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INDUSTRY REQUIREMENT GAP ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

Parya Nickbeen *University of New Mexico - Main Campus*

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Dr. Vanessa Valentin

Dr. Amy Ballard

INDUSTRY REQUIREMENT GAP ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABLE

CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

by

PARYA NICKBEEN

B.S. IN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

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INDUSTRY REQUIREMENT GAP ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

by

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B.S. in Industrial Engineering, 2011

M.S in Civil Engineering, 2018

ABSTRACT

As sustainable construction becomes a standard necessity in the construction industry, construction engineering and management programs seek to integrate sustainable construction concepts and skills into their degree programs. The aim of this research is to identify industry-required competencies and recognize the possible gaps between industry skills demands and the education provided by academia for sustainable construction technologist jobs. In this study, industry requirements for sustainable construction technologist (mid-level) positions were identified through the analysis of job advertisements, literature review, job analysis (i.e., Developing a Curriculum-DACUMprocess), and surveys. Results from the DACUM process provided a categorization of 4 main duties and 60 tasks for the job description of sustainable construction technologist. Identified tasks were verified by conducting a survey asking about the importance level of each task and how they could be learned better (either in the job position or in a college course). Thirteen professionals working in industry participated in the survey. An in-depth review of Community College curricula was performed to compare the different programs and determine potential gaps between industry requirements and academia-offered skills. The most critical gaps identified include maintaining standard green specifications, preparing green materials lists, and researching green certifications. The identified gaps

and requirements could provide educational programs with essential knowledge about industry expectations for sustainable construction technologists while they develop and implement sustainable construction curricula. The results of this study are applicable for academia to provide students with the most recent industry-required knowledge in order for students to quickly transition to industry after graduation.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The sustainable (green) construction market in the United States (US) has generated \$167.4 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 2011 to 2014 and supported more than 2.1 million jobs (Booz et al., 2015). According to the same report, it is expected that from 2015 to 2018, sustainable construction will generate an extra \$303.4 billion in GDP and support 3.9 million jobs in the US. The size of the green building market in the US increased consistently from 3 to 81 billion dollars in nine years from 2005 to 2014 (Statistia, 2016). These statistics show the large economic impact that green building has and is expected to have on GDP in the US. This impressive economic impact shows the industry interest in this field and the increased need in the workforce for skilled graduates who can perform the jobs created by sustainable construction. To satisfy the industry demand, some universities, colleges, and institutes have started to include sustainable construction programs in their curriculums. Although there are many construction engineering, construction management, civil engineering, and architectural degree programs in the US, only a few colleges offer sustainable construction course content. For the new jobs created by sustainable construction, it is necessary for academics to have a common understanding of the dynamically changing content, principles, knowledge, and skills required by the industry to fit these types of jobs. In addition, as the benefits of green building continue to change the Architecture/Engineering/Construction (AEC) industry and as the number of green projects rises in the United States, more construction firms are gaining experience with this new way of building and changing their expectations for new hires from degreegranting construction programs. (Ahn & Pearce, 2007)

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Insufficient skills for a specific occupation cause skill mismatch, which is costly for employers, workers, and society. Therefore, matching skills with jobs is a priority concern for policy makers. Although a large part of these difficulties is related to skills gaps and training deficits in specific sectors, occupations, and regions, many of them can be covered in courses offered by academia.

As a response to this concern, this research provides an approach to identify and clarify skills to be taught in 2-year programs and certificate programs in community colleges for jobs that require some advanced education and are defined as technologist positions. The first step was to explore, identify, and establish industry required competencies for workers specializing in sustainable construction technologies integrated with the cutting-edge requirements. Then, data were collected on current 2-year programs and certificate programs offered in community colleges with majors in sustainable construction. The final step was to identify the gaps between the industry-identified competencies and the offerings of 2-year programs and certificate programs.

The specific questions answered by this study are as follows:

1) What are the industry-identified competencies required for sustainable construction technologist jobs?

2) What are the gaps between industry needs and the education provided by academia for sustainable construction technologist positions?

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Chapter 2

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The fast-track development of construction techniques and materials in conjunction with the slower changes in college education result in a mismatch between what industry requires from construction graduates and what academia offers. This mismatch has led many researchers to review and revise competencies and industry requirements from time to time to benefit academia by making necessary changes in curricula to meet industry requirements and create graduates who can compete in the job market.

1. Defining Job-Based Competencies

According to the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), a competency in a position-specific competency is defined as the ability to apply knowledge, skills, behaviors, and personal characteristics to perform work tasks successfully (Ennis, 2008). Competencies are considered a necessary skill for graduates to be competitive in the job market, which makes academia's role more important in providing these necessary industry-required competencies. Educational competencies can successfully describe desired learning outcomes in industry and academia (Benhart & Shaurette, 2014). In the literature, authors use different terms to refer to the idea of competencies. These include employability skills, industry-required skills, and industryexpected skills. In this study, I use the term "competency" to describe these industry skills. Some industry-required competencies have already affected academic curricula. For instance, reading and writing are some skills existing in curricula that reduce the industry expectation gap (McGill, 2009).

