A/E Networking At Its Best
Doug Jennings  December 2007

On November 30th, UW/CPO and the Washington State Department of General Administration - Engineering and Architectural Services Division (GA/EAS) jointly sponsored its first A/E Networking Event. Sometimes informally referred to as “Speed Networking” the event was an effective way of introducing many A/E firms to many clients. We were also assisted by the Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises (OMWBE) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

The purpose of the event was to reach out to the A/E community with the specific target of MWBE firms, small firms and firms which have not worked for UW or GA before, but want to. The two primary goals were: first, to improve our delivery of A/E services by introducing UW and GA to (and ultimately engaging the services of) new and talented firms; and second, to build a pool of A/E service providers that reflects the diverse character of our region and is open and accessible to all A/E interested in working at UW and/or GA.

The format of the event was a series of 12 tables (8 for UW and 4 for GA) with staff representatives from UW and GA selected to represent various project stakeholders (for UW – client reps, CPO reps, Campus Engineering Reps, EH&S reps, etc). Representatives from 25 A/E firms circulated from among the tables on 15 minute intervals and presented qualifications and answered questions of the staff reps. The event lasted from 8am to 1pm – continental breakfast and light lunch were served.

The response from the A/E community when we announced the event was huge – in addition to the 25 firms who attended the event we had a waiting list of approximately 25 more.

The informal feedback we have received so far has been very positive. Many of the firms expressed their appreciation for us conducting this event and several of the UW participants felt there were some valuable contacts made. Some good contacts between the UW participants and the A/E’s were made during the event that could lead to mutually beneficial relationships in the future. We are in the process of conducting a formal survey of the A/E firms and UW participants and expect the results within a couple of weeks.

We are thinking about other similar events for the future – the results of our formal survey on this event will help guide us.

THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED:

Thanks to everyone who helped out at the A/E Networking Event. Your efforts helped make the event a great success. There are too many who helped in organizing this event to list them all but here is the Core Committee of the Event Team:

- Shaun Spearmon (UW Business School - Business Diversity Program)
- Lynn Beck (UW Purchasing - Business Diversity Program)
- John Lynch (GA/EAS)
- Adam Lawrence (GA/EAS)
- Vicky Schiantarelli (OMWBE)
- Diana Drake (SBA)
- From CPO: Alan Nygaard, Mike Purdy, Sara Voogt, Suzahn Bradley, Shelly Marriott, Rachel Toplin, and Doug Jennings.

And a special thanks for all the UW participants (32 in all) at the interview tables.

photos by Sara Voogt