

David Smith

Written by: Kira Gangbin

David graduated from Fresno State with his Bachelor's in Construction Management in 2010.

Kira Gangbin: What have you enjoyed the most about the Construction Management program?

David Smith: I really enjoyed and appreciated the vast amount of learning opportunities through varying subjects and classes that the CM program offered. It helped provide a wide range of knowledge that facilitated a smooth entry into the professional construction management field.

Kira: What experiences, knowledge, or skills have you learned/ been able to apply in professional work setting coming from this department?

David: One of the most realistic experiences that was offered was participation in the ASC Construction Management Competition in Reno. It gives students a hands on opportunity to experience what the planning and bidding processes are really like in the industry.



Kira: What is your favorite memory from the Construction Management Program?

David: My favorite memory was my Jr. year when I MC'd the CM Banquet. I was really nervous at first to have to talk in front of all of the industry representatives. After realizing their true support for the program and interest in hiring students for professional careers, I was able to overcome the nervousness and host a great, fun event! That was the night one of my friends that had already graduated from the program and was working for a large firm asked for my resume. He ended up helping me get an internship. That internship led to full time employment with one of the largest and arguably the best general contractors in the nation.

Kira: Who was your favorite professor?

David: It is very hard to really pick a favorite as all of the professors were very passionate and personable, but I would have to say Professor Brad Hyatt was the most influential on my career. He really cares about the program and students and has real life experience in the field to help prepare students for their professional career.

Kira: Did you do an internship? If so, where? Also, what advice do you have regarding internships?

David: Yes, I interned with McCarthy Building Company my junior year and ended up hiring on full time with them once I graduated. My advice is to secure internships as early as possible and do not limit yourself to a specific company or specialty in the field. Be persistent and apply for internships with as many companies as you can, even if it means leaving town for the summer. Trust me, it will go a long way when you graduate and are looking for a job. It provides the best learning opportunities for people entering the professional marketplace.

Kira: What was your job title when first starting your Construction Management career?

David: My first job title was a Project Engineer

Kira: How far has your career grown?

David: Over the past eight years I grew from a project engineer to a senior project engineer to an assistant project manager then to a project manager with McCarthy. I now work for the City of Fresno and oversee all capital improvement projects for the PARCS department.

Kira: Who inspired you to pursue this career and why?

David: Honestly I happened to stumble into this major and career while I was in college. I started as an Ag Business major and then decided to switch to Civil Engineering. While taking the Civil major I decided to start taking CM classes as a potential minor or double major option. Once I started the CM classes I realized that I enjoyed the CM field much more than the engineering design field and ended up taking way more CM classes than civil classes each semester which led me to getting the CM degree.

Kira: What did you want to be when you were little? Has it always involved Construction Management?

David: Not really. When I was little I thought I wanted to be a doctor. I did end up building hospitals for the first 8 years of my career though, so I guess I ended up in a career somewhat related to my childhood dream...

Kira: Where do you think Construction Management Program will be in the next ten years?

David: I hope that the program will continue to grow and end up being the #1 CM program in the nation!

Kira: What is your favorite part of the job?

David: I really enjoy the people that you end up meeting. It is also remarkable how no day, week, month or year is exactly the same. The industry really keeps you on your toes and provides learning opportunities every single day.

Kira: Are you a father with a family, how do you manage your work-life balance?

David: I am not a parent but I am married. You really have to just stay focused at work and cut yourself off at a reasonable time. If you think you're getting into an 8-5 industry you are sadly mistaken, however, most employers do respect their employees personal lives and do not put too much pressure on having to work excessive hours. There will be times that you end up working a 12 or even 14 hour day, but it won't be every day. It's just part of the nature of this busy and fast paced industry. Typically, as time progresses, you end up getting a better handle on your responsibilities and you learn how to prioritize tasks and manage time and expectations well.

Kira: Is there anything about your Fresno State experience that makes you stand out?

David: I was president of the Students in Construction club for one year. This really stood out when I was competing for entry level full time positions. It distinguished me from other applicants as I had some real life experience with leading a team and organizing events.