Defining the competencies for a specific position consists of identifying the critical work tasks, which appear in a formal job analysis. The main aim of a job analysis is to identify specific work activities, tasks, responsibilities, knowledge, and skills needed to perform a job. Results can be used for both academia, to provide more qualified relevant curriculum to meet the industry needs, and industry, to have a united expectation from employers for a job position.

To this end, researchers used different methods of job analysis to identify industry-required competencies and skills. Job analysis methods are more common in engineering and medical disciplines than other disciplines since they exhibit faster changes in technology advancement. Radermacher et al. (2014) considered the gaps between computer science and software engineering graduates as well as industry expectations and competencies in their research through semi-structured interviews. They interviewed twenty-three managers or employment personnel asking about the areas in which recent graduates had issues at the beginning of their work and the skill deficiencies that prevented them from being hired. The results of this study provided further support of several knowledge deficiencies in current curricula including communication skills and testing ability. Kuo et al. (2014) performed interviews and surveys to identify expected competencies in the solar energy field and introduced a set of employability indicators. An interpretational model was developed by Kuo et al. (2014) to link competence, job performance, working attitude, and employability for solar training purposes, recruitment, and curriculum development. Plessis & Van Niekerk (2014) studied three different Geographical Information (GI) Science competency sets to provide a framework of crucial competencies. They identified competencies used to provide a prototype framework of curriculum development. A group

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of experts rated the usefulness and importance of the basic framework of 16 knowledge areas (KAs). Then, they used the available GI Science Body of Knowledge (BoK) to develop the basic framework and deliver the new framework, which consists of 14 KAs, as a tool to develop curricula that satisfy industry needs of GI Science graduates. Mirzazadeh et al. (2014) provided a framework to meet required local clinical competencies. In this study, literature reviews and nominal group meetings with students and faculty members were initiated to raise a list of initially expected competencies. Ultimately, the final framework was proposed with eight competency domains. These identified competencies have been used to provide a baseline for curriculum development. Literature-based research on Management Information Systems (MIS) has been applied to obtain industry qualification expectations, which were eventually added to the proposed curriculum design. To validate the results, Ehie (2002) solicited feedback from fourteen industry professionals on the draft curriculum. He identified the ten most critical skills required by industry from MIS graduates to be included in the curriculum.

2. Job-based Competencies in Construction Field

Industry-expected competencies and requirements in construction management and sustainable/green building have also been studied. Ahn & Pearce (2007) conducted a survey of 87 companies that employ graduates from three main universities in the eastern US to address the rising industry expectations, experiences, and perceptions related to green building. The results indicated the growing importance of green building in the construction market and provided the baseline for the universities to understand how industry expectations change in order to provide students with the required knowledge to meet industry needs. In another study, Ahn. et al. (2012) conducted a survey of 100

construction companies located in the Eastern US to identify their expectations from graduates of construction programs. The companies were asked to rate 14 key competencies of the graduates and the result was compared with curriculum accreditation areas. The key competencies were ethical issues, problem-solving, and interpersonal abilities.

Results from an Australian study suggest that academia apply more capabilities to their curriculum to both cover industry requirements and lead the industry in innovation. In 2015, Wu et al. analyzed the new requirements arising with advancement of technology to the construction field in Australia. Wu suggested curriculum reform in construction education by considering industry needs for students' quick transition to industry after graduation. They conducted a survey of 252 construction graduates to identify significant gaps and then rate them. The results indicated that the most significant gaps were linked to problem-solving and construction technical skills. Based on an exploratory factor analysis, the identified gaps were categorized into eight groups including construction technology, information technology, problem-solving skills, construction economics, risk management, basic theories, business management, and sustainability science. The authors recommended that the existing curriculum should be reformed to meet the industry needs. Saks and Pikas (2013) provided a framework for Building Information Modeling (BIM) education that sets the fundamental topics and the levels of accomplishment required at each phase of degree programs. They utilized surveys, workshops, analysis of job advertisements, and in-depth interviews to identify the industry requirements from graduated engineers. Saks and Pikas (2013) developed a key competency for each identified topic using the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy. Through a gap analysis,

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this study compared the latest leading universities' curricula to industry needs. The analysis resulted in a framework to develop BIM content for construction engineering and management (CEM) degree programs. Benhart and Shaurette (2014) reviewed the undergraduate construction management curriculum in Purdue University's Department of Building Construction Management in 2010 to identify industry requirements. They compared them with the current curriculum and ACCE (American Council for Construction Education) standards, which define the learning outcomes for construction graduates in 2-year and 4-year programs, and suggested changes to meet industry requirements.

Most of the methods used to identify competencies and industry requirements depend on techniques such as observations, surveys, worker diaries, questionnaires, critical incidents, interviews, and individual and focus groups in order to collect job information (Shetterly & Krishnamoorthy, 2008). The competency tasks and activities identification are considered highly reliable when the job analysis is performed by professionals from specialized industries due to their experience and knowledge in performing the job (Dixon & Stricklin, 2014).

3. Types of Jobs in Sustainable Construction

Generally, based on job descriptions and advertisements, there are three levels of sustainable construction specialists needed in industry, and each level includes a few occupations (i.e., entry-level, middle-level, and higher-level). This study focuses on the middle-level positions in sustainable construction since it is where most graduates would look for a job. [Table 1](#page-16-0) shows the typical careers in each level. Entry-level careers are mostly the ones with lower educational requirements and minimal knowledge about the

job, since short on-site learning would be sufficient to do the job. Middle-level careers require some higher education and knowledge including experience in working with specific software or code enforcements. Engineering, management, and architecture positions require a high level of education, combined with several years of experience. Few jobs are available in high-level construction positions, since a company may require only one lead manager but increase responsibilities in the middle and entry level to make a project successful.

