The Project Manager: A CEPM Newsletter geared for our alumni and friends

CEPM Alumni Around the World

Michael M. Parker, M.S., 1987

Major David A. Bruce, M.S., 2004

Akira Iwabuchi, M.S., 1991
Project Manager at Kajima Corporation, a Tokyo-based ENR top-ranked global contractor. More on page 3.

Sam Kumar, M.S., 1992
President of Journeyman Construction, Inc., named one of the top 100 construction firms in Texas. More on page 3.
When the Construction Industry Institute was founded in 1983, its founder, Richard Tucker, took care to establish a partnership between the new institute and CEPM. Both organizations existed through the Cockrell School of Engineering and both were committed to transforming capital project facility delivery. Twenty-eight years later, both have become recognized as leaders of academia and industry.

According to CII’s director, Wayne Crew, the symbiotic relationship between the two entities has proven to be mutually beneficial over the years. CII provides the CEPM program with research funding, support for graduate students, and opportunities to work within the industry. Conversely, CEPM provides CII with distinguished faculty and world-class graduate students. Says Crew of this cooperative bond, “The relationship has made CII one of the world’s foremost academic research centers, in terms of construction research,” adding that “As a result, CEPM has gained exposure and recognition by the global construction industry.”

CEPM also helps CII staff members stay connected to their academic roots. Stephen Mulva and Steve Thomas—both associate directors at CII—step in and teach CEPM classes each year, as needed. Currently, Thomas teaches the graduate level course “Quantitative Methods for Project Analysis.” Crew says this intertwined partnership has clearly stood the test of time. “I would expect that over 28 years, there would be ebbs and flows, as there are in any relationship,” he says. “But for the most part, CII has looked at UT and CEPM as key stakeholders, and CEPM has looked at CII as a key opportunity.”

However, there is more to the organizations than the research they produce. CEPM’s Graduate Student Organization hosts a golf tournament each semester, to which CII staff are invited. Crew, who won the tournament in Fall 2010, says this side of CEPM brings further satisfaction from the relationship. “I find CEPM faculty to be supportive, fun to be around, and interesting,” he says. Summing up the CII-CEPM partnership Crew concludes, “So, the opportunity to partner with individuals who are not only scholarly, but interesting and fun, while working toward the mutual benefit of both our organizations and our industry….Well, it is just so fortunate.”
Sam Kumar, M.S., 1992

Sam Kumar is the President and founder of Journeyman Construction, Inc. He started his construction company in 2001 with only two employees. The company has grown into a successful organization with over 100 employees and approximately $100 million in revenues. The firm has been ranked as one of the fastest growing businesses in Entrepreneur magazine and was named among the Top 100 construction firms in Texas.

With projects ranging from $500,000 to $30 Million, Journeyman Construction has completed projects such as Bexar County Juvenile Probation Facility ($29 Million), Del Valle Ninth Grade Center and Opportunity center ($27 Million), James Masters Elementary School ($16 Million), and Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (Neches and 5th Street).

Sam currently serves on the Dean’s Advisory Council at the UT Civil Engineering Department and at the UT Architectural School. In the spirit of giving back to the University, Sam and Hema have set up the Tucker Hudson Kumar Presidential Fellowship for CEPM graduate students.

Michael M. Parker, M.S., 1987

Bankruptcy partner with the international law firm of Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P., the largest law firm in Texas. Michael is board certified in both Business Bankruptcy Law and Consumer Bankruptcy Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS). Michael was chosen as a “Top Lawyer” by Corporate Counsel magazine and since 2005 has been voted a “Texas Super Lawyer” in the bankruptcy area by his peers in Texas Monthly.

After obtaining his master’s degree in CEPM, Michael also graduated from UT Austin with a J.D. and an M.B.A. in 1993. He worked as an engineer and project manager in Dallas from 1987 to 1989. From 1993 to 1995, Michael was a briefing attorney for the Honorable Ronald B. King, United States Bankruptcy Judge (now Chief) for the Western District of Texas, and during law school served as a law clerk at the Texas Supreme Court for the Honorable John Cornyn (Justice, now a U.S. Senator) and the Honorable Lloyd Doggett (Justice, now a U.S. Congressman).

