Bob Flowers - President, Endurance Builders

Bob Flowers opened the meeting at 8:30 with a welcome to all the industry partners thanking them for their commitment to the program by finding time in their demanding schedules. He expressed respect and admiration for Jim Marsh, the first department head of program, who was honored as the Construction Industry advisory Council’s 2014 induction into the Constructor Hall of Fame at the awards banquet. It was very gratifying to hear about the early days of the construction program at Texas A&M and reflect upon how far we have come over the years.

Stan Marek, introduced the new executive director of the Construction Career Collaborative (C3), Chuck Gremillion, and briefed the members on the objectives and goals of the C3 member companies and property owners for advancing the workforce development initiative in Houston, Texas.

Professor John Bryant distributed a survey to the company representatives seeking input on the early stages of a study as to the need for a new degree in architectural engineering. This would be a new degree that is different than the construction science degree and is being explored by the College of Engineering. If such a new degree was determined to be needed, the approval process would take 1-1/2 years for approval. Professor Bryant was appointed by the dean to an interdisciplinary committee to explore the validity of this issue.

Joe Horlen also extended a welcome to the group and stated that the large turnout for the banquet was a very fitting tribute to Jim Marsh. All of the department heads that had served the program were present at the banquet and a group photograph was made. The growth in the program from its early beginnings is directly attributed to the former students and the companies that have hired the program’s graduates. Those present who were new to the CIAC and attending their first CIAC meeting were asked to stand and introduce themselves.

Joe Horlen reviewed the meeting agenda and requested the membership input on several key issues to the program. The goal and guidelines for the student focus group sessions were explained. He pointed out that the 2012-2013 Construction Industry Advisory Council Report was available and reviewed the key dates for CIAC events for the coming year.

During the department head update, Joe Horlen discussed the attainment of the student enrollment target of 725 with 759 undergraduates. The program has grown from 600 students since 2007 with a projected attainment of almost 900 students in the fall 2015. Progress is being made in reaching the average 3.01 years to graduate with a current 3.37 year attainment. This goal will be reached by increasing the intake of transfer students and decreasing that for change of majors. The semester long internship makes attainment of this goal more challenging, but the success and value of the semester long internship have proven a key to the university’s goal to provide students with an enhanced learning experience. The internship program is known as a model for quality on the university. The number of graduates will increase from the current 183 to about 240 a year. While many of the goals are numeric,
the program must still focus on quality. The remaining targets for total student credit hours and student
credit hours per fulltime faculty will be reached as the number of students increase along with the size
and number of classes. The incoming class demographics were reviewed. Approximately 10,000
freshmen are admitted from the 36,000 applicants by the university. A total of 135 of those admitted
had requested COSC. Admission letters were sent to 90 and 72 of those have accepted the offer thus
far. The key to a healthy growth in the quantity and quality of admissions is recruiting for which the
industry partners can assist. The department is leading on campus with 40% of the incoming class being
Hispanic. The representation of females is approximately 15%.

Joe Horlen also briefed the meeting on the department’s report card based upon the metrics for
effectiveness and excellence. Key metrics are the job placement rate and high impact learning
experience for students. Assistance from our former students will be required to obtain employment
data at the one year and five year marks as part of the required metrics.

An update on the Francis Hall project was provided, along with the announcement that several naming
opportunities were still available for those who wish to contribute to the capital campaign.

The department is hosting the spring 2015 national conference of the Associated Schools of
Construction in April 2015.

George Eustace presented an industry relations report covering the growth in the CIAC membership,
increases in the career fair participation, and CIAC support of the internship program. Job placement
statistics for fall 2013 graduates was 93% with average starting salaries of $57,000 dollars. The
projected CIAC 2014 membership is 141 companies with a wider range of industry sectors. The students
that participated in the national and regional student competitions were recognized, as were the
students that have served on COSC FIRST (Focused Industry Relations Support Team).

The various committee meetings convened at 10:30 a.m.

The Budget committee met to review the close out of the 2013 budget and the update of the 2014
budget. The Membership committee met to develop a list of nominees for future Constructor Hall of
Fame Award, and review the career fair planning process. The Graduate Program Curriculum Research
and Studies committee met for an update on the 2013 and 2014 research grants. The undergraduate
Curriculum committee was asked to review the process and progress of the department’s efforts to
develop assessment tools and student learning outcomes. The Development committee developed a
list of topics that could be addressed at the summer informational lunches.

The membership reassembled at 12:00 p.m. for lunch. Members of the various student competition
teams and the COSC FIRST members were invited to join the group for lunch and were introduced by
George Eustace.

The afternoon session re-convened at 1:15 p.m.
Brent Blake with Balfour Beatty presented the membership committee report regarding the career fair planning process. The primary issue is a lack of graduates looking for jobs at the career fairs since many have already accepted jobs prior to the career fair. There is a need to increase the participation of freshmen and sophomore students to begin their networking with the companies and learning about what each company has to offer. This is also true of any transfer students. There is some concern that the career fair is becoming too large. A suggestion would be to create a company overview booklet that has the company logo and a 250 word description of the jobs the company is seeking to fill. A book of resumes would be helpful if this could be developed by the student organizations on their web sites. The value of the social mixer prior to the career fair is decreased by the bar atmosphere that is crowded, noisy and poorly lit. Arrangement of the company booths by industry sector should be considered.

