CM Cares Earns Awards for Excellence

"Be a part of something larger than our individual selves." This core value of the CM program is best defined by the dedication and passion of the students, staff, and industry working together on projects through the CM Cares initiative. It serves as a driving force that engages learning through community projects that benefit individuals and organizations with special needs. This program has been recognized on local and national news and now two new awards have been added to its accolades.

On October 17, representatives of the CM program attended the Fort Collins Commission on Disability Mayor’s Awards to accept the 2013 Service Provider of the Year award. This honor recognizes a business or organization that provides exemplary and life-enriching services to people with disabilities. A majority of CM Cares’ projects involve work that benefits families with disabled children, such as the wheelchair swing for James and Libby Waechter in spring 2013 and the wheelchair ramp and widened driveway for Nick, a teenage boy in Loveland, in 2012.

CM Cares takes great pride in uniting students with industry leaders and community organizations on service projects. “We are very excited to have received this recognition,” said Khristy Preston, CM Cares coordinator. “We are proud of the work we do to benefit individuals with disabilities, and it is an honor to have been recognized by our community for what we have achieved for these families.”

Leaders in the construction industry have also taken notice of CM Cares’ influence and possibilities. On November 1, the Associated General Contractors of Colorado presented CM Cares with the 2013 Construction Education Challenge award at the ACE Awards and Industry Gala in Denver. This new award celebrates unique initiatives or innovative programming in construction education programs across Colorado that promote the engagement of the construction industry in the education process, prepare students to join the industry after graduation, and make an impact in the community.

Students who led some of the CM Cares projects this past spring attended the gala event to accept the award on behalf of the program. “Receiving this award is so encouraging in regards to the future and impact that CM Cares has on our community,” said senior Austin Shreve. “As a student, I have had the opportunity to gain exposure to the needs of our community, lead others to gain awareness of those needs, and, most of all, utilize CM Cares to bless the families with whom we are lucky enough to work. By having the support of the construction industry, we are able to build relationships and meet needs on a level that otherwise would be impossible.”

“It is my hope that receiving this recognition will shed more light on the great things that CM Cares does for families in northern Colorado and allow the program to continue to grow,” added senior Kyle Snow. “For me personally, however, it’s not just about the awards and media coverage. It’s about truly making a difference in someone’s life.”
Prospective Students Attend ‘Explore CM!’ Open House

On October 25, CM’s Recruitment Committee hosted the third annual program open house for prospective students. The goal of the event is to provide a program overview and other activities to educate students on the value of a degree and future career in construction management. Nineteen prospective students and their guests participated.

The event included mini sessions with current students and CM faculty that highlighted the technology and leadership opportunities in the program. Current CM students, along with alumnus Chad Carlson (‘96) held a panel discussion that highlighted their involvement in the program’s extracurricular activities and how the degree prepared them for their careers. Following a tour of CM’s facilities, attendees participated in hands-on and technology activities, and then rounded out the evening with dinner and a question and answer session.

“Students are definitely reacting to the effort we put into this event,” said CM recruitment coordinator Justin Smalley. “I received a message from an advisor on campus that a student with an undeclared major who attended the open house decided to stay at CSU and enroll in our program rather than transfer back to his home state. We are proud of the event we have put together to inform prospective students of all that our program has to offer.”

Faculty Delivers Lecture to Students in Brazil

On October 2, Rodolfo Valdes-Vasquez delivered a lecture via teleconference to graduate students at the University of Pernambuco in Brazil. A result of the recent collaboration efforts between CSU’s CM program and the civil engineering department at UPE, the lecture focused on social sustainability applications to construction projects.

Fifteen students in Brazil participated in the lecture and benefitted from preparatory materials, including research articles and videos, sent to them by Valdes-Vasquez prior to the teleconference. “The students said that they enjoyed the opportunity to interact with an international researcher who has published relevant work on social sustainability,” he said. “They found the resources extremely useful to their work, too, and we hope to be able to offer more lectures like this in coming semesters.”

