

CIAC BOARD MEETING – SPRING 2017
COLLEGE STATION HILTON
APRIL 7, 2017

Dave Fleming opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed the 59 members present with special recognition of those new members who were attending their first CIAC meeting. He introduced Dean Jorge Vanegas who extended his greetings and appreciation for the outstanding support that the CIAC provides to the Construction Science Department.

Dean Vanegas gave a brief update on the state of the college, and legislative issues with budget considerations that were expected. He commended the department on a very successful search for tenure and tenure track faculty, and the continued enhancement of the department's research focus. The impact of the young research faculty members is being seen in multiple ways. He addressed the past excellence in department head leadership by Jim Smith that was advanced over the last ten years by Joe Horlen, and expressed his confidence that the department leadership will be in good hands for the future as he introduced Dr. Patrick Suermann as the incoming department head. He expressed appreciation to Dave Fleming and Jeremy Stovall for their contributions as members of the department head search committee.

Dr. Suermann expressed his excitement with the opportunity to return to Texas A&M and assume the role of department head. After speaking of his wife and family, and summarizing his professional career, Dr. Suermann spoke on his vision with a focus on collaboration, resources, communications and accomplishments with the establishment of proper priorities while being bold and impeccable. Upon assuming leadership of the department, he pledged to continue the balance of quality with quantity in guiding the largest program of construction education in the nation.

Joe Horlen reviewed the meeting agenda and provided direction on the desired outcomes from the committee meetings as well as the student focus groups.

Gary Boldt and Larry Fickel explained the challenges and accomplishments of the 30 students that participated in the Constructionarium in the United Kingdom over the spring break with

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photographs of the two projects that the two fifteen-member teams planned and constructed in a one week period. Texas A&M is the only U.S. university to send students to the UK for this unique hands-on enhanced learning program. To date, 50 students have participated. Some keen observations were watching the student teams learn to work together, and seeing how leaders immersed and problem solving skills were developed. A similar program if offered in the U.S. is estimated to cost around \$1.5 million and would require real estate at perhaps the new RELLIS Campus, as well as industry management support.

Both Gary and Larry moved to the topic of the new Leadership Minor in Design and Construction Industry that will be graduating its first group of fifteen students. They shared their lessons learned thus far in developing and presenting the curricular content of the three COSC courses included in the minor degree. Balancing faculty and guest speaker presentations has been an issue in assuring the content and level of knowledge were appropriate for a proper progression through the three courses. The first course will focus on the basics of leadership types and theory following by a course in which students learn about themselves and develop personal core values. The concluding course will require each student to produce a personal development plan. All three courses are offered each semester on Wednesday evenings from 5:45 to 7:25 p.m. for seven weeks. The student evaluations of the courses have been very positive. Anyone interested in being a guest speaker can contact either Gary Boldt or Larry Fickel.

Dave Fleming concluded the initial morning session explaining to the members the process and basis for his development of the “12 Goals in 12 Years” that are in draft form and will be discussed during the breakout sessions. The goals set out in 1999 have been met and it is time to turn over the CIAC to the next generation. The expectation is that the committee discussions will get the ball rolling by addressing: “What is here?”, “What is not here?” and “What needs to be added or revised?” The results will also provide some guidance to Dr. Suermann when he assumes his new position as department head and executive director. The near term goal is to gain feedback from the CIAC members and provide a framework for more in depth discussion

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during the fall meeting.

In lieu of an oral presentation on the Industry Relations Office, each CIAC member was provided a copy of the IRO report with updated statistics on CIAC membership, career fair participation, job placement information, and internship support. The key items included:

- The CIAC is continuing to grow and become more diversified
- Membership in the CIAC is being driven more by the recruiting staffs of companies.
- Career fair participation is leveling out despite the growth in CIAC memberships
- The need for a deadline for career fair registrations is under review
- The participation in the spring career fairs is generally slightly less than the fall career fair events
- The variation in internship numbers between fall and spring semesters is lessening
- Placement of interns and graduates with CIAC member companies remains high at near 90%

The general meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m. as the committees went to the respective meeting rooms to resume their assigned meeting tasks and discussions. At 11:00 a.m., three of the committees began their student focus group meetings.

Lunch was served at noon, and students that participated in the ethics team competition were introduced.

The meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m. with individual committee reports on their discussions of the “12 Goals in 12 Years”, followed by a report on the issues that arose during the student focus groups.

The Budget Committee was chaired by Jeremy Stovall of Brookstone, and reviewed the close out of the 2016 Budget and the update of the 2017 Budget.

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In the 2016 Budget, membership incomes exceeded the \$375,000 and \$1000 budget amounts by \$42,500 and \$2,050 for corporate and individual membership dues respectively. The budgeted number of 150 corporate members was exceeded with 167 members effectively. The actual membership was 188 with the majority of the new members joining after July 1 at a lower prorated membership fee. The budgeted number of two lifetime members increased to six lifetime and one annual membership. The main change in income was the budgeted amount of \$2,200 from interest on the CIAC Discretionary Fund that was not received due to the Texas A&M Foundation no longer paying interest on non-endowed accounts. The 2016 Budget Update continued to show the impact of less CIAC expenditures for student enhancement line items such as competition teams, individual scholarships, and program enhancement due the available funds from differential tuition. The \$20,000 line item for an endowed matching professorship is the second installation of funds towards the required \$60,000. One of the ten budgeted endowed matching scholarships available was awaiting the required matching funds from the donor. The budgeted \$100,000 was transferred to the CIAC Support Fund bringing the balance in this account to approximately \$355,000. The line item for the tailgate event was less due to a change in location to the Association of Former Students Building that saved on tent and video equipment rental.

