



PCI Foundation at 20: Making headway on our 'problem'

“You have a problem!” For those who were at the awards luncheon at the 2019 PCI Convention in Louisville, Ky., we will never forget University of Southern California (USC) professor Doug Noble’s passionate speech about how we, as an industry, have a problem with architecture. The problem, he said, is that despite attending and then teaching at some of the finest architecture schools, he never learned about precast concrete. That is, until the PCI Foundation teamed up with California producers and PCI West to start a studio at USC.

In 2001, a group of precast concrete industry visionaries led by Jim Voss, president and general manager of JVI Inc., recognized the problem and the need to step up the industry’s efforts to educate the next generation of students about precast concrete and started the PCI Foundation. Twenty years later, those efforts are paying off and continue to grow at a fantastic rate.

Early on, the PCI Foundation focused on raising money to give scholarships to students in architecture and engineering. Then in 2007, PCI Foundation leadership learned about a program at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. PCI member Spancrete, whose headquarters was in the Milwaukee suburbs, had partnered with architecture faculty to develop a hands-on, semester-long design studio centered on precast concrete and its design possibilities. With that, the current era of the PCI Foundation’s support of architecture studios and immersive programs was born.

Today there is PCI Foundation–supported curriculum in almost every PCI region, many of them considering the continuation of the program at universities in their areas a key element of their strategic plans. To date, with 1920 weeks of precast concrete instruction and more than \$3.4 million invested, the PCI Foundation has reached 35 universities, 6000 students, and 50 professors teaching precast concrete. The key to the success of these programs continues to be the local PCI producers’ strong involvement and their presentations, planning curriculum with the professor, plant tours, competition judging, and donations of time and materials.

And it’s working. On the PCI Foundation website, you’ll find dozens of testimonials and examples of students armed with precast concrete knowledge looking for precast concrete solutions for projects after graduation.

Several years ago, the PCI Board of Directors implemented a program where members can donate to the Foundation as part of their annual membership renewal. I’m happy to report that through this process, PCI members have pledged more than \$73,000 for this year. If you donated, thank you. If you’d like to, visit the PCI Foundation website at PCI-Foundation.org or text PRECAST to 41-444.

I hope to see many of you at the upcoming PCI Committee Days meetings. If you attend, please consider joining the Concrete Chefs to continue supporting the work of the PCI Foundation and to celebrate the foundation’s 20th anniversary. See you in Chicago! 📍



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