Barry LePatner Visits CSU as CMAA Distinguished Speaker

On November 15, the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) chapter in CM, sponsored an event featuring author, construction lawyer, and U.S. infrastructure “guru” Barry LePatner as their 2010 distinguished speaker. Mr. LePatner has authored two books, Broken Buildings, Busted Budgets: How to fix America’s Trillion Dollar Construction Industry, and Too Big to Fall: America’s Failing Infrastructure and the Way Forward. He established the New York City-based law firm LePatner & Associates, LLP during his three decades of experience in advisory work on business and legal issues affecting the real estate, design, and construction industry.

The topic of discussion for the evening was the U.S. economy’s current recession and its direct effect on the construction industry. LePatner identified many different potential issues with current industry standards, construction practices, and business operations. Although the topic has not yet been thoroughly identified in the mass media, according to LePatner, it surely is just a matter of time. LePatner brought a different perspective on the matter with respect to the vast challenges owners face and solutions contractors can potentially provide to help minimize project cost overruns. His approach, although unconventional, did spark further discussion in the classroom among faculty and students. A direct quote from his presentation displays his delivery:

“When a person with experience meets a person with money, the person with experience will get the money. And the person with the money will get some experience.” - Leonard Lauder (LePatner2010)

The context of this quotation was ultimately in conclusion of LePatner’s findings that tax payers are spending over $120 billion annually due to inefficiencies of the construction industry.

As expected, his overall message was not unanimously accepted by the audience, but it did raise awareness and spark debate among peers within the university. CSU’s CM Department is dedicated to facilitating different perspectives in the promotion of higher thinking. The CMAA chapter is pleased to consider the event a great success and is grateful to all in attendance and those who helped make it possible.

The CMAA at CSU student chapter obtained funds and donations from ASCSU, Old Chicago, and Mugs that ultimately made the event possible. Over 300 audience members, consisting of university professors, students, industry, and CMAA Colorado regional members filled the auditorium in Johnson Hall at CSU.

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Senior Co-Authors Construction Textbook

The 4th edition of Wiley’s Construction Management was published in November. Bolivar A. Senior and Daniel W. Halpin are co-authors of this popular textbook, whose previous editions have been published in Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese, among other languages. This edition will also have an International Student Version, originally in English, which will be published this coming spring of 2011.

According to Wiley Publishing’s website, “This text has been used widely and has become a fairly standard course text at many universities. The first three editions have enjoyed wide success as an introductory treatment of the subjects which are critical to success in the construction industry.”

Lopez del Puerto Invited to Mexico for Conference

Carla Lopez del Puerto was invited to participate in the Academic Leaders Program at the University Tecnologico de Monterrey in Puebla, Mexico. Over Thanksgiving break, Lopez del Puerto travelled to Mexico and gave two presentations to the campus community. One covered the topic of Transportation Project Management and the other involved Construction Administration.

The Academic Leaders Program was created in 2008 to expand upon traditional university education by bringing nationally and internationally renowned scholars into the classroom. According to its website, the program’s aims include enriching the academic life of the Tecnologico de Monterrey, creating research and social networks, helping identify research and strategic areas of excellence, developing innovative solutions to national and international issues, developing innovative technology to address Mexico’s strategic sectorial needs, and strengthening knowledge and experience regarding national and international critical issues.

LEED Green Associate Training Held at CSU

Nearly 50 students and local industry professionals congregated at CSU on Saturday, November 15 to participate in a free all-day training for the LEED Green Associate (GA) Exam. The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) and the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) sponsored the program and made it free to registered CSU CM students.

Those who attended the seven-hour class were given an introduction to the LEED process and green building in general. Attendees were also exposed to specific materials and information to help them in passing the LEED Green Associate Exam. A valuable take-away from the presentation was an extensive power-point handout and access to the trainers’ database of test preparation questions. The database includes seven practice exams, similar in format and content of the actual US Green Building Council’s LEED Green Associate exam.

End of class surveys show the students were enthusiastic about their experience and that the class was a big success. Participants felt that the course will help them prepare to take the LEED GA exam. Comments on the end of class survey included: “This class was great and the instructors were great at keeping the attention of the audience,” and “Make it required for CM students.”

The CM Department again would like to thank AGC and MCAA, and in particular Lee Blum, Director of Education and Workforce Development at AGC, for making this event possible.
First Industry-Academia Symposium a Great Success

Sixty construction industry professionals from a wide range of professional backgrounds attended the first Industry and Academia Research Symposium on November 4 in Denver. The event was organized by CSU’s Department of Construction Management Professional Advisory Development Board (PADB) and hosted at the conference room of the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Colorado.

The goal of the Symposium is to create a dialogue between the department faculty and industry professionals to advance construction education and practice. The format of the first Symposium was a half-day conference consisting of three sessions each with three 10 minute presentations by CM faculty and leading industry professionals with a twenty minute period of question and answer following each session. This year’s Symposium centered around engagement and had presentations under the track headings of Construction Performance Improvement, Legal Aspects and Safety, and Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Sustainability.

By all accounts the event was a huge success and based on positive initial feedback, the PADB plans to make the Symposium an annual event, although attendees suggested holding the event even more frequently. Comments and feedback included, “This is a great start to bring academia and industry together and was great to see how the research process works for both sides,” and “good information, and overwhelming knowledge to understand building performance and science in the correct application.” In general, the event led to many exciting interactions between academia and industry for both individuals and organizations. Participants left with a positive outlook and an expectation of more opportunities for collaboration in the future.

The Symposium was sponsored by AGC of Colorado and the Colorado Association of Mechanical and Plumbing Contractors (CAMPC). Additional support was provided by Construction Mastery Institute.

