Safety Information System's (HSIS's) Excellence in Highway Safety Data Award competition. Haule won the top 2021 award for a paper that he, as a lead author, co-authored with MD Sultan Ali and Angela E. Kitali, Ph.D., titled, "Factors Influencing the Severity of Crashes Near Exit Ramps in North Carolina." The award was presented during the virtually hosted 2021 ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) Annual Meeting and Exhibition's Power Plenary Session on July 22.

The HSIS 2021 Excellence in Highway Safety Data Award is part of the Highway Data Analysis Excellence Awards Program. The program was created to introduce future highway safety professionals to using HSIS safety data, applying appropriate research methods to derive recommendations, and employing the data to make decisions. The competition is jointly administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ITE.

"The goal of this program is to inspire students to use HSIS data to investigate a topic that advances highway safety," says Brian Cronin, director of the FHWA's Office of Safety and Operations Research and Development. "The winning paper illustrates that this competition isn't just a theoretical data exercise. These students not only explored a real-world safety problem but also proposed potential solutions to improve the safety of exit ramps. FHWA is proud to recognize these young professionals for a job well done and excellence in research."

Haule, Ali, and Kitali identified variables influencing crashes in North Carolina that occurred near exit ramps and involved single or multiple vehicles and drivers over the age of 65. The researchers determined that certain types of crashes near exit ramps were more likely to be severe: single vehicle crashes involving drivers over the age of 65 at night; single and multiple vehicle crashes occurring during adverse weather conditions; and crashes involving drivers over the age of 65 or single vehicles, that occurred near exit ramps with narrow shoulders. The results of the study could potentially be used by agencies to develop methods and policies to reduce the severity of crashes near exit ramps. Potential countermeasures may include providing additional lighting, disseminating messages to warn drivers in advance of inclement weather, and widening exit shoulder widths.

"We are honored to receive this award and sincerely appreciate the efforts put together to maintain the HSIS database," says Haule. "The comprehensiveness and richness of the HSIS data provided us an opportunity to explore the safety of one of the critical roadway geometric elements. We were able to apply a data-driven approach that unveiled factors influencing the severity of specific crash groups, and the findings of our study enabled us to propose specific countermeasures to improve the safety of exit ramps."

The HSIS 2021 Excellence in Highway Safety Data Award winning paper will be published in the September 2021 issue of *ITE Journal*. Haule will receive a commemorative plaque and registration for the 2021 ITE Annual Meeting and Exhibition.

The selection committee did not award second and third place recipients for the 2021 competition.

More information about the HSIS Excellence in Highway Safety Data Award is available at https://www.hsisinfo.org/award.cfm.

About the Highway Safety Information System

HSIS is a safety database that contains crash, roadway inventory, and traffic volume data for a select group of States and cities. The participating agencies were selected based on the quality and quantity of data available and their ability to merge data from various files. FHWA uses the HSIS to support the FHWA's Safety Research and Technology Program and provide input for program policy decisions. The HSIS program also makes data available to other researchers upon request. For more information, visit www.hsisinfo.org.

About the Institute of Transportation Engineers

ITE is an international membership-based association of transportation professionals who work to improve safety and mobility for transportation system users and help to build smart and livable communities. Through its products and services, the ITE promotes professional development and career advancement for its members, develops public awareness programs, and supports and encourages education. ITE identifies necessary research and technical resources, including standards and recommended practices, and serves as a conduit for the exchange of professional information. ITE fosters the next generation of transportation professionals through its K–12 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program, which has more than 150 student chapters.

Founded in 1930, ITE is a community of transportation professionals that includes transportation engineers and planners, consultants, educators, technologists, and researchers. Through meetings, seminars, publications, and a network of more than 15,500 members working in more than 90 countries, ITE brings together ideas, people, and resources from around the world. For more information, visit www.ite.org.