The 2017 Budget Update showed membership incomes of \$442,500 and \$1,500 against budgeted amounts of \$425,000 and \$500 for business entity and individual members. The current number of corporate members for 2017 was 177 against a budget number of 170. The projected number of members for 2017 is 200 with those joining later at the reduced prorated membership fee of \$1,250.

Very few expenses have been incurred in the first quarter of the year with transfers of funds for two endowed professorships. Three endowed matching scholarships are in the process of being funded for a match. The budgeted amount for the graduation event (hard hat ceremony) was increased from \$3,000 to \$6,000 due to the need to reserve a meeting space off campus for the average of 150 graduates and their guests each semester.

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The Graduate Program and Research Studies Committee was chaired by Leland Rocchio. Professor K.C. Choi the recipient of the 2016 CIAC research funding was successful in applying the funding support to attract a \$150,000 research grant thus advancing the department's goal of increased external funded research. The committee discussed the marketability issue of international students in light of changes in the Department of Labor classification of construction management not being specialized enough to be a science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) vocation. Construction management professionals must now enter a lottery process for job placement in lieu of a company sponsorship. This change will impact the ability to attract international students into the graduate program. The committee discussed attracting domestic students in a career transition towards some form of graduate education in construction management. Efforts are underway to partner with a group in San Antonio on a series of day long refresher courses with COSC faculty participation as a continuing education effort. The industry still desires to see the value that is associated with the research currently being pursued by the current thesis-only graduate program. Faculty asked for feedback from the industry on what the important needs are for research.

The Membership, Development and Curriculum Committees were assigned to review and provide feedback on the "12 Goals in 12 Years", as well as conduct a student focus group.

The following is a summary of the feedback from the three committees on the draft goals:

- An overall vision statement for the CIAC separate from the COSC vision statement is needed
- The goals should support but not repeat those set by COSC
- A goal of a named program or school should be considered
- CIAC assistance with recruiting quality students should be addressed to ensure quality as well as quantity
- Diversification of memberships by the subcontractor trades with recognition of their influence

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- Acknowledge collaboration with the College of Architecture with an appropriate metric
- Tell the story of the CIAC beyond the recruiting and career fair benefits
- Emphasize more reporting back on goals
- Maintenance fund for Francis Hall with consideration of reimbursement for expenses
- Endowment for keeping Francis Hall current with latest technology
- Gain industry commitment for Goal #6 – sustainable PhD program with industry demand
- Increase endowed matching scholarships to twelve
- Enhance collaboration with more incentives to pursue and participate
- Continue support of the recruiting effort per Goal #11
- Identify how increased CIAC membership diversity will assist during periods of economic downturn
- Add outside project management companies to the CIAC membership
- Track membership non-renewals to determine key factors
- Increase industry engagement with graduate students

The following is a summary of the feedback from the three committees on the student focus group discussions:

Freshman and sophomores

- Overall the group like the accelerated courses and want more such classes. The fast pace keeps the information fresh.
- Presented very well being very polite with great attitudes.
- Had very little criticism and feel they were in an excellent program. Prefer smaller class sizes to get to know classmates and faculty.
- Reported more hands-on learning in the classrooms

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- None in the group of 10 were from construction backgrounds. Use of job site photos, videos and site visits are helpful in class.
- The number and quality of guest speakers is good and provide advice, and introductions for networking
- The department is very personal with students
- Advisors are helpful but need to be more consistent.
- Feedback on career fair and resume preparation was positive. Encouraged to go early and seek summer work prior to internship semester. More help with interviewing preparation is needed.
- Improvement is needed in learning how to read plans in COSC 175 in preparation for COSC 275.
- Overall very positive session

Juniors

- Lack of use of program management software in COSC 353 – Project Management. The faculty for this course is currently working with Procore to add use of such project management software in the summer 2017 class.
- Inconsistent content and presentation between the COSC 175 classes
- The project management class is good and demanding
- Half the students were interested in an advanced degree at some point
- Identified the barrier of the lack of a remote online master's degree program for construction management
- Very positive comments on the career fairs but would like to see a book or link for student use in researching the various companies prior to the career fair
- They would like more company presentations after hours
- The room being used for Company Day is inadequate, and is needed by students in April to finalize class team projects
- Would like to see internships be more challenging

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- Would like to have some form of published evaluation of the internships offered by companies perhaps similar to how Yelp is used to record reviews of businesses
- Are interested in participating in the recruitment of high school students
- Less commercial construction and more specialty construction focus
- There is limited collaboration and would like more

Seniors

- Provide more hands-on earlier in career on use of tools
- Look at Habitat for Humanity as a hands-on project
- Hands-on projects in the summer
- COSC 175 is too easy, could be a 1 hour credit class
- More exposure to outside the commercial construction focus
- Not learning how to use P6 software
- The hardware and software in scheduling needs to be reviewed
- Not getting a good understanding of soils such as soil properties
- COSC 325 and 326 are not effective
- The inclusion of inclusion of general conditions in COSC 275 and 375 is good
- Want more information on company operations and overhead
- Need a seminar class on personal finances
- More involved access to faculty
- Surveying class needs access to laser level equipment
- Improvements are needed in COSC 321 and 421
- Are seeing the value of professors that come in from the industry with a PhD from University of Hard Knocks

Joe Horlen expressed appreciation for the industry's support during his tenure as department head. The size of the program is not planned to grow further but funding will provide for

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additional faculty to address the current size of the program. He guided a discussion of how students are currently being recruited and admitted into the program.

Dave Fleming closed the meeting by thanking all those who attended and participated in the committee meetings

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.