SLX Welcomes New Members

CSU’s Kappa chapter of Sigma Lambda Chi (SLX), Construction Management’s Honor society, had another successful recruiting semester. Seventeen new members were inducted on November 16: Dustin Cooper, Derek Duran, Ryan Emery, J. Austin Fellows, Tim Hickory, Kyla Hines, Collin Jacobsen, Justin Mantelli, Gustave Natvig, Benjamin Potson, Matthew Prager, Christopher Turpaud, Mike Utter, Devin Van Maanen, Kyle Whitham, Robert Wikoff and Jade Wilson. The chapter has new and exciting activities planned for 2011, including the mentoring of new CM students and tutoring for undergraduate courses. Some of these plans were presented by Brett Hanneman, current chapter president, at November’s CM faculty meeting.

SLX is an international honor society that recognizes outstanding students in construction education. It provides the opportunity for construction majors to be recognized nationally and internationally for their academic achievements in their fields of study.
Khattab and Clevenger Travel to Egypt

CM Department Head Mostafa Khattab and CM faculty Caroline Clevenger spent two weeks in Egypt as part of a Fulbright sponsored trip. From October 25 to November 6, Khattab and Clevenger visited Helwan University in Cairo and the University of Alexandria and met with faculty and students at both institutions.

During the course of the trip, Khattab and Clevenger made presentations and held discussions at both schools around the issues facing the construction industry today in the United States and around the world. Some discussion focused on construction management education at CSU and the previous collaborations between CSU and the Egyptian institutions. The presentations included solutions to some of the issues facing the construction industry today, such as integrating technologies using BIM and sustainability practices into construction management education.

Discussions were also held on further collaborations between CSU and the Egyptian universities. For instance, students from all the institutions can work together on the design of a new campus for the Shultz School in Alexandria. There was also discussion regarding the Fulbright specialists to be sponsored at each university: Nessreen Y. Abo-Moussallam, a Fulbright graduate student at Helwan University will visit CSU for three months starting in November 2010; and Stephanie Clemons, a Fulbright Specialist in CSU’s Design and Merchandising Department, will head to Egypt in the summer of 2011.

Overall, the trip proved to be a successful interaction between peer universities with common goals. Both sides look forward to continued interaction and visits in the coming year.

Student Chapters Tour Sustainable Building

In October, the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA) and Associated General Contractors (AGC) student chapters at Colorado State University partnered to allow Construction Management students the opportunity to see firsthand the construction of a sustainable facility. The students and faculty visited the site of the Research Support Facilities (RSF) of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Golden, Colorado.

RSF is a design-build project owned by the U.S. Department of Energy who awarded the $64 million contract to Haselden Construction, LLC based out of Centennial, Colorado. The RSF is a 220,000-square-foot, LEED Platinum-NC attainable office building positioned to be one of the world’s largest net-zero energy buildings. Due to security restrictions, students and faculty members were only allowed to tour the completed portion of the RSF following a site and project specific presentation by Haselden where newly proven processes and energy sustainable methods used in the design and construction of this facility were detailed.

ABC Student Leaders Attend Prestigious Awards Dinner

The Rocky Mountain chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) held their Excellence in Construction (EIC) Awards dinner on October 15, and the student leaders of CSU’s ABC chapter were in attendance as guests of Mortenson Construction. Ryan Emery, Max Finster, Allie Parker and Jordan Wilmes attended the event. The dinner celebrated recipients of ABC’s EIC awards, which recognize quality and innovation in merit construction.

“The ABC Student Chapter was honored and excited to be invited by Mortenson Construction to be guests at their table for the prestigious event,” said Allie Parker. “In addition to being guests at their table, we assembled a centerpiece to compete with those of other companies who attended the event. It was such a wonderful experience and so great to see companies and projects being honored for their excellent work. It gave the students something to learn about and aspire to within their construction career.”
CMBoD News

The Construction Management Student Board of Directors (CMBoD) had several exciting happenings in November. Of greatest importance, the Board elected its new officers for the upcoming Spring semester. The new Director of Operations is Kiel Gross, the new Treasurer is Anna Kester, the new Vice President is Michelle Meis, and the President will be Kyle Coffman. The CM Department congratulates the new officers and looks forward to working with them to maintain the proud standing of the CM program.

On December 1, the CMBoD hosted the Fall 2010 Open Forum as an opportunity for students to voice their opinions and concerns about anything related to the CM program to the Department Head. Over 30 students attended the forum and discussed topics that included the technologies available to them in classrooms and the new courses in future semesters, such as the CM Leadership course for seniors. The overall reaction to the forum was one of excitement as students embraced the opportunity to discuss their needs and issues in the department.

The CMBoD is also proud to recognize the volunteer efforts of the CM student clubs as well. Over the first weekend of November, five members of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) chapter participated in a community clean-up in Fort Collins. They raked leaves and cleaned two different homes in the community. One yard required over 60 bags to contain all the leaves!

On November 19, six members of the Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) chapter volunteered at the Fort Collins soup kitchen. Together the group volunteered over 18 hours of service and 70 pounds of food to assist with the pre-Thanksgiving dinner preparations.

CM Recruitment Center Finished and In Use

The third floor of the newly renovated Preconstruction Center has become the new CM Recruitment Center. The old attic space has been divided into several rooms and waiting areas for intern and senior interviews throughout the semester.

Over 20 companies utilized the rooms in October to interview potential interns, and 9 held interviews for graduating seniors.

Upcoming Events

Students in CON/INTD 450 will travel to Costa Rica again this January 3—14. The course, Sustainable Building, is a collaboration between CSU’s Departments of Construction Management and Interior Design and the University of Costa Rica’s Department of Architecture. It focuses on the principle components of sustainable design and construction, energy, healthy buildings, natural resources, and other environmental issues.