

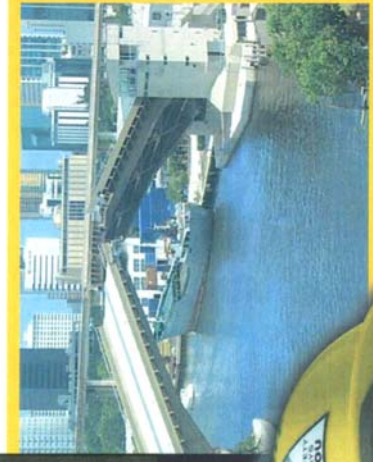
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430D Bishop-Favrao Hall (0156)  
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## Department of Building Construction Construction Outlook

Spring 2009 | Volume 15 | Issue 1

Bishop-Favrao Hall



### Spring 2009 Events

**February 17:** Construction Career Fair at Cassell Coliseum Social in the South End Zone Box Suite from 6-8pm  
Sponsored by R.W. Murray and Mid Eastern Builders (MEB)

**February 18:** Construction Career Fair Interview Day 8am-5pm at Cassell Coliseum

**March 16:** Industry Panel: Specialty Contractors  
Guests: Preston White of Century Concrete, Roger Quick of Tricon, Matt Corrigan of Pierce Associates, Eric Russell of Dominion Mechanical

**March 17:** Industry Day hosted by the Young Alumni Committee Squires Plaza All day

**April 22:** Capstone and Integrated Studio Presentation  
Bishop-Favrao Hall classroom 310

**April 23:** Myers-Lawson School of Construction Industry Board Meeting in Bishop-Favrao Hall from 11am -4pm

**April 23:** Myers-Lawson School of Construction Awards Banquet in Bishop-Favrao Hall 6-9pm

#### BC Faculty/ Staff

**540 Area Code**  
Dannette Beane  
231-1924  
Yvan Beliveau  
818-4602  
Ursula Halferty  
231-5017  
Ki-hong Ku  
818-6412  
Andrew McCoy  
230-3479  
Thom Mills  
818-4605  
Annie Pearce  
818-7732  
Georg Reichard  
818-4603  
Walid Thabet  
818-4604

#### Adjunct Faculty

Christine Fiori  
239-3389  
Michael Garvin  
808-9177  
Chema de la Garza  
231-5786  
Sunil Sinha  
231-6420  
Mike Vorster  
231-5009  
Deb Young  
230-7613



#### Message from Department Head

We continue to settle in our new building. We are now working diligently on developing our lab area. We have created two large work spaces to support faculty teaching and research; a woodshop and concrete testing facility and a virtual construction and prototyping lab. We are very thankful to the companies and organizations who donated most of the tools and all the concrete heavy testing equipment including, Virginia Ready-Mixed Concrete Association, and Branch & Associates Inc.

We are going through a search effort to hire a new faculty to replace Mike O'Brien's position. We are interviewing candidates this spring and should appoint a faculty at the assistant professor level by fall 2009. We plan to continue raising funds for a future new faculty position. The golf outing in fall 2008 was a very successful event and I plan to continue working with members of the Building Construction sub-committee of the MLSoC Board to coordinate future efforts for this goal.

We have redesigned our department website to give it a new look ([www.bc.vt.edu](http://www.bc.vt.edu)). Georg Reichard and Dannette Beane have worked very hard to make this happen.

The Faculty Fellows Industry Experience Program continues to grow. Learn more about the program inside.

The Alumni Trip to Egypt in early January 2009 was a wonderful experience. I am hoping to organize another trip in 2011 if there is interest. I hope more Alumni and friends can join. Please keep in touch.

Sincerely,  
Walid Thabet



Golf Tournament



Nationals MVP



Industry Day



Alumni Trip

## Golf Tournament and Wine Tasting

September 14-15, 2008



Student Matt Hanson, BC '08, putts on hole 9 with teammates from Clark Construction Co.

The Virginia Tech Myers-Lawson School of Construction Industry Board BC Subcommittee, made up of Building Construction Alumni, hosted the first annual Golf Tournament and Wine Tasting event to begin raising money for a new Building Construction tenure-track faculty position. This position will help alleviate the teaching load on existing faculty, provide an opportunity to teach more classes, and reduce faculty-student ratio for enhanced learning and interaction. All net proceeds generated from this event will be used to fund a new Building Construction faculty position. A named endowment sponsor is available for this professorship.

The event was a success with 70 golfers, 50+ sponsors, and \$41,000 raised. Thank you to the companies and students who helped to support this event. Special thanks goes to Brent Hellmandollar (BC '91, Hensel Phelps Construction Co.) for his leadership as well as committee members Tom Rathburn (BC '86, Tishman Construction), Gilford Edwards (BC '81, Plantation Sales), Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham (Snyder & Assoc.), Keith Maddox (BC '86, Vantage Construction), Walter Story (BC '67, The Story Group), Gary Hall (BC '69, The Whiting-Turner Contracting Co.), and Ken Taylor (W.M. Jordan Co.). Thanks is also given the student group Constructors Consortium for their many volunteer hours.

