Koshy Varghese is a Professor of Civil Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, India. He obtained his Undergraduate Degree in Civil Engineering at the College of Engineering Guindy, Anna University in 1986 and then joined the Graduate Program in Structural Engineering at UT Austin. He completed his Masters’ thesis under the supervision of Dr. Gregory Fenves in 1987. In 1988 he joined the CEPM Doctoral program with an interest to explore the area of Construction Automation and completed his dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Jim O’Connor. In addition to his research at CEPM, Koshy also worked with Bob Gloyd and Danny Quiroz to support the computing services of the department. After his doctorate, Koshy worked for a year with Dr. Richard Tucker and Charles McGinnis on a project for the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Koshy joined Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) in 1993 and was a key faculty responsible for establishing the graduate Construction Program at IITM. He is one of the pioneers of Construction Engineering and Management education and research in India and has made significant contributions to the growth of this discipline in the country. Today, the construction group at IITM works closely with several organizations in India to improve project delivery. Koshy has also mentored three successful start-ups with IITM alumni to meet the technology needs of the construction industry. Koshy is internationally recognized for his research in automation and computer integrated project delivery and is a member of the editorial board of leading journals in the area. He is a recipient of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) best paper award for Journal of Computing in Civil Engineering in 2011. He was conferred the Tucker-Hasagawa award in 2012 by International Association for Automation and Robotics in Construction (IAARC) for his contributions to Automation in Construction. The Project Management Institute (PMI) awarded him the Distinguished Scholar Award for 2012 for his research and practice based activities in the area of Project Management. He is currently the President of the International Association for Automation & Robotics in Construction.

Koshy is married to Annu, a UT-Austin alumna in Manufacturing Systems Engineering. They live in Chennai, India where Annu works as a design manager with a manufacturing firm. They have two children Ashwin and Nisha. In addition to spending time with family in Chennai, they enjoy travelling.
New CII Best Practices: Modularization and Advanced Work Packaging

The Construction Industry Institute (CII) has adopted two new “Best Practices” building on research with CEPM faculty. **Advanced Work Packaging** (AWP), a method of early planning and packaging work across the project lifecycle to support field execution, has been show to improve productivity by 25% and reduce project cost by 10%. Drs. O’Brien and Leite were the academics involved in the AWP research that led to this best practice. **Planning for Modularization** is a practice to maximize the benefits of off-site fabrication to meet project objectives and increase the chance of execution success. Both practices extend long-standing recommendations for front-end planning to more explicit consideration of construction needs. Dr. O’Connor was the academic lead in the research that led to this best practice.

Kudos to CEPM alumnus Sam Kumar and Journeyman Construction

Journeyman Construction recently ranked #1 in the Austin Business Journal’s Top Austin List of Ethnic Minority-Owned Businesses by revenue. Sam Kumar (MS 1992), is the President and founder of Journeyman Construction. The CEPM graduate started his construction company in 2001 with only two employees. Since then, the company has grown into a successful organization with over 100 employees and approximately $100 million in revenues.

ACE Mentor Program of Austin

High school students in the Austin area can now benefit from a nationwide program designed to introduce them to the wide range of career opportunities open to young people in the AEC industry. Wayne Crew, former Director of CII and now General Secretary of the National Academy of Construction, both located on the UT-Austin campus, is a member of the ACE –Austin Board of Directors and has been integral to the program and fundraising events in this inaugural year of the mentoring program. If you would like to learn more, visit their website at: http://wwwacementor.org/affiliates/texas/austin-tx/about-us/

Graduate Student Organization (GSO) Update

GSO has continued to host a variety of social and academic events throughout the semester. One of the most interesting events was the Resume Building Workshop in coordination with Spire Consulting Group, a proactive and forensic construction consulting firm based out of Austin.

CEPMers also had a number of social outings, and are currently setting up a team to participate in the intramural sports competition. Many of the CEPMers have attended GAIN (a Graduate and Industry Networking Event, organized by the Graduate Engineering Council) and the Engineering Career Expo. Like last year, GSO is planning to hold a CEPM Conference towards the end of the Spring semester, during which CEPM graduate students will have the opportunity to share their research with faculty and other graduate students within the program. Awards will be given to outstanding student research.

In December 2015, 9 MS and 1 PhD CEPM student graduated. Congratulations to all CEPM recent grads!

GSO Officers

President - Sara Alkayali Alalam
Vice President - Elie Mouannes
Treasurer - Akshaya L. Iyer
Director of Social Events - Sherif Koyess
Fundraiser - Katayoun Mokhtarzadeh
Sports Director - Carlos Alvarez

Please send alumni updates to: Fernanda.Leite@utexas.edu