



This is the briefest of notes from Cusco, Peru. The **19th International Group for Lean Construction** met in Lima last week. This was surely the first meeting held in a building, The Westin Hotel, constructed under Lean Construction Protocols. The event opened with an Industry Day with 460 +/- in attendance and then followed with 3 days devoted to academic papers from around the world. I counted 246 people late Thursday afternoon. We, Dana and me, Will Lichtig and his wife Ilene and Alan Mossman are off today for an adventure to Choquiquerao.

Now to the reason for this short note. I am working with **Professor Min Liu** and **Mark Russell** at the **North Carolina State University** on a research project to investigate why we always like to add a certain amount of **time buffer** when estimating construction task duration and how it is added. We all know that a little extra time reduces the stress level of making the deadlines and makes us look good. But in reality we have to use it carefully, too much is not going to help us either.

In detail, the areas that we want to investigate are: Which factors are the most influential (or those considered most often) to foremen, superintendents, and project managers when determining activity duration estimates? Which trades consider which factors most often and to what extent? Which trades add the most contingency/buffer/padding overall to their duration estimates? Is there a difference in the contingency trends of foremen in companies who use LPS versus those in companies who do not use LPS? If we know the answer to these questions, we can prioritize the areas requiring the most attention and reduce unnecessary activity duration contingency and work to allocate the contingency where it is most needed.

In order to answer those questions, **we need your help completing a survey**, which should take respondents about 15-20 minutes. If you are interested in participating in this survey, **please contact Mark Russell for more information**. Mark has agreed to provide each company a summary of their results and overall industry results to use as a benchmark. We promise to keep the company and project information confidential and would greatly appreciate your participation.

Mark can be reached by e-mail at mmrusse2@ncsu.edu and by phone at **(757)-218-3425**. He can further discuss the intent of the survey and the effort required by your project managers, superintendents, and foremen. Please contact Mark if you are interested now! Thank you.

Also - I have received notice of a course by **Professor Mike Vorster** on **Equipment Management**. This is a must if you manage a spread of equipment. Go to <http://www.cempcentral.com/course> for information.