



ARDR/ARCH - Advisory Committee Minutes, Fall 2025

Date: 11/21/25

Number of Attendees: 18

Called to order: 2:07 pm

Adjourned: 3:42 pm

Chairperson: Bruce Gunderson

Recorder: Katherine Meagher

Location: ATC 108/Zoom

Members present from industry: Kent Beirle- Equiterra, David Edwards- SMPC, Serri Grube- Valley High School, Bruce Gunderson- LANL, Mike May- Future Focused Education, Justin Milburn- FBT, Melodee Saiz- APS, Kyle Sanchez- Pattison ID (online), Meg Tokunaga- Future Focused Education (online)

Members present from CNM: Joseph Andrade- Instructor, Dani Belvin- Associate Dean, Christina Gilroy- CNM Advisement, Samuel Kerwin- AVS, Katherine Meagher- ATA, David Miertschin- Instructor, Margaret Ortega- WCS, Roderigo Padilla- Associate Dean (online), Karin Pitman- EMPO

Next scheduled meeting: TBD

I. **Welcome/Introductions:** Bruce started the meeting at 2:07 pm. Introductions were had.

II. **Minutes:** Minutes from Fall 2024 were approved.

III. Reports from Industry Members:

Bruce facilitated discussion with industry members, wanting to get feedback from them ahead of CNM updates. He asked each member to keep the following questions in mind: Are you hiring people? Are you able to find people to hire? How and where are you looking? What are you looking for when it comes to experience, i.e. what skills are important to you?

Bruce started the conversation by focusing on his experiences at Los Alamos National Labs (LANL), where they are seeing a variety of skill levels and needs. They are currently hiring and are looking for designers and drafters, especially those who are experienced with architecture and have skill levels in all related disciplines. They also have a need for students that understand how to use industry-standard 3D tools. LANL looks for recruits all over the United States, but they do prefer hiring locally, especially from Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and the like. He stated that their most successful recruits are the ones that take initiative, have great verbal and written communication skills, can balance multiple projects, and can meet deadlines. They also prefer candidates that can use Cloud capabilities, navigate a management system, can train others and pass on information, especially when working with VIM. LANL is also looking for people who have experience with LIDAR. The idea is to use VIM and LIDAR to capture their current facilities and use that as a technical baseline, so that knowledge would be extremely helpful.

Justin stated that FBT tries to maintain at least two part-time students in their office, saying they usually get interns. They do their best to give these students experience, especially as most hiring positions will require about 3-5 years of experience, making it hard for students to get into entry-level positions. They hire based on how people present themselves professionally and prefer strong verbal and written communication. They also judge applicants based on



School of Skilled Trades & Arts

how organized their portfolios are as this reflects how much they care about their work and demonstrates their attention to detail. They also value candidates that are self-starters, will ask questions, and have great time management skills. They look for people all over the country, but also look at internal references, so networking is still highly important, especially with Albuquerque's small architecture community. VIM skills are important, as is experience with Revit, as this is the industry standard. They still use some CAD, but it's in very select circumstances.

Kent said that Equiterra has the same needs that Justin and Bruce mentioned, and they are always looking for talent. They are having trouble finding people with even basic professional skills like timeliness and verbal/written communication. They have been working with Mike to get interns and have found success in that realm. He thinks they need to be hiring at a higher level instead of focusing on coaching, as those people tend to leave, but still feels the obligation to train these young workers. Equiterra is no longer utilizing AIA (American Institute of Architects) job boards for posting and have found that they have the most success with Craigslist. They value motivation, passion, and a diversity in tool skills (being able to draw, model, use 3D tools). He has found that it has also been useful to train new workers on a refresher course to help them with their skills. He has been impressed with CNM's students and has been glad to see students come to his business with inquiries. However, he has noticed that many students are lacking some basic vocabulary skills that are important to the field. As an example, he talked about one student worker that did not understand the term 2x4. This does seem to be changing as of now, but having further vocabulary exposure wouldn't hurt.

Kyle spoke about his experience as a former student. He now works for Pattison ID, working primarily in the Auto industry. He said that he uses Revit for everything and that this gives his modeling pin-point accuracy. CNM's program helped him immensely when adjusting to the workplace, especially in terms of exposure to Revit. Pattison is currently growing fast and is constantly looking for more workers. They are looking at possibly utilizing UNM and CNM's internship programs as they move forward and could help train these interns on Revit to get them away from AutoCAD. They also utilize Dynamo and LIDAR in addition to Revit.