CM Float Wins First in Homecoming Parade

Continuing a tradition of the past nine consecutive years, the CM float for the 2013 Homecoming parade once again came away with a first place win. This year’s win was received in the CSU entries category, and the theme for the parade was Stalwart Rams.

Thanks go to CM faculty members Scott Glick and Kevin Jones for their assistance in getting the float to come together. Congratulations to all the students who invested their time and creativity into bringing the float to life: Connor Bidrowsky, Steve Kenyon, Jonny Hendricks, Mark Bowers, Kayla Boos, Mark Norin, Austin Shreve, Eli Mergens, Kevin Kolb, Liz McEwen, Matt Henecke, Simon Salazar, Kyle Snow, Kaylee Millar, and Scott Peterson.

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Below: Graduate students at the University of Pernambuco in Brazil that participated in the lecture teleconference. Seated near the center in blue is Emilia Kahlan Rabbani, the professor who visited CSU over the summer as part of the partnership between CM and UPE.
CM Partners with Roofing Alliance

In a recent press release, the Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress announced an educational partnership with construction management programs across the country. Auburn University in Alabama, the University of Florida at Gainesville, and CSU are partnering with the Alliance to incorporate more roofing-specific study into the programs’ curricula. Scholarships will be provided for students, starting with a $5,000 award for each of the three schools available in the 2014-2015 academic year, as well as awards available to faculty for their work with the partnership. Internship programs will also be developed with a focus on roofing companies, manufacturers, and distributors.

The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress was established within the National Roofing Foundation as a way to create an endowment fund as a highly-focused resource for the roofing industry and its customers. Its objectives include conducting research and educational projects that support high-quality programs for roofing contractors; ensuring timely industry responses to major economic and technological issues; and enhancing the long-term viability and attractiveness of the industry to workers. The Alliance also reaches out to the roofing community and its members through scholarships and by helping to fund efforts dedicated to good works and charitable giving.

Ozbek Reappointed to Serve ASCE Committees

Mehmet Ozbek has been reappointed to serve on the American Society of Civil Engineers’ Transportation and Development Institute’s Infrastructure Systems Committee. This is a national committee established to study, evaluate, and report on current practices and promote new developments in the science of infrastructure management. Its focus is on broad infrastructure-related practices such as planning and development, operations and maintenance, and improving infrastructure management strategies as they relate to transportation, public works, and parks and recreation infrastructure systems. Ozbek was further appointed to chair its sub-committee charged with newsletters.

Ozbek also serves as a track chair on the technical committee in the Construction Research Congress for 2014. This is the prime international conference in the area of construction engineering and management and is organized every two years by the Construction Research Council of ASCE. The 2014 occurrence of the conference will take place at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta this coming May.

MCAA Officers Attend National Student Summit

Scott Clancy and Hayden Rice, officers of the Mechanical Contractors Association of America student chapter, travelled to Memphis, Tenn., to attend the MCAA Student Chapter Summit October 3-5. This event exposes students to the mechanical, plumbing and service industries and allows them to exchange chapter development ideas while attending sessions on various topics related to the mechanical industry.

On the second day, student attendees split up and formed teams with members of other chapters from around the country to compete in a mini-competition that consisted of creating a construction plan for a library remodel. The team on which Clancy participated received second place. “It was really cool to get to know some fellow MCAA chapter leaders and learn how they conduct business at their universities,” said Rice.

Before their departure on the final day, the students received details of the project for the upcoming MCAA competition. It consists of a processing plant retrofit for which the teams will act as the mechanical prime contractor. Proposals must be submitted in December and the top four teams will present at the MCAA National Convention in March 2014.
Grad Student Named Presidential Fellow

Maral Jalili, a second-year graduate student in CM, has been named an International Presidential Fellow for the 2013-14 academic year. This group, comprised of 25 students and visiting scholars, is designed to introduce its members to ongoing research at CSU and develop their leadership potential on international research projects by helping build bridges to other researchers across CSU.

