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National Steering Committee of CIM Announces Program Expansion to South Dakota State University

Alexandria, VA. (Dec. 15, 2020) – The National Steering Committee (NSC) for the Concrete Industry Management (CIM) program is pleased to announce that South Dakota State University's (SDSU) Jerome J. Lohr College of Engineering will soon offer a degree in CIM.

The announcement comes after a six-month selection process by the NSC and the North Central Region (NCR) patrons for the CIM program – a business intensive program that awards students with a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in Concrete Industry Management. The NSC and the NCR patron groups are combining resources to provide approximately \$1.5 million to SDSU over five years to develop the degree program and assist in employing a CIM program director, recruiter, and laboratory manager.

"We are excited to be selected as the university to fill the needs of the concrete industry, not only in South Dakota, but throughout the entire North Central Region," said SDSU President Barry Dunn. "The program supports our mission as a land-grant university of addressing workforce needs in the communities of South Dakota and beyond. These Jackrabbits will become knowledgeable in concrete technology and techniques, capable of managing people and systems, skilled in technical sales and expected to advance to industry leadership positions."

“We are pleased to welcome SDSU to the family of CIM universities,” said NSC chairman Michael Schneider. “This partnership will be a great asset to the CIM program and concrete industry. We look forward to a long relationship with this exceptional university.”

“The concrete industry recognized the need for the CIM program in the Midwest,” said NCR patrons chairman Thor Becken. “Once the decision was made to develop a CIM program in the region, it took two years of planning and gaining industry member support before a search committee began interviewing various universities about potential interest in offering a CIM degree.”

The CIM program provides graduates with both technical knowledge and management expertise to be hired into entry- or middle-level management positions. “The goal of CIM is to develop the future leaders of the concrete industry,” said Becken. “This is important because our industry, like many, is aging. Higher-level managers are starting to retire and we’re looking for the next generation of leaders to lead the concrete industry.”

“The selection committee, made up of NSC and NCR members, overwhelmingly agreed that SDSU was the most logical and best choice for us,” said Eugene Martineau, CIM NSC Executive Director. “SDSU’s prior experience with public/private partnerships, combined with how the Lohr College of Engineering stresses developing programs that engage industry needs, were critical in our decision making. It was obvious that working with industry is not something new to the university. During our visit to SDSU, it was evident that the president and provost down through the dean and department heads were all-in for establishing a CIM program.”

“The CIM degree is a really nice fit for us,” said Teresa Hall, who leads SDSU’s Department of Construction and Operations Management. “If you look at a Venn diagram, you have construction management and operations management and the CIM degree comes up between the two of them, so it works,” Hall said. “While the degree is very focused on a particular material, it’s one that goes hand in hand with construction since concrete is used in virtually every form of construction.”

“We are in an interesting place within Lohr College and the School of Design,” said Hall. “We have everything on the design-build continuum. There are a lot of great things happening at SDSU and there is no reason this degree program shouldn’t flourish.”

According to Art Thompson, NCR site selection committee chairman, there were multiple career openings last year for every CIM graduate. “These jobs include substantial starting salaries as well as full complements of benefits. For any student who is considering a career in a construction related industry, I would highly encourage them to learn more about the CIM program.”

The CIM Program

Recognizing the need for people with enhanced technical, communication and management skills, the CIM program was developed in 1995. The individuals graduating from this program will have the skill set necessary to meet the growing demands of the progressively changing concrete industry of the 21st century. It is a business intensive program, providing solid management skills that can be used in any industry, but has been developed specifically for the concrete industry. The program gives students many advantages including entering the concrete workforce with exposure to the industry early in their careers, unlike others coming in with generic business degrees.

The goal of the program is to produce broadly educated, articulate graduates grounded in basic business management, who are knowledgeable of concrete technology and techniques and are able to manage people and systems as well as promote products or services related to the concrete industry. It entails a broad range of courses, from English and history to science and mathematics. A series of required business courses such as finance, marketing, management and business law are also taken throughout the length of the program. The concrete-specific courses teach the fundamentals of concrete, properties and testing, concrete construction and more. All these courses utilize practical case studies and an internship to make sure the student obtains real-world experience essential to starting a successful career. Additional opportunities for growth include on-campus socials and other organized events providing industry networking and professional development.

About CIM

Receiving tremendous support from the concrete industry, the CIM program is the first of its kind in United States – a four-year Bachelor of Science degree in Concrete Industry Management. The need for such a program was recognized in 1995 and was put into action by the concrete industry. The end-result was a partnership between the concrete industry and Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) to develop the CIM program, implementing it with its first two students in 1996. Available at MTSU, California State University, Chico, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Texas State University, the program has been successful for both the industry and the graduates. To learn more about the program, visit www.concretedegree.com.

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