Comments regarding the student focus group for graduating seniors included:

- The Estimating I class is a plus when taught by one with industry experience
- Classes that provide hands-on training are best
- The methods portion of Materials and Methods I and II needs more emphasis
- Project Management and Building Information Modeling are good
- There is an overall commercial focus and more explanation of different sectors is needed. More specifics with certain disciplines or a minor in a sector of the industry.
- The MEP courses need more means and methods and less design emphasis
- The internship was a main discussion topic but overall is good. Some Corps of Cadet and athletes are having difficulty with the timing.
- Regarding classes with a part I and II in some cases, the follow on part II is a bad sequel with too much repetition of part I.

Jeremy Stovall, Brookstone, Chair, Graduate Program Curriculum Research and Studies committee, began his report by discussing the progress of the 2014 research project assigned to Professor Ben Bigelow. A graduate student has been hired to assist with an industry survey of potential research topics, and the CIAC membership was asked for their support of the survey. The survey will include site visits and interviews with industry members. Feedback on the interview questions will be welcome. Professor Ryoo presented an update on his cloud computing research to the committee. The research is in the implementation stage and is being tested with companies working on campus. Companies interested in participating in the implementation stage should contact Professor Sarel Lavy. The committee did not have time to address the issue regarding the uses for the graduate program enhancement funding. Comments regarding the student focus group for graduate students included:

- Some frustration on recurring topics such as marketing themselves to the industry, and lack of knowledge of company needs and expectations.
- An early seminar class is needed on how to communicate their career goals
- More information on which companies are hiring graduate students
- A minor issue with international students is an overall sense that companies are not interested in hiring graduate students.
- More balance is needed in the thesis and non-thesis options with more information on how to get a job, and offer of a semester long internship.
- There is perception that graduate program professors are not interested in teaching their classes
Dave Fleming, Sundt, Vice President and Chair, Budget Committee presented the close out of the 2013 budget and the proposed changes to update the 2014 budget. Two expense line items were addressed in the proposed update. The Individual Scholarship & Student Recruitment expense line item was increased from $20,000 to $40,000. The increase will be used to fund incoming freshmen scholarships that cannot be covered with differential tuition funding. A proposed transfer of $75,000 to the CIAC Support Fund was added to the budget. The funds transfer will be postponed until the fall 2014 meeting when the income from increased membership fees and the amount of the retained earnings are known.

Dave Fleming also gave a report on his participation in a recent Dean’s Advisory Council meeting as the CIAC’s representative to this council. The Dean’s Advisory Council has been reformed with a more balanced representation from all industry sectors represented in the College of Architecture. The council will meet twice a year in College Station and also have a summer meeting in some other location. The council is seeking to develop workshops and programs for professional communications and leadership. Each council member was given a thumb drive containing files for various slides and spreadsheets that are maintained by the dean’s office. The council also addressed various long range issues of interest to the dean.

Carl McClenan, Joeris General Contractors, Chair, Curriculum Committee gave a report on the morning session that included a review of the department’s efforts on development of assessment documents that address both university and ACCE student learning outcomes. The committee addressed 2 of the 20 ACCE student learning outcomes involved with electronic based technology and structures. The committee will review two other student learning outcomes in the fall 2014 meeting dealing with MEP systems and risk management. The importance of understanding the front end use of technology regarding the organization of the data in regards to building information modeling was discussed, as well as understanding the process that is derived from electronic based technology. In regards to structures, the ability to understand the soils analysis data contained in a geotechnical report is an important student learning outcome with less emphasis on laboratory testing methods, and a better understanding of the risks associated with the various structural elements. There is a need to be able to navigate through structural drawings and understand the role of the structural engineer. An understanding of various structural repair methods is also needed. Comments regarding the student focus group for freshmen and sophomore groups composed of mostly transfer students included:

- Positive comments on Professor Segner
- Discussion of career paths with focus more on project management and need to keep options open to meet high demand for superintendents
- Estimating is taught the old way and needs to explain the importance of knowing the process
- The accelerated classes for transfer students is too fast paced
- There is a desire for more job site visits in the first two years

Matt Summerville, Brandt, Development Committee Chair, presented his committee’s work on summer luncheon topics. The frequency and locations are good with the size of the meeting adequate. The format as a mini-CIAC meeting helps industry partners keep in touch. Continue with the various metrics
and statistics. More dialogue and refresher on what is in the current course catalogue could be added. To aid in recruitment CIAC members should be encouraged to bring high school counselors, and a recruitment pamphlet would be helpful. The committee also discussed a need for earlier access to students perhaps with company information sessions and guest speaker slots for which companies could sign up for. More knowledge of the specialty trades is needed.

Comments from the student focus group of juniors included:

- The level of industry support is good
- There were negative comments regarding Mgmt 209 and Mgmt 309 conflicting with career fair participation
- Would like to see a full day of presenting resumes and a full day of interviews at the career fair
- Would like to see the list of career fair companies sooner
- There has been some miscommunications at the career fairs with inaccurate information as to what companies are looking for
- Curriculum should address various career paths
- The essay in the soils class is of no value, but practical side is good
- The best classes are Project Management and Estimating II
- There needs to be more emphasis on plan reading
- General interest of companies – 8 writing intensive classes
- Ethics needs less lecture and more dialog on case studies
- Good response on guest speakers

Joe Horlen expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the various committees and welcomed the feedback. The department will work on improving where it can.

Bob Flowers closed the meeting by expressing his appreciation to Richard Palmer for his work as the outgoing president, and stating that it is great to be a part of a winning organization such as the Construction Industry Advisory Council.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.