Construction Management grads go right to work

For the second consecutive year, every graduate of Sacramento State’s Construction Management program landed a job.

The 32 men and women who wore commemorative tasseled hard hats at their May 25 Commencement at Sleep Train Arena almost immediately traded them in for honest-to-goodness industrial hard hats – and went to work managing job sites around Northern California and elsewhere.

“I attribute it to reputation of our program, which is getting more attention,” says Mikael Anderson, chair of the Department of Construction Management. “Companies that haven’t looked to us in the past are looking now. The industry is turning around. The economy is better. There is a lot of job placement in the Bay Area, and the Sacramento market is looking positive. Forty percent of our grads were placed locally.”

Sacramento State’s four-year Construction Management program is, at age 40, one of the oldest in California. Last year, it became a full-fledged academic department within the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and it recently was reaccredited by the American Council for Construction Education.

The University’s CM students consistently win top honors at national competitions, and their efforts are supported by an advisory board made up of industry leaders – the nonprofit Sacramento Construction Management Educational Foundation – that raises money for scholarships, special events and travel expenses to student competitions. Faculty, alumni and industry representatives coach the students each fall to prepare them for the springtime contest season.

Ten percent of the 200 students currently enrolled in Construction Management are women. Three women were in the spring 2013 graduating class.

Sac State’s CM graduates go on to careers in the general construction industry, managing job sites and working as estimators, pre-construction managers, project superintendents and project control specialists. Mechanical, electrical and other specialty contractors who traditionally bring their management teams up through the trades “have begun to recognize the value of Sacramento State’s CM graduates, hiring 25 percent of them in the past two years,” Anderson says.
The CM graduates have played a major role in high-profile projects around Northern California, including Levi’s Stadium, the new home of the San Francisco 49ers under construction in Santa Clara. They also managed such projects as Terminal B at Sacramento International Airport and Sutter Health’s Anderson Lucchetti Women’s and Children’s Center in midtown Sacramento. They worked on 14 of the last 15 construction projects at Sacramento State, including The WELL health and recreation center, Hornet Bookstore, Broad Fieldhouse and two parking structures.

For many years, all of Sac State’s CM graduates landed high-paying jobs right out school. That began to change in 2006-07, when the economy faltered and construction projects either were placed on hold or never started. And now, with any luck, the tradition of 100 percent job placement is back on track.

“There aren’t many academic departments that can make that claim,” Anderson says. “We are producing the right number and quality of graduates to meet the market demand.”

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