ProEst®

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

ProEst and MTSU bring real-world estimating to the classroom

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1911 as a two-year training school for teachers, Middle Tennessee State University has grown to include five undergraduate colleges as well as a post-graduate program. MTSU has graduated over 100,000 students in its 109-year history, with a current enrollment of 22,000 students and a faculty of 900. In 2016, MTSU combined its Concrete Management and Commercial Construction Management programs into a single coordinated entity, with a curriculum designed to prepare a diverse student body for careers as contractors, project managers, developers and other industry roles. Since the consolidation of the two programs, the department has continued to expand, with a current enrollment of 400 undergraduates. An advisory board includes both academic leaders and executives from local, regional and national construction companies—providing an important link between the school's initiatives and MTSU students' future careers.

BACKGROUND

MTSU's School of Concrete and Construction Management relies on a variety of technology providers to give students direct experience with the solutions they are most likely to encounter on the job after they graduate. For many years, the school used WinEst to teach estimating skills, but the limitations of an on-premise product led MTSU to seek out a different partnership. Dr. Thomas Gormley, Associate Professor and Director of the Commercial Construction Management program spear-headed the search. MTSU had an established relationship with Procore for teaching software-driven construction management, and based on their similarities and his introduction to ProEst at an industry event in 2019, Dr. Gormley chose ProEst as the department's new estimating tool. High on the list of advantages, he said, is the fact that ProEst, like Procore, is cloud-based, giving his students unlimited access to training modules, and the program itself, outside of the campus lab. Currently, 25 students are enrolled in Dr. Gormley's Commercial Estimating class, which has adopted a remote-only format to conform to the university's new stay-at-home policies. The shift to ProEst, he says, was accomplished "just in time" to allow classwork to continue uninterrupted.

PRAGMATIC LEARNING
THAT BUILDS ON THE BASICS

By the time students walk through the doors of Dr. Gormley's classroom as seniors, they have mastered the fundamentals of the MTSU construction management curriculum—surveying, plan reading, materials, solis and accounting. Estimating, crucial to delivering a profitable project in the real world, is a required class for all construction program graduates. Having experienced ProEst training himself—primarily via training modules and live video chats with ProEst CEO Jeff Gerardi—Dr. Gormley helps students navigate the features of the software, then assigns the class a "simple" commercial building to estimate. Students work independently, then post their projects in the ProEst program to be viewed and evaluated by Gormley and other students in the class. The "shareable" format serves as extra motivation to deliver credible work. "There's some peer pressure that makes people want to do a good job," he said.

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AN ESTIMATING TOOL IDEAL
FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

The ProEst cloud platform supports a teaching style, says Dr. Gormley, that works well for peer-to-peer learning, giving every student the ability to receive his critiques and compare their work to others in the class. The student who comes closest to his own estimate, prepared ahead of time as a baseline calculation, receives "bonus" points. "They take the project apart and estimate the whole thing," he said. "All of the building components using the CSI format plus labor burdens, tax, bonds, profit, contingency and sub bids and we talk about how to calculate the numbers." Dr. Gormley gives the ProEst online platform high marks for giving him ready access to his student's work. "I can give them feedback and check (their estimates) online, so that we're not passing around a lot of paper."

*At **MTSU**, students in the Construction Management program can concentrate on concrete, electrical, residential or commercial construction.*

PARTNERS IN A TECHNOLOGY-RICH LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

ProEst has joined other leading technology providers in giving MTSU School of Concrete and Construction Management students and faculty hands-on access to advanced solutions currently at work in the industry, including virtual reality and 3d modelling technologies, time-lapse videography and drones. Procore has contributed software for project management and budgeting tasks, while ProEst covers every aspect of project estimating and digital takeoffs. The solution has won widespread approval for its accessible online platform, ease of use and no-cost availability to students. Dr. Gormley's long career in the construction industry, coupled with his academic credentials and technical expertise—he co-authored Construction Management of Healthcare Projects in 2014—was important to the selection process. Today, MTSU's technology-rich construction curriculum attracts students from throughout Tennessee and surrounding states.

SOLID PREPARATION FOR FUTURE INDUSTRY CAREERS

Dr. Gormley reports that a growing number of students in the commercial construction program are female, and notes that they are among the most accomplished estimators in his class. And while a number of his students have a family connection to the construction industry, others are experiencing the discipline for the first time—and most can be described as "tech-savvy." In every case, says Dr. Gormley, laying the groundwork for college-age students is essential to the ongoing success of the industry as a whole. "These are going to be your estimators in the coming years," he said. And how ever the future of work plays out post-pandemic, "superintendents and project managers will be doing everything online." With ProEst, they're already there.

*Students enrolled in the **MTSU Construction Management** program have first-hand experience with leading technologies supplied by industry partners.*

ABOUT PROEST

ProEst provides advanced construction estimating capabilities for leading companies and public sector clients in the United States, Canada and Australia. Our cloud-based platform combines cost estimating, digital takeoffs and bid day analysis in a single powerful solution—a proven way to reduce costs, ensure accuracy and streamline pre-construction workflow.

Visit www.proest.com to learn more.