

# ITS Texas Student Chapter Guide



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ITS Texas Board of Directors

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Texas is to promote and enhance public safety and community welfare by fostering research, development, and implementation of plans and programs to reduce motor vehicle deaths and injuries, improve mobility and to promote, encourage, and advance a system of safer, more economical, energy efficient and environmentally sound highways and other surface transportation through research, development, and implementation of advanced technology.

### **What does that mean to you?**

As one of the largest ITS America chapters, ITS Texas brings together many different universities, governmental agencies, consultants, and vendor organizations interested and involved in ITS. Members are exposed and connected to a vast array of information, expertise, and technology difficult to find elsewhere.

For students, this can be particularly beneficial. Need to research the operation of a Traffic Management Center (TMC)? Want to visit with an expert in road-weather information systems? The members of ITS Texas are ready and willing to assist as they work to improve safety, reduce congestion, enhance mobility, minimize environmental impacts, save energy, and promote economic productivity.

In addition to the Chapter's 700+ professional members, the Board of Directors of ITS Texas is available to assist you with all of your membership and chapter questions.

Mailing Address:

ITS Texas  
P.O. Box 2706  
College Station, TX 77841

Telephone and email contact information for the Board of Directors is maintained on the chapter website, located at:

<http://www.itstexas.org>

## **STUDENT CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**

The purpose or objectives of ITS Texas student chapters are to:

- Promote the advancement and integration of intelligent transportation systems by fostering the close association of students of all relative disciplines with the greater transportation profession and ITS Texas;
- Acquaint students with topics of interest within the intelligent transportation arena;
- Promote common interests among students;
- Provide professional networking opportunities; and
- Encourage the development and/or enhancement of intelligent transportation systems study.

## **STUDENT CHAPTER BENEFITS**

Some of the benefits of joining an ITS Texas Student Chapter include:

- ITS Texas provides opportunities for students to attend the ITS Texas Annual Meeting at a discounted rate;
- Enhanced resume development and ITS Texas student scholarship opportunities as a student chapter officer;
- Platform for showcasing student and faculty research to professional community/industry representatives;
- Networking with other students, professionals, and potential employers at meetings;
- Soft skills development;
- Development of leadership and networking skills;
- Community engagement;
- Time management;
- Exposure to and participation in latest trends in the ITS industry; and
- It is FUN.

## **CHAPTER ORGANIZATION – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Student Chapter Governing Board**

The governing board consists of the chapter's elected officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) and the student chapter advisor as well as any additional committee chairpersons deemed necessary. The governing board is responsible for the successful operation of the student chapter. When setting up a new student chapter, the governing board is responsible for establishing bylaws (see ITS Texas' Student Chapter Sample Bylaws) and for setting up a charter or registration per the requirements of their associated university or college.

### **Student Chapter Advisor**

The student chapter advisor (or co-advisor) must be a faculty member at the school where the student chapter is located. The student chapter advisor must also be a member in good standing with ITS Texas. In general, the advisor serves as a guide to the chapter and its student officers, as well as serving as university liaison.

#### **The role of the student chapter advisor includes:**

- Consulting with chapter leaders to help the chapter's growth and development. The advisor should be available for advice and to help with group motivation;
- Adding to the continuity of the chapter by ensuring that successive officers of the chapter understand their responsibilities, as well as explaining to the officers the policies and regulations of the student chapter and ITS Texas;
- Serving as the liaison between the chapter and ITS Texas. All correspondence from ITS Texas should be sent to his/her attention as well as to the chapter officers;
- Promoting the professional and academic welfare of student members; and
- Ensuring the student chapter meets requirements to be a sanctioned university organization.

#### **Hints on recruiting an advisor:**

- Before approaching a faculty member, student chapter members should consider someone who will have time to devote to the chapter and who will take the role willingly and seriously;
- Make sure that the individual has a clear understanding of your chapter's purpose, what will be required, and the time involved; and
- Choose someone with whom you can maintain frequent contact and be comfortable with.

