

Parson Construction Management Program
Faculty Response to
Five-Year Program Review Committee Report

April 25, 2023

1. Introduction

The consensus of the Parson Construction Management program faculty is that the report submitted by the program review committee is an accurate representation of the status of the program. The committee addressed the program's strengths, challenges and opportunities, and presented recommendations for improvement.

2. Strengths

- a. **Standard A: Mission:** (Response) Preparing students from diverse backgrounds for success in any sector of the construction industry has been and continues to be the mission focus. This was not always apparent given the previous lengthy mission statement that addressed a variety of unrelated thoughts. The concise and specific nature of the newly crafted mission statement that is easy for faculty, staff, and students alike to commit to memory, will encourage its use to guide the program when direction is needed.

- b. **Standard B: Curriculum:** (Response) The faculty has worked hard to address industry needs and to shore up potential deficiencies by making what we consider to be improvements to the program's curriculum. The program faculty were successful in making curriculum changes in the past year that were approved by the college and university curriculum committees. Those changes will take effect in the 2023-2024 catalog year. We will continue to review the curriculum and work with industry to address their needs.

- c. **Standard B: Curriculum:** (Response) All Construction Management classes are offered in the evenings on the Davis campus. Many of the support courses and general education courses are also taught in the evenings but most are taught on the Ogden campus. We will continue to work with and encourage the other programs who teach our support courses to provide additional evening sections as feasible as well as encourage them to offer courses at the Davis campus.

- d. **Standard C: Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:** (Response) The program coordinator specifically will closely monitor the results of the AC Exam and disseminate those results to the other faculty to determine whether there are deficiencies in any of the categories and discuss a course of action if so. NOTE: By way of clarification, the report mentions the “AIC” exam in a few places. The correct name is the “AC” exam, which stands for “Associate Constructor” as administered by “AIC”, which is the American Institute of Constructors.
- e. **Standard H: Results of Previous Program Review:** (Response) The program faculty and staff will monitor the results of the AC exam as it relates to traditional vs. non-traditional students to identify possible areas of weakness and also to make note of particular strengths. These results will be used to address whether curriculum modifications to specific courses are needed for either traditional or non-traditional students.
- f. **Standard E: Faculty:** (Response) Both full-time and adjunct faculty take great pride in being accessible to students and in sharing their extensive industry experience to help students learn practical applications to construction management along with textbook content.
- g. **Standard E: Faculty:** (Response) Program faculty have been and will continue to be active in working informally during the summer months and in some cases formally (sabbaticals or externships) during one of the main semesters with industry partners to remain current in their professions.
- h. **Standard H: Results of Previous Program Review:** (Response) Through the personal efforts of one of the program faculty, Jeremy Farner, as well as his leadership as the director of the Wadman Center for Excellence, an increase in the recruitment of traditional students has resulted benefitting the Parson CM program and industry alike.
- i. **Standard G: Relationships with External Communities:** (Response) The program will continue to work with the participating school districts in northern Utah to attract students to the construction industry and provide the generous scholarships offered.

3. Challenges/Opportunities

- a. **Standard B: Curriculum:** Concepts are taught before technology is introduced which is great for conceptual learning, however some discussion that industry would like certain software applications taught, but the program recognizes it’s hard to train on every software. The concern remains from industry that technology to enter the industry needs to be a competitive advantage for the students.

Response: The program faculty will discuss the timing of introducing technology in conjunction with the essential concepts. Together with the action items in section 4, Recommendations, faculty will seek input from industry partners to strike the appropriate balance between teaching the concepts and learning software. Recognizing that it's not feasible to learn multiple software programs during one semester, faculty and industry will also work to agree on which technology most closely satisfies the needs of industry.

- b. **Standard D: Academic Advising:** Some general education support courses such as math and physics create difficulty for some non-traditional students to register during the day and often can delay graduation timelines.

Response: Faculty will explore options to assist non-traditional students by discussing potential tutoring options for Math and Physics. The Physics department has made accommodations for CM students for an evening section each spring semester and has provided preferential registration. The faculty will reach out to the Math department to ask if similar accommodations can be made and also to discuss further with the Physics department whether additional evening sections can be offered during the summer and fall semesters.

- c. **Standard E: Faculty:** The program has a significant number of adjunct professors, and their industry experience is beneficial to students; however, compensation for adjuncts is low. The concern for adjuncts remaining committed given compensation concerns given that they are a fundamental pillar of the program support.

Response: The program and department have been the beneficiaries of generous donations that among other things provides funding for student scholarships, assists in student recruitment, and supports faculty for attendance at conferences. The faculty will discuss within the department, college, and also from development, for potential fundraising methods of augmenting adjunct pay such as possibly setting aside endowment money to ensure the quality of the adjuncts remains high.

4. Recommendations

- a. Recommend that the Advisory Board (IAB) take an active role in course content and advise on program technology. We recommend the following two areas:
 - 1. **Standard F: Program Support:** Course Review: IAB review the syllabi for each class and suggest areas of improvement to keep pace with industry trends.

Response: The program faculty will meet with the Industry Advisory Board executive committee during the 2023-2024 academic year and together develop an action plan for a formal review by the IAB of the syllabi for each course and provide its recommendations for improvement.

2. **Standard B: Curriculum:** Technology Review: IAB review the technology offered to students in the classroom compared to what is used in the industry. The IAB can provide valuable insights into the best technology options to use in the classroom, ensuring that students are prepared for their future careers. Therefore, involving industry experts in deciding which technology to use in the classroom is advised to assist in selecting the best options.

Response: Similar to the previous item, the program faculty will meet with the Industry Advisory Board executive committee during the 2023-2024 academic year and develop a plan whereby all IAB members representing the various Construction Sectors will have input. Proposed items to discuss will be the current technology being used, the suggested balance of immersion into the technology with an understanding of fundamentals (e.g. understanding planning and scheduling vs. knowing how to run scheduling software), industry standards, and looking over the horizon to future trends.

- b. **Standard B: Curriculum:** The lack of accreditation may pose a continued concern. The program should pursue an appropriate external accreditation to replace the past accreditation that has lapsed. (Standard C: Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment).

Response: Two of the program faculty will attend the annual ACCE conference in July 2023. Faculty will meet during the fall semester 2023 and develop a schedule to follow for reaccreditation. Faculty have communicated with the ACCE President and a peer mentor from the University of Washington has been assigned to assist with the accreditation effort.

5. Conclusion

During the last five years, the Parson Construction Management Program successfully navigated the retirement of its long-time program coordinator, its longest tenured faculty, and the instructor who was the department chair. The Parson Construction Management Department became the Construction and Building Sciences Department as the Building Design and Construction program and the Interior Design Program joined the Parson Construction Management program. Enrollments have remained steady despite the challenges presented by a global pandemic that required all courses to be offered in an online or virtual format. Coming out of the pandemic, the increased ability to offer more online and virtual

options greatly benefitted the students by giving them the ability to take certain courses concurrently. This has resulted in allowing them to graduate sooner given the short four-hour window in which to offer the courses in the evenings. Feedback from the industry partners who employ the students has been positive as well.

The program has experienced positive increases in the number of female and ethnic minority students and we look forward to continued increases. The program has traditionally catered to the non-traditional working professional, but the increase in traditional students has been a positive trend. We appreciate the service provided by the program review committee in making recommendations for potential areas of improvement. We look forward to improving our engagement with the Industry Advisory Board and partnering with them in providing the students with the best possible training in the technologies used in the industry. We also look forward to becoming reaccredited so students and industry alike will be assured of the continuous improvement associated with the internal and external review of the accreditation effort.