

# TRANSPORTATION SPOTLIGHT

## CATALINA ECHEVERRI

### COMPANY:

Gannett Fleming

### TITLE:

Project Manager

### TRAINING ORGANIZATION OR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:

University of South Florida

### CERTIFICATION/DEGREE:

Bachelor in Industrial  
Engineering, Master in Civil  
Engineering (Transportation)

[memphis.edu/setwc](http://memphis.edu/setwc)



### Q: How did you select your certification program or college major?

**A:** I decided to study Industrial Engineering because of the degree concentration in engineering management. I became interested in transportation projects during my years in the undergraduate research program. The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) is located in the USF Tampa campus and they had many interesting projects where industrial engineers were involved. I became interested in traffic and intelligent transportations systems (ITS) projects. Therefore, I decided to do a master's degree in transportation, while being a graduate research assistant at CUTR with the ITS group.

### Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of career pathway?

**A:** The biggest influence was CUTR. This program helped me understand how all engineering majors play a role in the future of transportation.

### Q: What attracted you to the transportation industry?

**A:** I've always been fascinated with interchanges and how incredible the highway system is.

### Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?

**A:** I like that we can make a difference on everyone's' daily lives and our own. Traffic operations is an exciting field to be in right now with all the upcoming connected and automated vehicles technologies and smart cities. I enjoy participating in the discussions of how technology can change the world that we live in now.

### Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

**A:** We are encouraged by the company to give back and part of that is through charities. Some of the regional offices organize volunteer days. We always try to get involved with the local community donating not only money but also our time.

### Q: What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

**A:** I would say working in the design of a tunnel management system in the Middle East. There are only two (2) tunnels in Florida so we don't really have an opportunity to constantly get involved in this type of work. Also, I was working with mechanical, electrical, and communication's engineers. We all contributed in one way or another to this project.

### Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

**A:** It feels good to contribute to quality of people's lives. Traffic is something that we experience every day and we are constantly looking for ways improve the transportation system.

### Q: If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

**A:** I would recommend design and programming courses. Engineers have only one required course of each and those skills are always helpful after graduation.

### Q: What advice would you share with students or anyone considering your profession?

**A:** Take as many science classes as possible. Most of the engineering majors have a hard time and sometimes drop out the first two years of math, physics, and chemistry. After the basic classes are done, you can concentrate on the engineering track chosen.