### How to work with your advisor:

- Meet with you advisor in advance of chapter meetings to go over the agenda and topics to be discussed;
- Be open to suggestions and criticism from your advisor. The advisor's knowledge and experience will be helpful to achieve solutions and meet chapter goals; and
- If an advisor cannot attend your meeting, be sure to meet with him or her afterwards to brief the individual on what transpired.

### President

The President is responsible for the overall management of all student chapter affairs. This individual should only serve as officer of the ITS Texas student chapter (i.e., not as an officer of multiple student chapters simultaneously). The president's responsibilities include to:

1. Establish and maintain contact with the student chapter advisor and the ITS Texas Board of Directors.
2. Chair all chapter governing board meetings.
  - Solicit agenda items for regular business meetings;
  - Evaluate past projects and discuss future projects before they are turned over to the appropriate committee for further work; and
  - Ensure that minutes are kept and are made available for the student chapter advisor, members of committees, etc.
3. Chair all general meetings.
  - Produce an agenda well in advance so that copies are available to all members and the student chapter advisor.
  - Run a professional meeting following "Robert's Rules of Order" ([robertsrules.com](http://robertsrules.com)).
4. Prepare and submit the annual chapter report to ITS Texas.
5. Review and update student bylaws, as needed, with submittal to ITS Texas with new officer information.
6. Ensure that an active communications network is developed between:
  - Governing Board. An internal network between members of the governing board can take the form of regular memos or emails with a wide variety of news items. Possible items that may be appropriate to include: plans and projects, regular meetings – both business and social in nature – and progress reports on various chapter projects. If possible, have at least one member of the governing board directly responsible for the successful outcome of each project and all subsequent communication.
  - School officials. Proper liaison to school officials, in conjunction with the academic advisor is essential to maintain the student organization in good standing. Members of other departments whose teachings or research may have bearing on

the ITS industry may be a good source of speakers. If the school or department has an advisory committee to the dean or department head, try to get a member from the student chapter on that committee. This representative can do much to promote the chapter's existence and contribute to the academic community.

- ITS Texas Board of Directors. Maintaining a good working relationship with the ITS Texas Board of Directors can help alleviate problems, open up opportunities, and provide for contact information for a source of speakers.
  - Media. Use the local media, both on campus and off. Regular articles in the local and campus newspapers, maintaining and updating a student website and/or email distribution list, etc. will do much to spread the news of the chapter's activities.
7. Keep the chapter active in the community. Look for opportunities to involve the student chapter in the ITS and campus community. Examples include, help a professor or local government on a project or survey, donate time to a local STEM class or scout troop (traffic safety, engineering, or technology merit badges), or assist your academic department with freshman seminars and/or orientation. Relationships developed from appropriate chapter activities can result in student internship opportunities, professional training, and/or educational activities.
8. Manage day-to-day chapter activities.
- Plan and organize a membership drive targeting graduate and undergraduate students, especially juniors and seniors. Because ITS is multidisciplinary in nature, it is recommended to engage other departments/schools beyond the traditional civil engineering. For example, outreach may extend to schools or departments that house programs such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, engineering technology, computer science, and other related academic departments. It is suggested that a membership drive take place at the same time each year (for example, during the second week of fall and/or spring semester).
  - Enforce the provisions of the chapter's charter/registration and bylaws. The president is also responsible for seeing that the necessary revisions, inclusions, and exclusions are made to these documents as needed and that the necessary actions are taken relative to these changes.
  - Supervise all chapter activities and committees including naming of all committees and appointing each respective chairperson. President should also be familiar with each of the officers' and committees' responsibilities.
  - Implement a checks and balance system by getting to know each of the officers and chairpersons, including their strengths and weaknesses.

## Vice President

The vice president shall perform the duties of the president in the absence of that officer and/or at the president's inability or request to perform those duties delegated. This individual should only serve ITS Texas student chapter, when possible but may be an officer of another student chapter if approved by the ITS Texas Board of Directors. Duties for the vice president might include to:

1. Chair the program and membership committees;
2. Organize field trips or special events that involve additional coordination beyond regular programming efforts;
3. Oversee publicity including preparation and distribution of meeting notices, posters, and notices to the campus newspaper; and
4. Monitor the progress of committees, if applicable.