Level of sustainable construction careers	Careers				
	Roofer \bullet				
	Construction Laborer				
Entry level	Solar Photovoltaic Installer				
	Landscaping and Grounds-keeping Workers				
	Refuse and Recyclable Material Collector				
	CAD/CADD drafting/design technician \bullet				
	Construction Carpenter				
	Energy Auditor				
Middle level	Electronics Engineering Technician				
	HVAC Technician and Installer \bullet				
	Residential Energy Auditor \bullet				
	Building Inspector				
	Mechanical Engineer				
Higher level	Construction Manager				
	Landscape Architect				

Table 1. Sustainable construction levels and careers (Mapcareer, 2013)

To begin the study, each of the middle-level jobs was researched through job descriptions on the internet independently from different job advertising websites including LinkedIn and Indeed. One hundred job descriptions were studied to have a better understanding of industry requirements for graduates. The review of job descriptions showed that a large number of middle-level jobs exists in the sustainable construction field. This indicated the

industry need and included common competencies to perform the job properly, including communication skills, excellence in working with Office software, problem solving skills, and the ability to work in groups and individually.

4. Methods for Curriculum Development

Once industry expectations for skills are identified, colleges can use this information to incorporate it into their curricula. Curriculum development is considered an essential step for any new degree program and the Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) technique has been effectively used to develop the technical part of a curriculum since the 1960s (Halbrooks, 2003). It directly relies on the workers in the specific positions to describe their jobs (Johnson, 2010) and, by involving members of the industry in the curricular development process, provided several long-term benefits and a high level of cooperation between industry leaders and academia (Halbrooks, 2003). Linton et al (2011) used DACUM to build a job task analysis to identify a set of required knowledge, skills, tasks, steps, duties, and abilities to perform a food protection and defense professional position. They conducted a survey to validate the identified knowledge through the DACUM process to provide a training program. In 2016, Halawi et al. interviewed existing Information System (IS) industry experts to explore the skills needed to perform the job using the DACUM process. The results helped Halawi to design a curriculum for two graduate degrees in IS and Information Security and Assurance (ISA).

DACUM is a common method for occupational analysis because of its low-cost process and quick determination of the skills, since the ones who perform the job determine the skills. (Owens et al., 2013) DACUM is being used in more than 20 studies under National Science Foundation grants to identify industry requirements and competencies to assist in

the design of curricula for customized training, certificates, and two-year degree programs helping to bridge the gap between academia and industry (NSF, 2017). The Ohio State University, college of education and human ecology, used DACUM to identify industryexpected competencies for Sustainable Construction Operations for Coast Colleges in 2016 through a Career Pathways Trust grant funded by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. (OSU, 2016)

However, there are still few studies using DACUM to analyze occupations documented in literature. This article aims to add to the published body of knowledge by reporting on the DACUM process employed to identify sustainable construction technologist competencies. The process included a survey to validate the DACUM results and an analysis using college curriculums and DACUM results to help identifying possible gaps.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

[Figure 1](#page-20-1) illustrates the methodology used in this study. First, sustainable construction jobs and required skills and knowledge for these jobs were identified through an examination of published job profiles. A literature review was also performed to better understand methodologies used for identifying industry requirements. Base on this review, a time- and cost-effective method with a direct viewpoint of the professionals working in the industry was selected. The review of job profiles and the literature review provided the necessary background to successfully complete the rest of the study methodology. An occupational job analysis approach (DACUM) was used to identify the necessary duties, tasks, and skillsets required to successfully work in a sustainable construction technology position. After the DACUM was complete, a survey was conducted to validate the DACUM results, and 13 experienced professionals who work in high-ranking construction company positions responded to the survey questions. Finally, existing curricula from 2-year programs and certificate programs in sustainable construction management and engineering in the US were reviewed to identify the gaps between the required skills (identified through DACUM) and the skills currently taught in 2-year programs or certificate programs. The gap analysis was conducted by mapping the occupation tasks, skills, and competencies to the existing community college curricula. Based on the data analysis, recommendations are made to better meet industry requirements in community colleges for sustainable construction technology curricula.

Figure 1. Study Methodology

5. DACUM Job Analysis

DACUM is a structured brainstorming process to identify a specific job's skillsets. A panel of five to nine expert workers in the industry, a competent and trained DACUM facilitator, and a recorder participate in the process. The results from a DACUM analysis include an in-depth representation of the skills and competencies of the study's occupation. DACUM analysis has been used in several aspects of education, training, and certification programs including curriculum development, student learning, training needs assessments, worker performance evaluations, and competency. (Owens et al., 2013)

The value of a DACUM analysis relies on the following assumptions:

- Experts are the ones that can describe their job/occupation better than anyone else.
- It is more effective and precise for experts who perform in the position to define the job/occupation by tasks.
- To perform all tasks correctly, specific knowledge, skills, and tools are required. (Norton, 1997)

Some of the advantages of the DACUM process are group interaction, energized brainstorming power, group synergy, group consensus, superior quality, low cost, and a future-oriented, comprehensive outcome. DACUM has been proven to be a very effective

method for quickly determining, at relatively low cost, the competencies or tasks that must be performed by persons employed in a given job or occupational area (Norton, 1997). In addition to these DACUM advantages, DACUM can be used as a method to effectively conceptualize future occupations. That is the case for this study, where I am attempting to define a relatively new occupation – Sustainable Building Technologist.