Kent asked about the intention of the ARDR and Pre-ARCH program. Joseph explained that ARDR focuses on training members of technical staff and that Pre-ARCH prepares students to finish their Architecture degrees through UNM. He spoke more on his curriculum and teaching methods, saying that his class gives students experience with AutoCAD, Revit, and Autodesk. This includes getting students ready for the Revit certification test. They also work on vocabulary and construction, and he gives them time to teach each other the content, helping them build their training skills. He also mentioned that they get experience in modeling and building constraints and will use AutoCAD to facilitate a better understanding of Revit as well as promoting problem solving skills.

Serri spoke on her experience with high school students and the tools they are using in class. She said that she sees older students using AI tools, but younger students are still figuring things out. Some students don't even know what they don't know- they are still getting exposure to a lot of this knowledge and don't really know what they could be lacking. She has been teaching student professional skills, telling them that she will be operating as their boss and grading them on their performance, including responding to their emails with professional communication skills. She said that it is important for students to get exposure to the software that industry is utilizing, but that this is hard with her limited access at this education level. She is currently trying to generate as much interest as she can and drive home architectural vocabulary.

Bruce asked about the gameification of the industry, speaking about how many people are trying to bring in AR/VR systems and apply gaming technology as a starting point for workers. Serri agreed that games are extremely influential, especially for the younger generation, but advised that we keep in mind how much younger students absorb of their surroundings. If there is a way to blend their interest with the real world, this could be something to investigate.



School of Skilled Trades & Arts

Justin took a moment to appreciate CNM and our students, saying that the CNM students that come to FBT are very well-prepared. However, he noticed that many students seem to have a hard time shifting from a technology-based approach to the theory-based approach that UNM fosters. He also mentioned that UNM uses Rhino, a program that FBT primarily uses as well, and CNM students don't tend to get exposure to that program until they transfer to UNM. FBT primarily uses Rhino for early schematics and uses it daily, promoting work with form instead of accuracy. He also emphasized the importance of having a well-rounded worker that can work with multiple moving parts, sketch, and do field work. They really value workers with a better grasp of all their available tools. David and Joseph spoke on how they are very much limited by the school timeframe and student motivation.

Mike discussed enrollment in the program and stated that while the program is doing well, the current enrollment is still below what is preferred. He noted the struggle at capturing younger people earlier and said that Future Focused is trying to work with high schools to build pathways. They are also looking at teaming up with industry to build a sort of bootcamp to equip students with skills to step into industry and gain their interest in the subject. They are currently working with a couple of firms to design this semester-long experience and are aligning it with Serri's program to give students more opportunities post-graduation.

Melodee spoke about APS' focus on career pathways and their efforts to bring skilled trades and arts into schools. One of these efforts is the Albuquerque Academies at three different high schools. These academies will be promoting engagement in trades & arts and supporting students in career pathways. She also spoke on the partnership APS has with United Way to speak with more middle schoolers, especially 8th graders. In the spring, United Way held career exploration events at Van Buren, Hays, and Wilson middle schools, working with over 300 8th graders and community employers. More schools should be added to this effort with each year. These events should help get students engaged with trades & arts and give them an idea of what it is like to be work ready and how to conduct oneself. Please share all productions and events with Melodee so she can share this information with APS high schools. She also invited committee members to be speakers for career events!

IV. New Business Margaret talked about internships and employment through WCS. Employers are encouraged to post their job openings on HireCNM - our free job board. She also mentioned that the division offers subsidized funding for internships, allowing employers to pay students a minimum of \$15 an hour and receive a reimbursement of \$12 an hour. The time period is 10 - 20 weeks, dependent on the number of hours the student is available. Additionally, she noted the importance of Work-Based learning opportunities for students. She also outlined documents required by employers as well as requiring a mid-term and final check-in with the student intern. There will also be a career fair in April 2026. She also spoke about a colleague that runs job shadowing, so job shadow opportunities are available!

Karin spoke on how EMPO trains project managers. They have been considering inviting students to these training meetings for them to build their skills.

V. Adjournment: Joseph stated that he is glad to hear a lot of the success coming from the program! He thanked David for his vision, leadership, and years of work developing, refining, and advancing the program—David deserves the lion's share of the credit for the accomplishments of both ARDR and Pre-Architecture. Bruce also recognized David for his work. David also spoke on their AIS group and how it has been off and on due to the program's term schedules. The current schedule and student turnover makes it hard to keep a president of the student group. He also spoke on the importance of taking students on field trips to different firms, as it gives them an idea of what to expect when they enter the workplace.

Bruce stated that, moving forward, it would be preferred to start our meetings with industry reports as this conversation was very productive!



Adjourned at 3:42 pm