### Secretary\*

The secretary of a student chapter is the custodian of the chapter records. This individual should only serve ITS Texas student chapter, when possible but may be an officer of another student chapter if approved by the ITS Texas Board of Directors. The duties of this office require organization and neatness. The duties of the secretary include to:

1. Maintain a complete up-to-date file of chapter records. These records include membership lists, minutes for all major and minor meetings, attendance records of each regular chapter meeting, complete reports on each activity or project (including names of participants, date, functions performed, etc.), and copies of correspondence. This information will aid in the preparation of the annual chapter report;
2. Solicit and submit articles to the ITS Texas Newsletter. The secretary should contact the ITS Board of Directors to learn of submittal requirements; and
3. Conduct all chapter correspondence with other parties.

### Treasurer\*

This individual should only serve ITS Texas student chapter, when possible but may be an officer of another student chapter if approved by the ITS Texas Board of Directors. The duties of the treasurer include to:

1. Discharge all financial obligations incurred by the chapter including to:
  - Collect and deposit all chapter dues and fees;
  - Ensure payment of chapter bills;
  - Maintain proper records of all receipts and expenditures, bank account deposits, and reconciliation of bank account and payment of accounts; and
  - Mail dues statements (if applicable) and issue receipts.
2. Prepare and maintain membership, officer, and financial lists and reports.
  - Maintain a current list of all members and their status;
  - Forward applicable membership and officer rosters to the ITS Texas Board of Directors (as applicable); and



- Prepare annual financial statements as well as brief financial summaries for each general meeting and for annual chapter report, as needed.

\*One person can fill the role of both secretary and treasurer if only serving ITS Texas (i.e., not multiple student chapters simultaneously). In such instances, the secretary/treasurer will be responsible for all items listed under both the secretary and treasurer titles.

## Committees

Committees are the mechanisms through which a chapter may implement its programs and increase membership involvement. Chapter size will dictate the need and scope of committee responsibility.

Committee members may be appointed by the Chapter's executive board or enlisted from general chapter membership. Seek out members who have a particular interest in the committee's subject.

Another good source of volunteers is the chapter's host of new members. Seek them out and get them involved. Consider having the members complete a sign-up sheet and pass it in after the proposed project has been discussed. It is usually easier to make contacts on an individual basis; however, if the governing board uses the "group" volunteer method, always utilize all of the volunteers or they will soon tire of volunteering.

Determine the function and goal of the committee and steps to be taken to achieve the goal. Relay this information to the potential committee members. Student chapter leaders must never forget the contributions of committee chairpersons, and it is appropriate to frequently recognize their contributions publicly.

Example committees include:

1. Program. Organizing and carrying out the annual activities of the chapter is the function of this committee. Examples of program elements include: career opportunity panels, technical projects and joint student chapter functions with other student chapter professional societies. Copies of the most recent annual reports provided by other ITS Texas student chapters are available at the ITS Texas website and may provide ideas for meaningful chapter activities.
2. Publicity. To ensure a high membership turnout, it is very important to let others know what the chapter is doing.
3. Membership. The responsibility of organizing and overseeing a membership recruitment program or campaign rests with this committee. Each member of the committee should have a thorough knowledge of membership benefits, chapter

programs, and any specific membership requirements imposed by the student chapter in order to answer questions for prospective members.

4. **Nominating.** If a nominating committee is used, a slate of candidates is selected in consultation with the advisor. The committee then submits its report and allows nominations to be made from the floor at the time of the election. The candidates must be announced no later than the second to last meeting of the academic year. All student chapter officers must be academically in good standing.

Officer continuity is an important consideration. Some chapters may find that the smooth operation of a chapter is enhanced if the vice president is elected as a sophomore or junior and automatically becomes president in the next academic year. In this way, he or she is better prepared and can begin in a more confident manner.

## Resources

To build a strong chapter, the governing board should utilize all available resources. As the chapter plans activities, keep the following sources in mind:

- **Financial Resources.** ITS Texas student chapter grants, membership dues, fundraisers, local school funding, transportation (professional) agencies and firms.
- **Human Resources.** Local and regional ITS Texas professional members, faculty members, school officials, other student organizations, and local consulting firms.

