

ENGINEER

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March 16 Section Meeting

Date: Tuesday,
March 16, 2004

Time:
5:45 pm Social
6:30 pm Dinner
7:30 pm Program

Location:
Greek Cusina
404 SW Washington St
Portland, OR 97204

Program:
Recent OHSU
Construction and
Project Management

Speaker:
Karl Schulz,
Vice President,
Ethos Development

Cost: \$25

Karl will provide an overview of the major new construction on the OHSU campus, including the Biomedical Research Building, Patient Care Facility Expansion, and new Parking Garage. The presentation will focus on project management and construction challenges associated with the complex sites, and the flexibility to interface with the proposed Tram project.

Mr. Schulz has been a licensed architect for
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CECOP Offers Opportunities to OSU Students By Ken Roley, Facilities Engineer, City of Salem Public Works Department

If you are like most engineers you still remember the fear, excitement, trepidation, and panic of your first real engineering job. But think what an advantage it would have been, if you had gotten your first experience as part of you college curriculum. As a result of a cooperative work experience program, that is just what is happening for a select group of civil engineering students at Oregon State University (OSU).

The Civil Engineering Cooperative Program (CECOP) is a joint partnership with area governmental agencies and consulting firms. This successful program has been in existence for over five years and is part of the

much larger Multiple Engineering Cooperative Program (MECOP) that has provided meaningful work experience to engineering students in 13 different disciplines for 25 years. Currently, the CECOP program has 14 member companies and places 35-40 students each year out of the approximately 220 junior and seniors in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Students apply for the program in the spring of their sophomore year. If they are selected for the program, they are chosen by the member companies and committed to two six-month internships: one during their junior year and one their senior year. If possible, students split their

internships between the government agencies and consulting firms. Each student is provided a "mentor" by the company, who helps guide and coach the student during his/her internship.

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Rachael Poole and Benjamin Linzy were CECOP interns for the City of Salem Public Works Department in 2003.

CECOP Opportunities *Continued from page 1*

This type of real work experience takes place in an environment where jobs and an intern's abilities are closely matched, according to Gary Petersen, MECOP/CECOP Program Director with the OSU College of Engineering. Students are screened, interviewed and prepared. Industry "mentors" are trained in how to work with the students. Both student and the company are repeatedly evaluated and adjustments made as the internship progresses. At the end of the internship, students provide feedback to peers about their successes, failures, and experiences.

Students, Petersen said, get work experience, learn their strong and weak points, make informed course selections, help pay for their education, are more motivated in class, and develop maturity beyond their years. Member companies provide feedback to the university curriculum, gain a pool of well trained engineers, get a healthy injection of youthful enthusiasm and a preview of potential employees in a real work setting. (In the 25-year history of the MECOP program, over 75% of the students are hired by one of the companies that they interned with when they graduate.) The university keeps its curriculum current, develops a bridge to industry, and provides an up-to-date educational experience for its students that wouldn't otherwise be possible in many fast changing professions. Clearly, the CECOP program is a win-win-win situation!

According to Gregg Thompson with CH2M Hill, "CECOP is a powerful cooperative program that provides great benefits for both the member companies and the students. After six months together, both the student and the company will know if there is long-term potential in an employment relationship. These are top-notch students that will impress you with the quality and quantity of their work. They are really value-added. And, I think it's important for each of us to provide opportunities in our profession for young engineers to develop an appreciation for the career they have chosen."

"I think what impresses me the most is the tremendous capabilities these students have", said Ken Roley, City of Salem Public Works Department. "The students are bright, energetic, and eager to learn. We have been involved in the CECOP program for four years, and haven't had a bad experience with any of our students. We have had students leading fish passage investigations, looking at alternatives for abandoning sewer pump stations, working with hydraulic computer models, and designing repairs to our sewer and storm drainage systems. The students get excellent work experience, earn money to help pay for their college education, and help us keep up with our work load", says Roley.

The CECOP program is supported by the member organizations and doesn't rely on any state funding. Currently, there simply are not enough member companies to provide positions to match the number of highly qualified students available. "There's not another program like this, period, and we would like to see the program continue to grow", said Petersen. It's not unrealistic to envision the CECOP program serving twice as many students within the next 5 years than it serves today.

Member companies include:

Brown and Caldwell	David Evans & Associates
CH2M Hill	Kennedy/Jenks Consultants
City of Eugene	Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH)
City of Portland	OBEC Consulting Engineers
City of Salem	Washington County
City of Stayton	W&H Pacific Inc.
Clark County	WRG Design, Inc.

Gary Petersen and other members of the board are available to visit with your organization if you are interested in learning more about the CECOP program. If you would like more information please contact Gary Petersen at (541) 737-3210 or you may email him at Gary.P.Petersen@orst.edu.