ECU Construction Management to launch new infrastructure concentration in 2011

The Department of Construction Management in the College of Technology and Computer Science is looking toward the future. In the spring of 2011, the department will add to its curriculum, an infrastructure concentration that provides training in highway, bridges, pipelines, and heavy civil construction.

The proposed concentration is part of growing trend in the field of construction. The nation's infrastructure system is aging and will be in need of major rehabilitation over the next 20-30 years. According to reports from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the aging and over burdened highway, road, and bridge infrastructure threatens our economy and quality of life in every town, city, and state in the nation. Based on research and discussions with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Dr. David Watkins, interim chair, and the faculty decided it was time to add to what will be a crucial step in the construction market.

"We want our students to be able to compete for those national and international projects," says Danny Morton, instructor and one of the architects of the program. "In order to compete, they will need to have infrastructure and/or heavy civil construction knowledge."

The objective is to teach students the fundamentals of infrastructure construction using effective and efficient core modules with five courses, two courses already in place and three to be developed.

One of the major components of the infrastructure concentration will be the projected Construction Research and Field Teaching Laboratory (CRAFT). The CRAFT lab will provide a learning environment in which students learn construction and management skills in an applied environment for commercial, residential and heavy highway/infrastructure concentrations. The CRAFT Lab will supply the teaching and research initiatives important for preparing students entering this emerging marketplace.

"Working in conjunction with our industry partners such as Barnhill Contracting, Gregory Poole Equipment, Caterpillar, S-T Wooten, and Barrett Paving, our students will be well positioned for jobs immediately after graduation." says Dr. David White, dean, of the College of Technology and Computer Science.