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS ANDREW MCCOY

### Innovation in Construction

The research of Andrew P. McCoy, (PhD, environmental design and planning, '08) assistant professor of building construction, focuses on the United States' construction industry, which is on the verge of becoming either a net importer or a net exporter of construction technologies. Innovation is commonly considered a critical element of healthy markets, the construction industry being no exception. The successful development of innovative products by small, limited-resource innovators in the United States is especially important to this balance. Recent failures of such entrepreneurial business ventures in the development of innovative products indicate potential benefits from a unique model that describes commercialization success.

McCoy's initial work suggests that a parallel development of the early processes for innovation commercialization is particularly important. Ongoing research will continue to validate the model and determine how additional products and innovative processes vary in their movement through the phases of commercialization. With greater attention, these processes could accelerate commercialization and increase successful product development, in turn reinforcing US industry technology adoption and development. McCoy will apply these concepts to identify specific barriers and accelerators for new areas of the industry, such as commercial construction, or types of innovation, such as sustainable or information technology (IT) products and processes. He has also started the development of a tool for measuring innovative behavior on construction sites.



McCoy is the 2008 recipient of the ARCC / King Student Medal for Excellence in Architectural + Environmental Design Research for his work in commercialization. McCoy's work is available for viewing in Volume 8, issue 2 of the journal *Construction Innovation* and Volume 12 of the *European Journal of Innovation Management*.



Winter Study Abroad  
December 27-January 13, 2009

Seven students traveled to Portugal and Spain for a seventeen day Study Abroad program this past winter break accompanied by faculty members Walid Thabet and Andrew McCoy. Preparatory meetings between the students and faculty identified areas of study including adaptive reuse, castle construction, construction safety, foreign business management policies, and green building and energies.

The group started in southern Portugal and worked their way north with extended stays in Portugal's three largest cities: Lisbon, Braga and Porto. Day trips were made to the coastal towns of Albufeiro, Lagos, and Playa da Foz to taste Portugal's extraordinary seafood cuisine and see some of Europe's most beautiful Atlantic beaches. Countryside towns of Evora, Marvao, Tomar, Almourol and Santiago allowed the group to visit castles, cathedrals, museums, soccer stadiums and wineries.

## ABC National Conference February



The 2008 ABC National Chairman Bill Fairchild (VT BC '76) presenting the 5th place trophy to BC students (from left) Mike Tato, Andrew Cosby, Andy Abrams, and Jake Althizer.

Professor Thom Mills formed a rookie team of BC majors to compete in the ABC Student Chapter Construction Competition in Honolulu, HI. The team was formed in mid January to compete in late February. In preparing for the competition, the group took over a conference room in Bishop-Favrao Hall working nights and weekends.

## Students Crowned National Pre-Construction Champions

A team of 6 students traveled to Sparks, Nevada in February to compete in the Associated Schools of Construction National Pre-Construction competition.

They competed against 13 other teams from universities across the country, such as Arizona State, California Polytechnic, and Brigham Young and finished in first place. In addition to their first place finish, team member Sheila Matarazzo received the MVP award for the competition.



Top Row (L-R): Jacob Brown, David Dubose, Brandon Knight, Jeff Simmons

Bottom Row (L-R): Sheila Matarazzo, Professor Christine Fiori, Lillian Miller

The first phase of the project was completed prior to the team's arrival in Nevada and was submitted at the initial meeting with the PCL judges the morning of the first competition day. Teams received their Phase II problem at 6:00am on the first day of competition and were required to submit their solutions at 10:30pm that evening. The competition problem involved a new office building and required the students to develop a plan for providing pre-construction services and a plan to negotiate a contract to provide construction. These included estimating, scheduling, value engineering and constructability reviews, as well as site logistics, equipment selection and a LEED credit evaluation.

The teams are required to present their solutions to the PCL judges the following day. The VT team presented strongly and their solution included an innovative fly-through of their site phasing plans. The PCL judges requested their presentation for use in their internal company training. This was quite a complement to our team. They proudly represented Virginia Tech and the Myers-Lawson School of Construction at this national competition.

This winter, the Department of Building Construction hosted its first Alumni Study Abroad trip to Egypt. The group traveled for 14 days seeing places like Cairo, Luxor and other key destinations.



## INDUSTRY DAY

Presented by



## Young Alumni Committee

The first Industry Day was held on campus on March 17, 2009.

It was an event aimed at promoting the field of construction to undecided and general studies students. Information booths on heavy civil, concrete, survey & site work, mechanical, electrical and plumbing were sponsored by several companies.

Thousand of students were exposed to



Motor Grader driving along drill field

the equipment and some interactive displays. Students had an opportunity to learn about the management, skill, innovation and education that it takes to obtain a career in construction. YAC members were fortunate enough to locate 17 generous sponsors! Thank you!

Visit [www.mlsoc.vt.edu/industryday](http://www.mlsoc.vt.edu/industryday) for more information on this successful event.