For this study, a trained facilitator led the DACUM analysis and brought together subjectmatter experts in the area of sustainable construction technology. The DACUM consisted of a two-day workshop with the purpose of providing input about the specific tasks, knowledge, and skills needed to perform a sustainable construction technology job.

[Figure 2](#page-22-1)**[Error! Reference source not found.](#page-22-1)** presents the two-day DACUM workshop process followed in this study. The facilitator role was vital to describe the process to the participants and guide them through finding the tasks using suitable wording. The tasks needed to start with active verbs and be easy enough to be understood by the general audience. The brainstorming process included experts suggesting a variety of duties applicable for the position, statement correction by the facilitators, and voting for unanimous agreement over selecting the most suitable duties to obtain the consensus of the group. The same process was adopted for task selection.

Figure 2. Two-day DACUM workshop process

6. DACUM Validation Survey

The results of the DACUM analysis were validated through a survey. The targeted population of this survey was sustainable construction professionals. A group of 13 participants responded to the pilot survey for this study. A follow-on survey had 40 respondents. The surveys were conducted under a protocol approved by the UNM IRB ID 881334-2. The validation survey consists of three major sections:

- Section 1: includes optional questions regarding participants' information including their gender, years of experience, expertise, ethnicity, and race.
- Section 2: asks the participants to determine the level of importance for each identified task identified in DACUM chart to successfully perform the sustainable construction technology position based on their experience. A five-point Likert scale - (1) not important, (2) neutral, (3) slightly important,

(4) important, and (5) very important is adopted to calculate the relative importance of each identified task.

• Section 3: asks the participants to clarify if, and to what extent, the task can be taught in a class or on the job - multiple terms / entire semester / one assignment and with constant supervision / little supervision.

The responses to section 1 indicate that the participants' occupations include eight architectures/designers, two construction mangers, two engineers, and one specified in other occupations. Five females and eight males with the average of 13 years of experience participated in the validation process.

Sixteen tasks were excluded throughout the survey process because they were classified as personal-professional development opportunities rather than task-specific skills needed by the person to be hired for this position. [Table 2](#page-23-0) shows the excluded tasks from the validation process.

Code	Task
A.18	Distribute project team contact and correspondence list
A.19	Participate in project team meetings
A.20	Prepare project team meeting minutes
D.13	Maintain $O \& M$ and project team points of contact
E.4	Develop personal professional development plan
E.5	Complete professional certifications (e.g., LEED GA, BOC, CDT)
E.6	Participate in continuing education activities

Table 2. Excluded tasks for the entire validation process

The Relative Importance Index (RII) method was first used to determine the relative importance of different causes and effects of delays(Kometa et al. 1994). It was adopted in this study to analyze the data from the second section of the survey and to evaluate the importance of each task in performing the duties of the position successfully. The RII is defined as:

$$
RII = \frac{\sum W}{A \times N}
$$

where W is the weight given to each factor by the respondents and ranges from not important (1) to very important (5); A is the highest weight (i.e., 5); and N is the total number of respondents (Sambasivan & Soon, 2007), which in this case varies for each question, based on the number of responds, from 8 to 13. These rankings made it possible to cross-compare the relative importance of the tasks as recognized by the respondents.

Weighted average method was used to determine the importance threshold of the responses. Based on Likert scales defined earlier as (1) not important, (2) neutral, (3) slightly important, (4) important, and (5) very important, the threshold to separate the most important tasks was defined at 4.

$$
Weighted Average = \frac{\sum W}{N}
$$

where the W and N have the same definition of RII equation.

In section 3, the responses are classified into two main categories: if performing the task can be learned in the job position (constant supervision / little supervision) or if it can be learned in the college (in a class - multiple terms / entire semester / one assignment). This classification is used to determine how important it is for a college to include teaching a specific skill in its curriculum, according to industry practitioners. In this section, the remaining tasks included in the "participate in professional development activities" phase were excluded, since they were a personality trait and not applicable to be learned as a skill, which includes participating in code update training $(E-01)$, participating in BIM related software training (E-02), and assisting with smart technology feasibility studies (E-03).

7. Existing Curriculum Review

There are more than 1,100 community colleges (CC), with more than 12.4 million enrolled students, serving almost half of all undergraduate students in the US (AACC, 2018). Given that the scope of this paper encompasses the skills of the sustainable construction technology position, I considered community colleges to be the most appropriate educational institutions for providing this type of education and training. Therefore, community college programs were the focus of a review of the existing curriculum to try

to identify gaps between the skillset identified through the DACUM process and the skills taught in sustainable construction programs. A comprehensive search on community colleges offering sustainable construction, sustainable building technology, or sustainable management programs with either certificate or 2-year associate degree programs was performed. Overall, more than 20 community colleges with similar programs were identified. Thirteen community colleges were selected for analysis because they provided their curriculum and course details in their catalogs or on their websites. The curriculum review included in-depth and comprehensive reviews of the course details provided by the programs' catalogs, which explain specific knowledge and expertise being taught by taking that course.

