Effective project management comes from controlling cost, time, and quality on a project. As construction projects become more complex, changes in the original contract documents will arise due to the nature of human error. How a project manager documents and addresses change events can alter the successfulness of a project. This study attempts to look at senior level construction management major student’s understanding of the change order management process. The goal of the study is to ascertain how well the students feel the construction management curriculum prepared them to manage change events in industry. Students were asked to demonstrate their understanding of key aspects to the change order process – requests for information, potential change orders, change order requests, time & material pricing, negotiations and impacts to the schedule. Results indicated that students would like to see the introduction of modules into existing lab curricula to gain a better understanding of change order processes.

Key Words: Cal Poly, Change order, Construction, Curriculum, Cost

Conclusion

Students’ understanding of the change order process could be the result of their prior internship experiences. However, the curriculum can provide guidance on how to address change orders prior to experiencing them in a real life scenario. The overall consensus suggests that there are ways to incorporate more change order topics into the construction management curriculum. Modules can be added into the labs to simulate change order management skills in each of the main industry sectors – residential, commercial, heavy civil, and specialty construction.

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