The National Academy of Construction

A seldom advertised aspect of the CEPM Program is its relationship to The National Academy of Construction (NAC). The NAC has been housed at UT Austin since its inception in 2000, and offices on the Fifth Floor of ECJ, along with the CEPM faculty and graduate students. Dr. Richard Tucker, CEPM Emeritus Professor, is the Academy’s General Secretary. Alicia Zapata, Sr. Administrative Associate for CEPM, is supported half-time by the Academy.

The NAC is patterned after the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), which includes Richard Tucker and several other UT Engineering faculty. Some other NAC members also belong to the NAE. However, the U.S. construction industry is so large that it is under represented in NAE. Also, the construction industry is eclectic, with many disciplines involved, such as architecture, law, finance, project management, etc. The NAC includes all disciplines, as well as representatives from the major industry sectors of residential, buildings, industrial and heavy civil.

The Academy is an elite organization, and election is the highest career honor most of its members will receive. It currently has 130 members and elects only 10% new members each year. The selection process for new members begins with about 200 prospects and takes place over several months. A 75% positive vote from the current members is necessary for election. Although Academy members are all leaders in their organizations, the basic criteria for election are contributions to the industry, outside of their own organizations. A “rule of thumb” is that election to the Academy will not be the first national award of a nominee.

The NAC has a significant UT representation among its members. In addition to Richard Tucker, former CEPM faculty members David Ashley and Edd Gibson are members. CEPM graduates Stuart Anderson and Ed Jaselskis have been recently elected, and other CEPM graduates are regularly nominated. CII has a significant representation, including former Directors Ken Eickmann and Hans Van Winkle, current Director Wayne Crew, and former Associate Directors Bob Jortberg and Chuck McGinnis, all of whom have served as adjunct faculty in the CEPM Program.

Although NAC is a “Hall of Honor”, it does much more. It has a close relationship with the National Research Council (NRC), which addresses much of the national research. Numerous NAC members have served on NRC Study Committees. The Academy also publishes a widely-distributed series of "White Papers" on ways to improve construction safety. It has recently started a series of Construction Industry Forums, with invited participation from leaders of major industry associations.

The Academy also has a strong connection to the CEPM program. In addition to Dr. Tucker and Alicia Zapata, the NAC also supports a CEPM graduate student to assist in structuring its Bulletin and web site and in correspondence with its members. CEPM faculty are invited to various NAC events. NAC members regularly present seminars to CEPM students and faculty.

For more information about the National Academy of Construction, visit its web site at: www.naocon.org

Featured Alumni in this Issue:

Andrew Griffith, PhD; Rafael Aldrete, PhD; David Weston, MS; and Jorge Castaneda, PhD (Pages 2 and 4)
Andrew F. Griffith, P.E., Ph.D. 1997

Andrew Griffith has had a varied career as researcher, consultant, and construction professional. Andrew graduated from Clemson University in 1983 with a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering. After graduating, he worked for the Army Corps of Engineers in Georgia, South Carolina, and New York as a construction engineer on a wide-range of military and civil construction projects. He then moved to Sverdrup Corporation as a project engineer on the construction of U.S. Embassy projects in Yemen and El Salvador.

After eight years in the field as a construction professional, Andrew returned to academia. In 1993, he earned his Master’s degree in Construction Engineering and Project Management from The University of Texas at Austin. After spending a year as a cost engineer on the AMD Fab 25 Project in Austin, Texas, he returned to UT to pursue his doctorate. Andrew’s Doctoral dissertation was on “Team Alignment During Pre-Project Planning of Capital Projects” and was funded by the Construction Industry Institute (CII) under the supervision of Dr. G. Edward Gibson.

In 1997, Andrew joined Independent Project Analysis, Inc. (IPA). IPA is the leading consultancy in project evaluation and project system benchmarking, and has become the industry leader in quantitative analysis of project management systems He holds the title of Master Analyst, which is the most senior analytical position in the company. Andrew leads client sponsored research studies, project system benchmarking evaluations, and consulting engagements. The focus of his research while at IPA has been in the areas of construction safety, planning and scheduling, project controls, and construction processes. In addition to his work at IPA, Andrew also serves as an adjunct professor at George Washington University teaching courses in project planning and scheduling and cost estimating.

Andrew met his wife Patricia while working in El Salvador. They have been married for 19 years and have two children, Andrea (age 10) and Christian (age 7). They currently live in Reston, Virginia.