8. Gap Analysis

The purpose of the gap analysis was to identify gaps between the necessary skillset identified through the DACUM process and the curricula and courses offered at community colleges in the area of sustainable construction technology. A spreadsheet was developed that mapped the course details to the DACUM results to identify how the current curricula were covering the industry requirement and expectations for sustainable construction technology positions. The gap analysis was conducted using the course details, results of the validation survey, and tasks' importance and how they can be learned.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

1. DACUM Analysis

In this study, the panel selection for the DACUM process was a challenge. Ideally, a DACUM panel would consist of workers who are doing the job for which the curriculum is meant to be developed. Since this study is ahead of the industry in trying to define a middle-level occupation, the higher-level employees' idea who might employ these people were selected. A combination of architects involved with LEED, building energy consultants, and trades workers who are involved in the actual installation of building energy systems were identified and selected. Because Advisory Committees exist at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) in many of the trades areas and architecture, contacts and networking started from there.

After panel selection, a two-day Job/Task Analysis (JTA) workshop was held at CNM, Albuquerque, New Mexico, on November 9–10, 2016. Three architects (including a LEED fellow), a sustainability project manager, a training director, a BIM director, a BIM specialist, an electrical/PV contractor, and a principal engineer from different companies participated in the DACUM process. Two competent and trained DACUM facilitators moderated the meetings.

The first day of the meeting consisted of an introduction to the DACUM process. A trained facilitator explained the DACUM Job Task Analysis (JTA) process to the participants and provided the panel a sample of DACUM results to better define the duty and task statement. A duty covers a large area of work for a particulate position and includes multiple tasks to perform it. Five duties were identified as the main body of being excel and competent in

the sustainable construction technology position: (A) perform pre-construction phase activities, (B) perform construction phase activities, (C) perform post-construction phase activities, (D) perform operations and maintenance activities, (E) participate in professional development activities, and (F) perform administrative tasks. Each duty consists of several tasks that were represented by the codes defined earlier. Overall, 60 tasks were identified to perform effectively in the position (Appendix 1). Table 3 presents the general skills and knowledge required to perform the job as reported in the DACUM results.

Table 3. General knowledge and skills identified in DACUM process to perform green construction technologist responsibilities

General Knowledge and Skills
Computer Skills:
Spreadsheets \bullet
Apps
Internet research
Microsoft Office type tools \bullet
Data (obtain, organize) \bullet
Multi-device and media aptitude \bullet
Electronic communication protocol (e.g., email vs. texts)
Knowledge of design and construction industry
General knowledge of construction trades
Technical writing
Basic understanding of building science
Ability to read construction documents
LEED GA Certification
OSHA for Construction certification
Energy basics
Construction specification formats
Familiarity with green and energy codes and standards
BOC- Building Operating Certificate
Time management skills
Presentation skills
Functional aspects of landscaping and plant choice
Sustainability theory and philosophy

2. Validation

A survey was conducted to verify the DACUM results. The survey was sent to more than 50 experts affiliated with architecture and/or construction related programs at CNM (e.g., an Advisory Committee member) focused on green and sustainable projects. Overall, 13 experts responded to the survey's questions including 8 architectures/designers, 2 construction managers, 2 engineers, and 1 with another position.

The participants rated the importance of each task to perform in the position from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Using the Relevant Importance Index (RII), the most important tasks to be prosperous in the sustainable construction technology position were identified. [\(Table 4\)](#page-29-1)

Duties	Codes	Tasks	RII
Perform pre- construction phase activities	$A-01$	Research building project constraints	0.76
	$A-02$	Research Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) and applicable codes	0.74
	$A-03$	Coordinate LEED related activities	0.80
	$A-04$	Document existing project site conditions	0.78
	$A-05$	Evaluate site designs	0.60
	$A-06$	Assist with building energy and daylight models	0.78
	$A-07$	Perform water use and collection calculations	0.66
	$A-08$	Research green certifications	0.82
	$A-09$	Research sustainability grants, tax credits and rebates	0.76
	$A-10$	Integrate green solutions recommendations into design and BIM documentation	0.87
	$A-11$	Perform BIM coordination	0.74
	$A-12$	Assist with selection of green materials and systems	0.80
	$A-13$	Prepare green materials list	0.84
	$A-14$	Edit project specifications	0.56
	$A-15$	Prepare waste management construction plan	0.64
	$A-16$	Prepare air quality construction plan	0.64

Table 4. Relative Importance Index (RII) of the identified tasks

The RII varies from 0.50 to 0.91, which is a wide range to consider. For each duty, the average RII of associated tasks was calculated and shown in [Figure 3.](#page-32-0) The most important duty with RII of 0.83 was "Participate in Professional Development Activities" (E) implying the importance of self-development in the position for an employee in a sustainable construction technology occupation. Duty F (perform administrative tasks) was the second important duty to perform for this job since it is a middle-level position and the employee needs to perform activities to connect the higher level position to the entry level ones. Pre-construction phase activities (A) needs to take more priority than construction (B) and post-construction phase activities (C). Construction phase activities (B) was identified as the least important duty, while it is believed that most of the construction activities are being done during the construction phase. This result suggested that the defined middle level position requires more knowledge and skill relevant to pre and post construction activities to support the manager-labor interactions.