“I received the nomination when I least expected it,” said Jalili. “It feels great to be recognized for my work and its contribution to people’s lives. I felt like all the long nights have actually paid off. It made my entire week!”

Jalili was born and raised in Tehran, Iran, and earned a B.S. in civil engineering at the University of Tehran. She was involved with the Construction Material Institute at the university where she worked with sustainable aspects and usages of concrete. She worked as a cultural mentor for the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience, her experience with which inspired her to apply for an internship at the University of Innsbruck in Austria where she worked with a large group to perform an energy analysis of a high-tech commercial building being constructed in northern Italy.

“I am passionate about sustainable practices in building design and construction as well as high performance and energy efficient buildings,” said Jalili. “I am hoping that one day I could put my knowledge into practice and make a change in the way we build things, to make our living spaces better, more efficient and more environmentally friendly. I am honored and excited about this nomination to be an International Presidential Fellow and would like to thank the University of Tehran, the University of Innsbruck, and CSU for the time, effort, and support that has helped me be where I am.”

USGBC Hosts CEO of Local Renewable Energy Company

On October 24, CSU’s student chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council hosted Sunil Cherian, founder and CEO of Spirae, Inc., for a presentation on the innovative renewable smart grid technology developed by his company. Spirae delivers scalable smart grid solutions to partners and customers around the world. Based in Fort Collins, it is a recognized thought leader in distributed power and control systems using active distribution management techniques to integrate high levels of renewable energy into a grid system while maintaining reliable grid operations.

“The presentation given by Dr. Cherian was an interesting look at how global technologies are making an impact close to home,” said USGBC vice president Patrick Sullivan.

Cherian founded Spirae in 2002 and has maintained strong customer relationships and advanced an intellectual property portfolio with a highly-skilled team of power systems and software development professionals. He is an alumnus of CSU’s mechanical engineering program and currently serves on the Boards of the Colorado Energy Cluster and Colorado Cleantech Industry Association.

DBIA Regional Teams Achieve Placing Finishes

Student teams from CSU have continued the CM department’s winning legacy in the regional Design-Build Institute of America student competitions. All four teams sent to the competition in September returned with placing finishes, including first, fourth, fifth and sixth. The first-place team, Blue Steel Builders, was made up of Zach Belsey, Shawn Heikens, Zach Hoover, and Chris Marchese.

This team is also one of three finalists from among all the region’s winners that will participate in the second annual national competition held in Las Vegas, Nev., in November. The group, along with teams from Auburn University and California State University - Sacramento, will present their project before a panel of interviewers to answer questions and defend their design and construction plans.

Congratulations to all the students that participated in the regional competition, and good luck to the first-place team at the national competition!
Grad Student Attends Earth USA 2013

Evan Hughes, a CM graduate student and research assistant to Rodolfo Valdes-Vasquez, attended Earth USA 2013 at the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe October 4-6. The event, sponsored by Adobe in Action, focuses on architecture and construction with earthen materials, such as adobe, rammed earth, compressed earth block, and monolithic adobe, and included workshops, presentations, and tours of earthbuilding sites in and around Santa Fe.

“It was a great opportunity to learn from experts who have dedicated their professional lives to studying and improving earth construction technologies,” said Hughes. “I was struck by the wealth of technical data that the attendees possessed, and it was gratifying to learn about some of the research being conducted, particularly a study at the University of Oklahoma comparing compressed earth block to wooden home construction.”

Hughes’ future career interests include designing and building net-zero energy housing for low-income families in the Middle East, China, and possibly Africa. “Earth, despite being one of the oldest and most widely-used building materials on the planet, has not enjoyed mainstream success in American commercial and residential construction,” he said. “Most of the presentations at Earth USA took this into account and focused on the practical strengths and limitations of building with earth. I am grateful to have had the chance to visit Santa Fe and learn more about such an interesting sustainable technology.

