

Practitioner Involvement in an Undergraduate Engineering Program
Kunchi Madhavan* and Eugene McGinnis**

ABSTRACT

Practitioner participation in a small undergraduate Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) program is discussed. Starting from the freshmen year and ending with the capstone design course in their senior year, practitioners interact with the students, giving them professional advice, internship opportunities, and eventually offering the students their first job.

During the freshmen year at Christian Brothers University (CBU), we offer a freshman course: Introduction to Civil and Environmental Engineering. In this course, practitioners are invited to give lectures on the different areas of civil engineering: structural engineering, geotechnical/ geo-environmental engineering, environmental/water resources engineering, and traffic/transportation engineering. The practitioners discuss job opportunities in each area of engineering and explain exactly what engineers do in each area of engineering. Also, we have a panel of CBU Engineering alumni visit this class to answer students' questions and concerns. As part of the Introduction to Civil and Environmental Engineering class, freshmen students are paired with practitioners from industry, many of whom are CBU alumni. The practitioners will hopefully become mentors for freshmen students as they progress towards their degrees.

During the sophomore and junior years, we continue to invite practitioners to give lectures on topics of interest in some classes. In the junior project course, practitioners act as project advisors to student groups. During the senior year, practitioners continue to advise student groups in their projects.

The CEE faculty occasionally accompany the students to the local American Society of Civil Engineers' (ASCE) monthly meetings. This gives the students an additional opportunity to meet local practicing engineers. The ASCE students have made presentations to the West Tennessee Branch regarding their performance at the regional

conferences. ASCE students also participate in the Tennessee Section meetings each year and compete against ASCE student members from other Tennessee universities.

* Professor; ** Assistant Professor and Chairman
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Christian Brothers University
650 East Parkway South
Memphis, TN, 38104-5581