Figure 3. Duties priority based on relevant importance index

The tasks were sorted based on RII and weighted average values separately and the results provided the same order for all tasks. The most critical tasks were selected with the weighted average higher than 4 (same as RII>0.8), suggesting tasks that were in the highest priority about which graduates should have knowledge with the highest level of importance.

Figure 4. Identified tasks sorted by the weighted average values

[Figure 5](#page-34-0) illustrates that tasks E-02 (participate in BIM related software training), A-10 (integrate green solutions recommendations into design and BIM documentation), A-13 (prepare green materials list), F-04 (maintain standard green specifications, A-08 (research green certifications), C-05 (upload documents to LEED online), A-03 (coordinate LEED related activities), A-12 (assist with selection of green materials and systems), and C-03 (help coordinate submittal data for Operations & Maintenance (O&M) manuals) are among the most critical tasks, in that order. BIM related knowledge tasks were identified as the most important tasks in the sustainable construction technology position. Knowledge linked to green construction and LEED were among the most important tasks after the BIM area, which suggests that in a sustainable/green position, the information regarding sustainability would be more highlighted and requires extra consideration in training, either in the job position or at a college.

Figure 5. The most important tasks based on both RII and weighted average The last section of the survey asks the participants if an employee in the sustainable construction technology position can learn how to perform the identified task in the job with supervision/experience or at college. This question is essential to realize how important it is for the colleges to include the required knowledge in their curriculum. [\(Figure 6\)](#page-35-1)

The tasks E-01 (Participate in codes update training) and E-02 (Participate in BIM related software training) were excluded from this section since they are tasks in the "participate in professional development activities" duty category that can only be learned by being in the position and experiencing it. [Figure 6](#page-35-1) argues that nearly all of the most important tasks require job supervision more than learning in college. For instance, 73 percent of professionals identified A-10 (integrate green solutions recommendations into design and BIM documentation) as a task that can be learned in the job position, while only 27 percent

admit that it can be learned in college. However, half of the participants consider that C-05 (Upload documents to LEED online) can be learned either in college or in the position. Tasks A-13, F-04, A-03, and A-12 are roughly receiving the same rate of being learned at college or in the job position, which means that if they were included in the curriculum, there would be less training time required at work.

 \blacksquare Can be learned in the job position Can be learned in college

Figure 6. Comparison between important tasks being learned in either college or the position

3. Curricula Review

An in-depth study of current curricula offered by Community Colleges in the area of sustainable construction is conducted to recognize academia's offered knowledge in sustainable construction programs. Thirteen community colleges and 14 programs in the US with green/sustainable construction/building technology curriculum including certificate programs, two-year associate degree, and bachelor's degree were studied [\(Table](#page-36-0) **[5](#page-36-0)**5). The number of credits were different depending on the type of degree/certification a college offers.

College name, state	Program name	Degree	Number of credits	Reference	
Erie $CC1$, NY	Green Building Technology	Certification	31	https://www.ecc.edu/	
Bristol CC, MA	Green Building Technology	Certification	22/23	http://www.bristolcc.edu	
Rockland CC, NY	Green Building	Certification	30	http://www.sunyrocklan d.edu/	
Aims CC, CO	Green/Sustainable building	Certification	8	http://www.aims.edu/	
Bergen CC, NJ	Green Construction Management	Certification	230	https://bergen.edu/	
Hawkeye CC, IA	Sustainable Construction and Design	AAS^2	69	https://www.hawkeyecol lege.edu/	
Mott CC, MI	Sustainable Construction	Certification	15	http://mcc.edu/	
Technical College of the low Country, SC	Green Residential Construction Management	Certification	19	https://www.tcl.edu/	
North Seattle CC, WA	HVAC/Sustainabl e Building Engineering Technician	AAS	92	https://www.northseattle .edu/	
De An Za College, CA	Facility and Sustainable Building Management	Certification	21	https://www.deanza.edu/	
Santa Barbara City College, CA	Construction Technology	Certification	$33 - 35$	http://www.sbcc.edu/	
Santa Barbara City College, CA	Construction Technology	AAS	41	http://www.sbcc.edu/	
South Seattle CC, WA	Sustainable Building Science Technology	BAS ³	90	http://www.southseattle. <u>edu</u>	

Table 5. College sustainable construction programs

¹ Community College

² Associates in Applied Science

³ Bachelor of Applied Science

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[Figure 7](#page-37-1) shows the Community Colleges with sustainable construcion programs in the US that were evaluated for this study. There are 2 colleges in the state of California, 2 colleges in the state of New York, and one college in several other states as indicated by the highlighted states.

Figure 7. US map with the selected Community Colleges

4. DACUM Survey Mapping with Curriculum

Course details were collected from colleges' online cataloges and studied in depth to map the courses with the identified tasks in the DACUM results. For example, the "Green Building Materials" (GRB 140) course in Rockland Community College objectives' include "both the selection and specification processes for green building materials. Environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines related to cleaning, maintenance, and other materials and supplies are also covered". This description could possibly imply that

when passing the Green Building Materials course, a student will be able to perform the following tasks: A-16 (prepare green materials list), A-15 (assist with selection of green materials and systems), B-4 (verify received materials), and B-5 (track green materials). The in-depth review of each course description provided a database to map the learning objectives of a course with the industry-expected competencies.