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

A strong, well-rounded chapter program is designed to attract students and potential student members. A dynamic speaker, a rewarding special project, or an interesting field trip will strengthen the chapter's activities, facilitate networking opportunities, and allow students to meet and interact with professionals in the ITS field. The following sample calendar is meant as a guideline only, student chapters should adapt it as required to fit their local needs.

### Sample Chapter Calendar

#### ***June-September***

Think ahead for organizing the next year's program. Arrange for speakers, tours, and joint meetings with other student chapters (examples include ITE, WTS, or ASCE). Plan fundraising and social/service activities, organize membership drive, and begin publicity preparation. If officers are not on campus, keep them involved through regular correspondence. Advance work is important.

#### ***September***

Conduct membership drive. Publish fall schedule of meetings and speakers. Conduct first meeting and handle any administrative items such as revisions to bylaws or decisions about participation in upcoming events.

***October (varies)***

Deadline for applications for ITS Texas scholarship. See <http://www.itstexas.org> for details.

***November***

Deadline for submitting annual chapter report to ITS Texas Board of Directors and elect officers for next year (to avoid transitioning during summer break).

***November (varies, but typically 3<sup>rd</sup> week)***

Participate in the ITS Texas annual meeting at a reduced registration rate.

***January***

Publish spring schedule of meetings and speakers.

***April/May***

Hold last meeting of the year.

**Meetings**

Planning a meeting program for the academic year should begin immediately following the election of new officers. Considerable effort must be devoted to planning varied programs, determining student interests, and arranging for speakers. Meetings may be of a technical, career, or business nature. During technical meetings, students can become better acquainted with the transportation engineering profession and more deeply involved with the technical aspects of intelligent transportation systems. Furthermore, technical meetings permit the students to undertake activities and pursue particular topics that supplement education programs.

The student chapter should take full responsibility for contacting, inviting, and making all necessary arrangements for guest speakers. The chapter can coordinate with their regional ITS Texas Board member, as needed. The arrangements include providing local transportation, ensuring that the necessary equipment for audio/visual aids is available and, if applicable, making overnight room reservations. It is good practice to confirm in writing all arrangements made for a speaker via a letter from the program chair to the speaker at least one week in advance of the meeting. This action serves to eliminate any misunderstandings that may not have surfaced during earlier, informal contacts. The chapter should acknowledge its appreciation to the speaker in a letter following his or her presentation.

In order to promote leadership and communication skills, the chapter leadership could have the speaker as its guest for an informal reception or for a lunch or dinner before or as part of a classroom lecture. Actively engaging with the speaker, apart from the technical session, provides the leadership and/or membership with an additional opportunity to engage with a

practitioner. Networking is critical for building contacts for potential internships and jobs as well as future career advice and information.

The chapter may also offer programs primarily of a social nature. Typical social programs would be a get-acquainted party or picnic at the beginning of the school year, holiday parties, end-of-school-year parties, and sports/games.

### Special Projects

The student chapter should consider implementing service projects and fundraising projects that might be used to supplement the chapter meeting schedule. Faculty members, regional ITS Texas Board members, and school officials are a good source of information. While a brief list of potential fundraising ideas follows, activities must be cleared through the student activities office at the university/college:

- Raffle – Sell raffle tickets at a football game or other athletic event. Ask local businesses for prize donations.
- Outbid Contractor – Offer to build something needed by the community (sandbox, swing set, etc.) at a cheaper rate. Seek “in-kind” gift of guidance from a local construction engineering company who can manage the team.
- Direct Mail Campaign to Alumni – Ask the Alumni Office for names and addresses of engineering alumni and engineering companies at which alumni work. Write to them seeking fits to support the Student Chapter.
- Golf Tournament – Host a golf tournament. Have course fees donated. Seek sponsors for each hole and have prizes for hole-in-one, longest drive, closest-to-pin, etc. Print signs to acknowledge company’s in-kind gifts to the tournament. Charge players an entry fee.
- Students Volunteer to Work Events – Students can work at various sporting activities or local businesses. The money that is earned is donated to the student chapter.
- Sell Used Text Books – At the end of each semester, purchase used engineering books from students and sell them at a lower price than you can buy them for at the campus bookstore.
- Traffic Data Collection – Provide service for government agency or other engineering firm, chapter will spend the day working together and donate profits to chapter.
- Have lunch BBQ – Pick a day on a busy week and have a BBQ on campus in an area that has a lot of student activity. Sell a burger/hotdog with chips and a drink using profits for the chapter.
- Host a 5K Run – Host a run with corporate sponsors. Have an entry fee for participants, print T-shirts and have prizes for the top finishers.
- Campus Service Projects – Form a team of ITS student chapter members to participate in university/college-sanctioned service projects.

### Field Trips

Field trips offer an opportunity for students to meet practicing ITS professionals and see transportation facilities. Field trips must be arranged and taken in full accordance with the student activity regulations at the university/college.

## State Meetings

Once a year, typically in November, ITS Texas holds their annual meeting. The student chapter is encouraged to participate in the annual meeting, by attending, by submitting topics for consideration of presentation or poster, by participating in the training opportunities, and by presenting a brief report to be presented at the annual meeting business luncheon.

## National Conferences and Meetings

Students have a standing invitation to attend the ITS America Annual Meeting, typically at a reduced rate. There, they have the opportunity to meet world-renowned transportation professionals and to talk with other students and professionals from all over the world. Hotel accommodations are available and student registration fees are substantially reduced from those of other attendees. Students are also often invited to submit a paper for presentation as well as encouraged to attend technical meetings, committee meetings, and social events scheduled throughout the week. The location and date of future meetings can be found at the ITS America website (<http://www.itsa.org>).

## Annual Report and Annual Stipend

Each chapter must submit a written annual report to the ITS Texas Board of Directors by November 1st. The report shall include a summary of the chapter's activities for the previous year. For example, the report due November 1, 2023 would summarize activities from the 2022/2023 academic year (Fall 2022/Spring 2023 semesters).

Student chapters are encouraged to use creativity in the composition of their annual report, but should include an introduction, chapter objectives, chapter leadership, chapter activities, and a chapter roster. The importance of the annual report cannot be overstated. In addition to helping the ITS Texas collect vital data on the progress of student chapters, annual report documents are used to assist us in maintaining our non-profit 501(c)(3) status. The annual report also serves as a record for student chapters in future years. In no way are the reports intended to be a burden to the Chapters. Most student chapter annual reports will be 5-15 pages in length. No exceptions to submission of the annual report are allowed.

The annual report should also include information regarding financial status of the student chapter, including bank balance at the end of the previous academic year, current chapter bank balance, and anticipated funding needs through the current academic year. This information is used by the ITS Texas Board of Directors in considering annual stipend amounts awarded to each chapter.

The annual report is a requirement of the student chapter. It should be included in the chapter's bylaws (see sample Section VII, subsection (a) of the sample Student Chapter Bylaws). Payment of an annual stipend to the student chapter is contingent upon on-time receipt and acceptance of the student chapter annual report. The report largely covers activities during the previous academic year but will also include up-to-date financial information.

## **Chapter Dues**

There are no dues for the student chapter to be a student chapter member of ITS Texas.

## **Individual Dues**

It is the decision of the student chapter whether or not to impose and collect a membership fee. The annual stipend from ITS Texas should alleviate the need for anything other than a nominal membership fee. Fees imposed by the student chapter must be in accordance with the policies and regulations of the student activities office at the university/college.

## **Student Chapter Information on ITS Texas Website**

Each student chapter of ITS Texas has a listing on the ITS Texas website with a brief history, the most recent annual report, and a link to the faculty advisor. This area is maintained by the ITS Texas webmaster and will be updated yearly with the submission and acceptance of the student chapter annual report.

## **Student Chapter Website**

The student chapter is encouraged to create and maintain a student chapter website to provide information to their membership on upcoming events, meetings, and general chapter information.