CM faculty members Caroline Clevenger and Rodolfo Valdes-Vasquez, along with twelve students from CSU, traveled to Costa Rica to participate in a ten day travel abroad course January 5-15. The course promotes experiential learning focused on sustainable building practices and encourages collaboration among students from multiple disciplines through hands-on building activities.

The students from CSU had backgrounds ranging from construction management and civil engineering to interior design and fashion design and were joined by five agronomy students from Earth University, a private, non-profit international university created by the Costa Rican government. The CM program awarded five partial scholarships to the Earth University students to participate in the course as part of an initiative to create a long-term collaboration between the two universities.

This new partnership between the CM program and Earth University creates an innovative opportunity to explore sustainable community development and natural building techniques in the tropics. The students all stayed on the campus of Earth University, participated in a two-night community stay with local families in the region, and went to the beach in Cahuita for one night. They performed two days of construction to complete the installation of a new roof on a community center and build the walls for compostable latrines using bahareque, a natural building technique using mud, straw and bamboo.

Earth University’s students heralded from Costa Rica and Africa. The University, located in Guácimo on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica, offers undergraduate degrees in agricultural sciences and natural resources management with the goal to prepare students to be future leaders in sustainable development in their native countries. The University emphasizes values, ethical entrepreneurship, and environmental and social commitment in its studies.
MCAA President Visits CSU

On January 30, Michael Cables, president of the Mechanical Contractors Association of America, visited CSU to speak with students on leadership and success in the construction industry. Nearly 100 students packed into 122 Preconstruction Center to hear Cables’ remarks and then joined the MCAA student chapter for a reception afterward. “I really enjoyed his speech,” said Kayla Boos, a CM senior. “It was interesting to hear about the construction industry from a specialty contractor’s point of view, and it piqued my interest in a career in the mechanical field. It really was a great event and I am so appreciative of MCAA for hosting it!”

Cables is an executive vice president at Kinetics, a full-service process and mechanical contractor based in California with locations worldwide, and has been with the company for more than 29 years. He got his start as an apprentice before moving to Kinetics as an estimator where he was promoted through the ranks while working in Kinetics operations in Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil and Puerto Rico along the way. He also currently serves as the chairman of the Pipe Fabrication Institute, an industry association that works to ensure an uncompromised level of quality in pipe fabrication.

NECA Preparing for Green Energy Challenge

A team of students is preparing for the 6th annual Green Energy Challenge sponsored by ELECTRI International and the National Electrical Contracting Association. This year’s challenge involves designing a retrofit for a student union building on campus by conducting an energy audit of the power and lighting systems. They are also required to design a new solar energy component for the system and propose sub-metering plans to support the system’s monitoring and feedback of energy consumption.

Mike McLain, Dan Proud, Richard Simmons, and Trevor Vance met in mid-January to discuss ideas and plan for the competition. On January 29, they toured CSU’s Hartshorn Health Center with Rory Berumen, NECA Rocky Mountain Chapter manager, and Mary Broderick, IBEW 68 Renewable Energy Committee. The tour allowed them to see the current electrical conditions on which to build ideas to incorporate into their proposal. “We have new ideas that can help fix the outdated electrical technology throughout some of the campus’ buildings,” said Vance.

Pre-proposals for the Challenge must be submitted by March 10 and final proposals are due May 5. If selected as a finalist, the team from CSU will present at the NECA convention in September.

Pre-CM Students Tour CSU Project

Touring a construction project is an ideal method to expose students in CM to what they will be tackling in their future careers. On December 6, 2013, pre-CM students enrolled in CON 101, Introduction to Construction Management, took a tour of the CSU Engines and Energy Conversion Lab project on north College Avenue in Fort Collins.

The Neenan Company, a Fort Collins business, is the general contractor for the project. Sergio Ortiz (’09), project manager at The Neenan Company, guided the students through the $18.5 million renovation and 65,000-square-foot expansion of the 78-year-old structure. They learned about all aspects of a construction project from the design phase to the actual construction and observed all the various workers’ contributions.

“It was a cold day, but the students had a lot of fun,” said Mary Nobe, instructor for the course. “We would particularly like to thank Sergio for guiding this and the many other tours he’s done for our students, as well as his help with our LEED competition team and his presentations in CON 476, Sustainable Practice - Design and Construction.”
Mark Young Construction, Inc. was founded in 1989 as a Construction Management/General Contracting firm. With experience in a wide range of commercial projects, the employee-owned company has enjoyed continued success throughout the American West, particularly the Rocky Mountain Region. Located in Frederick, Colorado, MYC’s revenue in 2012 was $43 million. With 150 employees and growing, including over 100 skilled craftsmen, the company self-performs over 30% of its work. Over 95% of work is for a repeat client, many of which were referrals. Mark Young Construction’s project sectors include design/build, negotiated, CM/GC, municipal, office, retail, educational, industrial, or green build projects.
Ozbek Presides Over Session at TRB Conference

Faculty member Mehmet Ozbek served as the presiding officer for a session at the 93rd Transportation Research Board meeting and conference in Washington, D.C., January 12-16. Sponsored by the Maintenance and Operations Management Committee, “Data Collection and Analysis Methodologies in Support of Maintenance Programming Decisions” was one of several hundred sessions that covered all aspects of transportation research, policies and practices within the overall conference theme of “Celebrating Our Legacy, Anticipating Our Future.”

A few CM faculty attended the meeting, including Scott Shuler, who has contributed material to it for the past 36 years. The TRB is one of six major divisions of the National Research Council. Its mission is to lead the way in transportation innovation through research and exploration within an objective, interdisciplinary and multimodal setting.

CM Recognized by CSU EAB

During the Spring Retreat on January 16, the CM faculty and staff were recognized by the CSU Employee Appreciation Board thanks to a nomination by staff member Natalya Bowen. The EAB provided breakfast and door prizes and thanked the department for its hard work and contributions to CSU. “I’m very happy my nomination meant a well-deserved recognition for the department,” said Bowen. “I wanted the rest of CSU to see how well we all work together, from the department head to our student staff, to achieve the excellence for which we are well known. It is a pleasure to work here!”

Upcoming Events

Spring 2014 Career Fair

The Spring 2014 Career Fair will take place on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, at the Hilton on Prospect Road in Fort Collins. This bi-annual event has become the cornerstone of on-campus recruiting activities at CSU for CM students and is an excellent method for them to ‘preview’ companies while giving recruiters the opportunity to get acquainted with the students.

Find information on recruiting activities on the CM website.

Spring 2014 PADB Meeting

PADB Members, the next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2014, in Guggenheim Hall. An invitation and the meeting agenda will be sent out in February.

Connect with us!