

Student Team Consulting for Construction Industry Clients

Construction Student Team Consulting (CSTC) is part of a course, CEE 530 - Construction Professional Practice Seminar, that is required of all students in the Master of Engineering (MEng) in Construction Engineering and Management at the University of Michigan. CSTC gives construction graduate students experience in interacting with the construction industry to apply student knowledge to real industry problems. CSTC also helps industry clients to identify problems they face and to provide fresh insights and solutions that can improve their practices. Most university construction programs have internships, co-op programs, and/or summer work programs. However, the CSTC at the University of Michigan is the first formal student team consulting program in construction.

CSTC projects were initiated in the Fall Semester of 1994. In its first four years, CSTC teams have completed 19 projects for nine industry clients. Professor Robert I. Carr created the Construction Professional Practice Seminar and CSTC, and he has recruited its industry clients and supervised the work of all student teams.

Students take CEE 530 in two successive semesters, starting in either September or January. In their first semester, students form teams of two to four members. Each team selects and contacts an industry client and meets with the client to identify a problem on which to work. The team then develops a project plan. In the second semester, each team performs the work in its project plan to solve its client's problem. Each team prepares a report for the client and makes an oral presentation to the client and to the Construction Professional Practice Seminar. Students are universally enthusiastic about CSTC and consider it a major benefit of their graduate education. Clients' implementation of student team products, and repeated participation by clients and growth in the number of client candidates prove the success of the CSTC program.

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