Best wishes from the Clyde Building! The view from my narrow window is now full with the construction of our new engineering building. Still unnamed, it’s being referred to as the “New Engineering Building.” That is as far as our imagination goes at this point. As we ready for the move 100 ft to the South in August, we prepare to bid farewell to Dr. Mitsu Saito, who will be retiring in just a few months. Dr. Saito has been a valuable member of our department for many years and has contributed to our growth and development in the transportation area. He came to us in 1997 from the City College of New York, and he had a plan – a plan to fully embrace the major research areas in transportation. With the addition of Dr. Spencer Guthrie in 2003 and Dr. Grant Schultz in 2004, Dr. Saito had assembled the “Dream Team.” Together they have mentored dozens of students and established a reputation of excellence with the Utah Department of Transportation. It is only fitting that a month ago Dr. Saito was honored by UDOT with the 2018 Trailblazer Award, the highest honor bestowed by UDOT for research and innovation. This is a well-deserved award as Dr. Saito has published nearly 100 peer-reviewed papers including dozens of UDOT project reports. We will miss him.

I am very pleased to report on the progress made by our Scholarship Society in their ongoing fundraising campaign. In a little more than a year they have completed the establishment of their own endowment with well over $100,000 from their own ranks and have overseen the receipt of about $400,000 more donations towards endowments. We would encourage you to be a part of this campaign in asking for your donations to one of our several endowments. Endowments ‘give forever,’ and your donation will be felt for generations to come.

It is with mixed emotions that I pen this last message. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as the Department Chair for six years. In those six years, we have seen tremendous progress in our department as our undergraduate, graduate, and faculty development committees have answered the call to be proactive. With several improvements in our curriculum, the expansion of our study abroad programs, our research productivity and excellent teaching, our department was recognized this year as in the top 70 in the country- an improvement of more than 15 ‘ticks’ from the year before- and the department with the largest positive change. It has been my job to observe these fine staff and faculty as they use their talents and the Spirit to provide the best education for our students.

This coming Fall will bring (1) new digs for us in the New Engineering Building; (2) a new faculty member in the transportation area, and (3) a new department chair. Please plan on joining us for our first alumni reunion around homecoming in the Fall – we can celebrate our achievements together!