The purpose of this section is to determine if colleges are addressing the industryrequirements for middle-level sustainable construction positions in their curriculum. **Error! Reference source not found.**6, specifies that task A-15 ("assist with selection of reen materials and systems" task) is addressed in 11 specific and different courses offered in 10 community colleges.

Table 6. Mapping A-15 (Assist with selection of green materials and systems) task with offered curriculum in Community Colleges

College name	Course number- Course name
Hawkeye CC	CON 217- Exterior Finishing
Santa Barbara City College	CT 120- Building Green
De An Za CC	E S 58- Introduction to Green Building
Erie CC	BM 225- Energy Management
Bristol CC	EGR 123- Green Building Practices
Rockland CC	GRB 140- Green Building Materials
CNM	CM 1110- Construction Materials and Techniques
South Seattle CC	SBST 322- Energy Analysis & Auditing
Mott CC	BCON 201- Green Construction BCON 181- Construction Materials
Aims CC	ENY 153- Renewable Energy Construction

5. Gap Analysis

From the most important tasks identified in Figure 4, the gap analysis identified E-02 (participate in BIM related software training), A-10 (integrate green solutions recommendations into design and BIM documentation), and A-13 (prepare green materials list) as the topics not covered by college programs [\(Figure 8\)](#page-40-0). Knowledge in BIM, as a relatively recent knowledge introduced to construction academic programs, was expected from a graduate in sustainable construction technology.

F-04 (maintain standard green specifications), A-08 (research green certifications), and A-12 (assist with selection of green materials and systems) were green related tasks that, despite of their importance and relevance to sustainable construction education, were not discussed or mentioned in curricula. While E-01 (participate in code update training) was the $8th$ most important task, it was not considered as a task to be learned in a college, since participating in work training was a task which requires only work expertise and experience.

Figure 8. The most important tasks vs. colleges covering them in their curriculum [Table 7](#page-40-1) shows the most important tasks with respect to the highest number of participants chosen tasks that can be learned at college. The purpose of this table is to show to what extent the tasks that most likely can be learned at college are covered by the college curriculums. A detailed examination of [Table 7](#page-40-1) reveals some of the specifics of the gap between what industries expect and what colleges teach.

		Can be learned in the	Can be learned in	Number of colleges
Codes	Identified tasks	job position	college	covering the
		(Rate)	(Rate)	tasks
$C-05$	Upload documents to LEED online	0.50	0.50	4
$F-04$	Maintain standard green specifications	0.55	0.45	0
$A-13$	Prepare green materials list	0.56	0.44	5

Table 7. Prioritized tasks, sorted by their rate of being learned at college

Task A-12 (assist with selection of green materials and systems) is identified as one of the most important tasks to perform the job with a high possibility of being learned in college. Ten colleges include teaching it in their curriculum. This task shows an excellent match between the industry-requirement and college curriculum. Also, task A-03 (coordinate LEED related activities) is among the most addressed in college curriculums with 7 colleges offering it. However, many tasks are not covered or poorly covered; only a few colleges include them in their program and curriculums. Task F-04 (maintain standard green specifications), A-08 (research green certifications), and C-03 (help coordinate submittal data for Operations & Maintenance (O&M) manuals) are not addressed in any of the studied syllabi. [\(Figure 9\)](#page-42-0)

Figure 9. Tasks potentially being learned in college vs. colleges covering them in their curriculum

[Figure 10](#page-43-0)[Figure 10](#page-43-0) illustrates the existing gap between knowledge and tasks (competencies) that can be learned on the job with supervision and the number of colleges addressing them in their program. Six colleges cover task B-05 (track green materials) while it is a task that can be supervised and learned on the job. Also, B-04 (verify received materials) is addressed by 8 colleges, however experts highly recognize it as a task that can be learned on the job position. F-01(maintain green product library), A-01(research building project constraints), and F-02 (assist with development of materials to market green practices) are the tasks that are not covered in any of the studied curricula, implying

that colleges are not addressing the tasks that are easy to learn how to perform on the job, which indicates the strong industry-curriculum match.

Figure 10. Tasks being learned in job vs. colleges covering them in their program The most significant gaps in the area of sustainable construction technology is found in F-04 (maintain standard green specifications), A-13 (Prepare green materials list), and A-08 (research green certifications). Although A-10, integrate green solutions recommendations into design and BIM documentation, is the most important task, it is not among the high rates of being learned in college and consequently is not covered well in the college programs. However, it is expected that with exceeding large number of colleges offering BIM related courses, industry experts would consider it as a task to be learned more in a college than in a job position.