Adobe in Action is an organization working to promote economic and community development through affordable adobe home building. It encourages community participation and volunteering in an effort to alleviate poverty and provides educational stewardship regarding the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of adobe home construction and ownership.

CON 366 Students Operate Heavy Equipment

Real-world, hands-on experience is an invaluable aspect of a quality construction education. On October 24, 40 students enrolled in Construction Equipment and Methods, or CON 366, ventured away from the classroom to attend an equipment orientation hosted by the City of Fort Collins Streets Department. They were given the opportunity to experience heavy equipment operations from the driver’s seat of a loader, grader, backhoe, roller, and dump truck, all under the careful supervision of experienced employees of the city.

This exercise has become a regular event for CON 366 and is a highlight of the semester for students, most of whom have never had the chance to work with construction equipment of this size. “It was a great experience and I learned a lot that is very difficult to teach in class,” said senior Anthony Cory. “I have a new respect for equipment operators.”

“My favorite was the backhoe and getting to see just how difficult it is to pick up a cone and place it on top of another,” said junior Lexi Wade. “I have not had much experience with these machines, so when we left I felt as though I learned a lot. This is a great learning experience!”

WIC Builds Food Structure to Raise Hunger Awareness

Members of CM’s Women in Construction student chapter spent a sunny morning at the hockey rink outside CSU’s Student Rec Center using donated food as building materials in an attempt to raise awareness of hunger in the local community. CANstruction is an annual event held in conjunction with CSU’s Cans Around the Oval to raise food donations for the Food Bank of Larimer County. Groups of students from organizations across campus participated in the event on October 9.

WIC members, along with Jake Pault of Hensel Phelps Construction Company who generously donated his time to help, used the goods donated by faculty, staff, students, and industry to construct a model of the Student Rec Center. “Our structure was one of the most complete and best-built out there,” said Liz McEwen, WIC president. “We raised more than $500 in food thanks to the support of the department and our industry partners, Hensel Phelps Construction Company and ISEC, Inc.”
ABC Hosts Bluebeam Presentation

On October 24, the Associated Builders and Contractors student chapter hosted a presentation on Bluebeam software by Jeremy Sibert from Hensel Phelps Construction Company. Utilized by several companies in the construction industry, Bluebeam is a collaborative program that combines editing and file-creation technology with the ability to access and manipulate documents from anywhere. It has created a paperless workplace that many companies find useful in working with partners located at sites anywhere on the globe. “Students really enjoyed the interactive format of the presentation,” said ABC chapter president Matthew Henecke. “Jeremy also answered some great questions and really kept the students engaged the entire evening.”

WIC Hosts Industry Mixer

On October 24, members of Women in Construction hosted an industry mixer in the Preconstruction Center as a way for members of industry to network with students in a relaxed atmosphere of food and fun. Hensel Phelps Construction and ISEC, Inc., helped to sponsor the event which was considered a great success. “It was awesome to get one-on-one time with so many industry members,” said WIC president Liz McEwen. “We were very excited for the great turnout of industry members and students, too! This would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors, so we definitely would like to thank them for their help.”

Upcoming Events

Spring 2014 Career Fair Registration

Recruiters, be sure to keep an eye on the recruiting portion of our website for the link to register for the Spring 2014 Career Fair on February 25! The link to the registration page will be posted the first week of December.

Information on the Career Fair and the link to register can be found on the CM website: www.cm.colostate.edu/careers-internships/phelps_industry/index.aspx

PADB 2014 Membership Renewal

PADB Members, the invoices for 2014 membership renewals have been sent! Please remit your membership dues by January 31, 2014, so that you may take advantage of all your benefits, including free career fair booths and company advertising opportunities.

Interested in the CM PADB? Information on membership and initiatives can be found on the CM website: www.cm.colostate.edu/industry/about.aspx

Connect with us!