Rafael M. Aldrete, Ph.D. 1998

Rafael M. Aldrete has a distinguished research and professional career. In 1992 he completed his Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosi, in Mexico. In 1993 he came to the University of Texas at Austin to pursue his Master’s degree in the CEPM program under the supervision of Dr. Richard L. Tucker. After completing his Master’s degree, Rafael stayed in the CEPM program to pursue his PhD. His Doctoral dissertation was on “Feasibility Evaluation Model for Toll Highways” and was funded by the Construction Industry Institute (CII) under the supervision of Dr. Tucker and Dr. B. Frank McCullough.

Upon completion of his PhD in 1998, he joined the global strategy and technology consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton in the Washington DC area, where he was involved in numerous transportation and infrastructure management consulting projects worldwide. His experience at Booz Allen included the development and management of over $4 billion worth of public-private partnership transportation projects, the appraisal of major public infrastructure investments, and the restructuring of highway agencies and railway companies. From 2001 to 2002 he relocated to Budapest, Hungary, where he was Deputy Director of Booz Allen’s Southeast Europe Regional Infrastructure Program Office.

In 2006 he relocated to El Paso to join the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) of the Texas A&M University System, as Director of its Center for International Intelligent Transportation Research and manager of its El Paso office. He started-up the El Paso office, doubling its contracted research backlog and increasing its staff from two researchers to 20 employees within two years. In 2010 Rafael became TTI’s Division Head for San Antonio and El Paso. He currently oversees a multi-million dollar research and implementation program for US federal, state and local agencies, and for governments and development agencies in Latin America, Asia and Southeast Europe.

Rafael met his wife Sengul in Istanbul, Turkey, while he was working for Booz Allen in 2000. They have two tri-lingual daughters, Ela (6) and Lila (4). They all currently reside in El Paso, where they enjoy hiking and mountain biking.
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New Faculty Member

The CEPM Program at the University of Texas at Austin is pleased to welcome a new faculty member:

Michael Blackhurst will join CAEE in January 2012 as an assistant professor in construction engineering and project management. Blackhurst earned a master of science in environmental and water resources engineering at The University of Texas at Austin. He also received doctorate degrees in engineering and public policy and civil and environmental engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. While working as a graduate research assistant at the university’s Green Design Institute, Blackhurst developed life cycle assessment tools to track water use in economic models. Results of the work have been profiled in the New York Times and National Geographic. His research focuses on the sustainability and equity of urban infrastructure systems given uncertainty and variability in future resources provisions, infrastructure and technology performance, user behavior and life cycle impacts. He hopes to provide decision support and methods to transition to more sustainable infrastructure systems.

"I had a tremendously positive experience as a Master’s student at UT-Austin," says Blackhurst. "The curriculum was challenging and engaging. The CAEE Department has clearly created a unique and positive culture. I look forward to being part of the program again." When not in the classroom or lab, he enjoys playing music and spending time with family and friends.

Accomplishments

Dr. Leite honored with 2011 CII Distinguished Professor Award

Since she joined The University of Texas at Austin in January 2010, Dr. Fernanda Leite has been introducing CII research topics to undergraduates and graduate students. In addition, Dr. Leite is completing a research study for CII on Enhanced Work Packaging, with Dr. O’Brien. Congratulations to Dr. Leite for being named by CII 2011 Distinguished

Previously Featured Alumni in CEPM Newsletter

Shan Viswanathan, MS 1990
Tai-Wook Noh, MS ’83
Ed Jaselskis, Ph.D. 1988
Col. David C. Weston, M.S. 1992
Col. Aniello L. Tortora, M.S. 1992
James R. Dunlop, M.S. 1987
Soliman A. Almohawis, Ph.D 1986
Jim Broaddus, P.E., Ph.D. 1991
Kirk Morrow, P.E., Ph.D. 1998
Michael M. Parker, M.S., 1987
Major David A. Bruce, M.S., 2004
Akira Iwabuchi, M.S., 1991
Sam Kumar, M.S., 1992

CEPM Faculty

Michael Blackhurst, Ph.D.
John D. Borcherding, Ph.D.
Carlos H. Caldas, Ph.D.
Brian K. Carroll, J.D.
Kirby Kuntz, Ph.D.
Fernanda L. Leite, Ph.D
John McLeod, PhD
Stephen P. Mulva, Ph.D.
Steven D. Nelson, J.D.
William J. O’Brien, Ph.D.
James T. O’Connor, Ph.D.
John A. Rickard, MS
Richard L. Tucker, PhD
Jorge Castañeda, Ph.D. 2002

Jorge Castañeda has dedicated his career to developing expertise in the field of project management. In 1995 he completed his Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering, graduating Cum Laude from UDLA-Puebla in Mexico. He worked in field project controls and estimating for a small construction firm and then went on to work for Empresas ICA (NYSE: ICA) primarily on engineering management for civil infrastructure projects and later on strategy and technology development. In the Fall of 1999 he completed a Master’s Degree in Civil Engineering/Construction Engineering and Project Management (CEPM) at the University of Texas at Austin, sponsored by Fulbright/CONACYT. He then decided to continue in the CEPM doctoral program and completed a PhD in 2002. Jorge’s Doctoral dissertation was on Workforce Management Strategies in the Construction Industry and was partly funded by the Center for Construction Industry Studies (CCIS) based in UT Austin, under the supervision of Dr. Richard L. Tucker. Derived articles were presented and published in the ASCE conference and journal.