Akira Iwabuchi, M.S., 1991

Mr. Akira Iwabuchi is a project manager of Kajima Corporation, a Tokyo-based ENR top-ranked global contractor. He is currently leading his team for the heavy civil construction of a power plant repowering project in Singapore, under a Japanese EPC consortium.

He joined Kajima in 1982, just after he graduated from the University of Tokyo with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. In 1989, the company gave him a chance to study the CEPM at the University of Texas at Austin for a master’s degree, which he received two years later under the advice of Dr. O’Connor.

He has completed three post-tensioned bridges so far in Japan and in Sri Lanka. His most well-known projects include: the Suez Canal cable-stayed bridge under which US aircraft carriers pass, Hong Kong’s Stonecutters Bridge previously the world’s longest cable stayed application, and the Dubai Metro that was recently opened for public use.

Major David A. Bruce, M.S., 2004

Major David A. Bruce is an instructor pilot in the USAF Reserves training both US and NATO pilots at Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training. He is also a commercial airline pilot.

While completing his master’s degree in CEPM, David worked with the Dallas District of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). He reduced the construction schedule for the IH-35/State Highway 121 interchange and developed an incentive program for consultants that provide plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) to TxDOT.

David’s CEPM thesis “A Proposed System for Evaluating Consultant PS&E Performance” provides a methodology to objectively evaluate and compare professional consultant performance prior to awarding new contracts. The methodology has been implemented by both TxDOT and the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Following CEPM graduation, Major Bruce returned to active duty and completed seven deployments to the Iraq and Afghanistan combat zones. He piloted a surveillance aircraft that uncovered numerous terrorist hideouts and insurgent support avenues leading directly to the capture of dozens of high value enemy combatants.
Class of 2010 Updates

Maria Benzekri (M.S.) – Maria is working in Paris, France for EDF analyzing and evaluating contractors’ bids | Anushree Dandriyal (M.S.) – Anushree now works for Bechtel Oil, Gas & Chemicals, Inc. in Houston as a Project Controls Engineer | Juan Du (M.S.) | Yashesh Gandhi (M.S.) – Yashesh works for CMG Construction Pvt. Ltd. in Mumbai, India as a Project Manager | Santiago Gonzalez (M.S.) – Santiago is in the Professional Development Program at BASF Corporation | Nitin Gulati (M.S.) | Carlos Martinez (M.S.) – Carlos is working in Peru as an Operation Manager Assistant at Cosapi | Thuy Nguyen (Ph.D.) | Patrick Ryan (M.S.) – Patrick is staying in the Austin and San Antonio area and working for the U.S. Air Force’s Planning, Design, and Construction Branch of the Health Facilities Division. He is a Health Facilities Officer | Daniel Vargas (M.S.) – Daniel moved to Houston where he is currently a Procurement Specialist for Bechtel | Li Wang (M.S.) – Li is continuing her studies by pursuing a Ph.D. here at U.T. | Bo Zhang (M.S.) – Bo works for Shimmick Construction out of their Irvine, CA office as a Field Engineer.

Graduate Student Organization Updates

For the Fall 2010 semester, the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) at CEPM organized academic and social events for students to interact with members from construction industry and academia.

The GSO was proud to host Steve Hutsell from the US Army Corp of Engineers for a Q&A session in which he talked about implementation of Building Information Modeling. Later in the semester, Major Patrick Suermann from the US Air Force Academy also presented his experience in using BIM for an Air Force Project. General Bud Ahearn was able to attend Major Suermann’s presentation, prior to his own presentation, entitled “Civil Engineering Profession—Leadership in Motion.” And just as in every Fall semester, incoming students were greeted with the traditional Welcome BBQ. All CEPM students and faculty gathered together at Simkins Lawn to enjoy burgers and hot dogs. For the Spring semester, new officers will continue to organize events for the CEPM community.

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

Visit our website:
http://www.caee.utexas.edu/dept/area/construction/construction.html

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

The Project Manager, Spring 2011 issue