



## **MONTHLY RESEARCH SEMINAR**

### **Transportation Safety: Challenges for Continuing Improvement**

Christopher Hart  
Chairman of National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

15:00 – 16:30, Thursday, February 16, 2017  
Room 148 at Science Building  
Texas Southern University

#### **Abstract**

The National Transportation Safety Board is the federal agency that investigates transportation accidents, determines the cause, and issues recommendations to prevent them from happening again. Transportation safety has generally been improving, except recently on our nation's highways, and NTSB investigations have revealed several longstanding issues – namely, operator fatigue, distraction, and impairment -- that must be addressed in order to continue improving safety. That will lead to the discussion of another issue – automation – that could theoretically help address the first three issues by reducing or eliminating the role of the human operator. However, several decades of automation development in various transportation modes, primarily aviation, as well as the recent introduction of automation onto our streets and highways, have demonstrated that automation introduces several of its own challenges. These challenges will be discussed, along with opportunities for learning from the successes and failures of prior automation experience to inform the process of automating cars, trucks, and buses.

#### **Biography**



Christopher Hart has held a series of legal positions, mostly in the private sector. He holds a law degree from Harvard University and master's and bachelor's degrees in Aerospace Engineering from Princeton University. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar and the Lawyer-Pilots Bar Association. He served as a member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) from 1990 to 1993. After leaving the Board, he served as Deputy Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, before moving to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 1995. Immediately before returning to the Board in 2009, Hart was Deputy Director for Air Traffic Safety Oversight at the FAA. He had been the FAA Assistant Administrator for System Safety. Hart was sworn in as a Member of the National Transportation Safety

Board on August 12, 2009, and designated by President Obama for a two-year term as Vice Chairman of the Board on August 18, 2009. In August 2013, President Obama nominated him for a second term as Board Member and after Senate confirmation of his nomination, the President, in October 2013, designated him for a third term as Vice Chairman. He served as Acting NTSB Chairman from April 26, 2014 and in July 2014 was nominated by the President to serve as Chairman of the NTSB. Hart's family has a tradition of accomplishment in the field of transportation. His great uncle, James Herman Banning, was the first African-American to receive a pilot's license issued by the U.S. Government in 1926. Hart is a licensed pilot with commercial, multi-engine, and instrument ratings.