In early 2003 Jorge joined Independent Project Analysis, Inc. (IPA) at its headquarters in Virginia, USA, and he is currently the managing director of the Netherlands office, IPA’s office which services clients in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Before his current position he was managing IPA business in Africa. Since joining IPA Jorge conducted assessments of project systems worldwide and individual large capital projects ranging from about US$1 million up to US$20 billion, in various industry sectors, providing consulting of proven best practices for capital projects’ development and execution. Jorge also has directly contributed to defining major global companies’ strategy for project performance improvement, and continues to teach courses on project management best practices with the IPA Institute for experienced project professionals in the EMEA region. In the research domain in recent years, Jorge has studied South African projects, and conducted special studies on root causes of project cost performance for IPA’s major international energy clients.

Dr. Castaneda met his wife Theodora in Austin. She is also a CEPM alumna. They got married in 2010 and currently live in The Netherlands, where Theodora is the Manager of Gas Portfolio Development for a large European energy company.

Please send alumni updates to Dr. Fernanda Leite:
fernanda.leite@austin.utexas.edu
## Class of 2011 Updates

**Puneet Chopra (M.S.)** – Puneet graduated in the summer and has returned to India to work.

**Ateeth Dhumal (M.S.)** – After graduating in the spring, Ateeth remains in the Austin area working for CINTRA as an O&M Analyst.

**Trevor Dunlap (M.S.)** – Trevor is now a 2nd Lt. in the United States Marine Corps in Quantico, VA.

**Bennett Ford (M.S.)** – Bennett graduated in the spring.

**Nitin Gulati (M.S.)** – Nitin completed his coursework in the spring.

**Charles Livingston (M.S.)** – Charles graduated in the spring and continues to live in Austin.

**Yogita Manan Bindal (M.S.)** – Yogita moved to Singapore after completing her coursework in the spring. She is looking for a job and working on publishing her Dispute Resolution paper.

**Ben Meinke (M.S.)** – Having graduated in the summer, Ben moved to Houston where he works as a Project Controls Engineer for KBR, Inc.

**Cameron Schmeits (M.S.)** – Cameron is working in Dallas as a Research Fellow for the Center for Transportation Research, The University of Texas at Austin. He graduated in the summer.

**Jasjyot Suri (M.S.)** – After graduating in the summer, Jasjyot moved to Mumbai, India and is working for Bharat Construction Company.

## Graduate Student Organization—Spring 2011 Update

During the last semester, the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) continued to host a number of events for the CEPM community. We had two guest speakers throughout the semester, who provided a great overview of what are current and future industry practices. Jason Choyce (DPR Construction) and Chendi Yang (Turner Construction) shared their experience and knowledge with our students. The GSO also hosted an activity during Explore UT, in which children ages 4-12 were exposed to different aspects of construction through games and puzzles presented by our own graduate students and Dr. Leite. We were also proud to continue the traditional CEPM Golf Tournament, which was held at the Riverside Golf Course for the second year in a row. Students, alumni and faculty were all involved in this fun event. Finally, the Farewell BBQ for graduating students put an end to GSO’s activities for the semester.

### GSO Officers

- **Fernando Mondragon**
  - President
- **Elizabeth Kincaid**
  - Vice President
- **Li Wang**
  - Director of Communication
- **Ankit Bhatla**
  - Secretary
- **Jin Ouk Choi & Luis Gotelli**
  - Director Informal Events
- **Jean Goyat**
  - Treasurer

## Support CEPM

Support the CEPM program by donating to the **Richard & Shirley Tucker Endowed Excellence Fund** in Construction Engineering and Project Management. Learn how to donate by contacting Kelsey Evans at (512) 471-6151 or emailing her at: kelsey.evans@mail.utexas.edu

Please send alumni updates to: fernanda.leite@austin.utexas.edu

Visit our website: [http://www.caee.utexas.edu/dept/area/construction/construction.html](http://www.caee.utexas.edu/dept/area/construction/construction.html)