CONCLUSION

With the constant increase in the sustainable construction market and its substantial economic impact in the US in conjunction with fast technological development, educators need to provide appropriate curriculum materials to continue bridging the gap between industry requirements and educational perceptions. Using job advertisement reviews and a job analysis method (DACUM), 6 categories including (1) perform pre-construction phase activities, (2) perform construction phase activities, (3) perform post-construction activities, (4) perform Operations and Maintenance ($O \& M$) activities, (5) participate in professional development activities, and (6) perform administrative tasks were identified. Overall, 60 tasks were identified to perform successfully in the position. Verification survey results indicate that the most significant tasks in the sustainable construction technology position were participating in BIM related software training, integrating green solutions recommendations into design and BIM documentation, preparing the green materials list, and maintaining standard green specifications. BIM related skills were implied to be the most critical practical knowledge in the sustainable construction technologist position.

Among the most significant tasks, only a few have the potential to be learned in the college including C-05 (upload documents to LEED online) and F-04 (maintain standard green specifications). However, most of the tasks were identified to be learned better and more suitable in the job position than in college.

Thirteen community college curricula reviews, coupled with mapping the courses' descriptions with DACUM verified results, provided a proper tool to compare the industryexpected competencies to the offered curricula in academia. Among the most significant

identified tasks that can be learned in the college, the highest gap was found in task F-04 (maintain standard green specifications), A-08 (research green certifications), and C-03 (help coordinate submittal data for Operations & Maintenance (O&M) manuals) which are not addressed in any of the studied syllabi. Tasks that can be learned in the job and are significantly offered in the colleges indicate a different type of existing gap. Tasks B-05 (track green materials) and B-04 (verify received materials) are more applicable to be learned in the job position.

Based on the existing identified gaps, this study suggests that academia requires continually updating the fast-track technology programs' materials and adopting the industry requirements more frequently. More specifically, BIM and LEED related skills need to be represented more strongly in the curricula while verifying and tracking green material can be represented less strongly.

Since the data is collected from sustainable construction industry and academia – community colleges – in the US, the applicability of this study outside the US is not presently confirmed and needs to be investigated in future studies. However, considering the curricula standard similarities and pace of technological development in sustainable construction, this study provides valuable information and methods for other institutions to adopt. In addition, only 13 experts from the industry verify DACUM results; therefore, the survey needs to be expanded for future work to more clearly represent the industry perspective.

Appendix A

DACUM Results for Sustainable Construction Technologist

Table 8. DACUM research chart for sustainable construction technologist

Tools, Equipment, Supplies, and Materials knowledge that are beneficial to know include airflow hood, azimuth tool, augmented reality tools (e.g., Daqri), blower door, cell phone, cell phone apps, CO2 sensor, data loggers, duct blaster, infrared scanner, laser level, light meter, measuring tools (e.g., tape measure), solmetric sun eye, sUAS, tablet-based applications, and temperature sensor.

Expected behaviors for graduates to be detail oriented, collaborative, analytical, punctual, observant, self-motivated, perseverance, confident, respectful, professional attire, initiative, and passion for sustainability.

Future Trends and Concerns

- Resistance to green materials and systems
- Financing mechanisms not set up to accommodate long range thinking
- Tax Credits availability
- Economic growth and stability
- Lack of skilled labor
- Diminishing vocational education opportunities in high school
- Resource depletion
- Climate change
- Increasing energy costs
- Increasing water costs

- Adoption of future Technology
- Initial cost of green energy systems
- Automated data analysis
- Cyber security
- Failure to integrate sustainability into design
- Changing code requirements
- Need lobbying for green/renewable energy
- Pre-fabricated/modular construction techniques
- Additive manufacturing
- Integration of augmented reality with construction practices
- Smart technology to collect data on resource consumption

Recommendations

- Offer construction technology course in high school
- Community outreach and education on the cost to benefit of green adoption (high school teachers should be educated).
- Lobby for green/renewable energy
- Press releases/social media on progress of certificate and project development
- Proof studies on the benefits of green construction
- Before and after cost comparison
- Life cycle
- Publicize green efforts to create a buzz
- Leverage Campus as a Living Lab

- Collaborate/partner with local employers to train students (volunteers, as part of course/program
- Mandatory participation in USGBC student group
- Encourage students to join student level of professional groups
- Collaborate with UNM programs
- Take field trips
- Conduct audits on their own buildings (homes, apartments, etc.)
- Students create learning modules and learning materials
- Identify green related projects that were started in schools and complete them, e.g., project where each public school's roof is assessed for how much solar power it could generate. Create a map that would show how many housing units/buildings in the immediate vicinity of the school could be powered with the solar generated energy.

Appendix B

Mapping DACUM Results to Community Colleges' Course Descriptions for Sustainable Construction Technology

Table 9. Pre-construction phase activity tasks mapped with the courses offered by the colleges

Table 10. Construction phase activity tasks mapped with the courses offered by the colleges

Table 11. Post-construction phase activity tasks mapped with the courses offered by the colleges

Table 12. O & M Related Activities tasks mapped with the courses offered by the colleges

Table 13. Participate in Professional Development Activities tasks mapped with the courses offered by the colleges

Table 14. Perform Administrative Tasks mapped with the courses offered by the colleges

Tasks	College. Course code				
F.1 Maintain green product					
library					
F.2 Assist with development					
of materials to market green					
practices					
F.3 Identify green marketing					
opportunities					
F.4 Maintain standard green					
specifications					
F.5 Participate in staff					
meetings					
F.6 Establish personal					
performance deliverables					
F.7 Document time and daily	Te. CT 196				
activities	CT 290				

Table 15. Community colleges' abbreviation and courses directory

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