As I sit here eating my Trader Joe’s Non-Fat Pomegranate Greek Yogurt I wonder what is a “Grade A Blend” as it is noted on the container? How many grades are there? What do they pertain to? Why even have grades? Evergreen doesn’t use any, right?

It is looking to be very wet today, but there is still plenty of fall color outside. I dread the thought of winter being around the corner. It just gets so gloomy and cold.

Anyway, yesterday was an exciting day on the other side of the green fabric covered fencing, also known as the Lecture Hall Renovation project. Some of you may recall the majority of the Lecture Hall exterior walls did not connect with the adjacent grade; see attached photo “1 a before shot”. Since we need to change the floor level to make the building fully accessible, new walls need to extend, infill and connect to the existing walls that are to remain. So the current part of this project is to install those walls, and they are also going to be constructed of concrete.

Some formwork and steel reinforcement were installed as I mentioned last week. Our contractor decided the best method to install these new walls was with the use of “Self Consolidating Concrete”. This type of concrete is highly flowable and in this case it is being pressure pumped. The beauty of this approach is you get to fill the formwork without the use of “any mechanical consolidation”. Typically the mechanical consolidation part is accomplished with the use of mechanical vibrators. Vibrators could not be used in this installation being we are forming up to an existing wall above and the forms are fully enclosed. This is not your typical construction project, and I’ve never had the experience to work on a project using this method of concrete placement. I got pretty jazzed when I saw the concrete pumper pull up yesterday.

I took a number of photos which I’ve attached to this message so that I can explain the process. Did I mention this is pretty cool? Well now, the second picture is of the concrete pumper truck. The third picture shows the concrete truck starting to drop the mix into the hopper of the concrete pumper. In the fourth picture the hose is extending from the pumper arm as the pumper is primed with the concrete mix. Note the fellow with the orange hard hat in this photo, he has a little controller box hanging from his waist. This fellow is controlling the pumper remotely with all sorts of buttons and joy-sticks on the control box, again this is pretty cool! In the fifth picture the pumper arm is extended to the first wall form. In the sixth picture you can see the hose descending to the workers below. The seventh picture shows the fitting installed earlier on this formwork in which the hose will be connected and concrete pumped into the wall form. The fitting is located low so the
objective impression left in the concrete will be below grade once the wall is back-filled. On the eighth picture they are connecting the hose to the wall fitting. In the ninth picture they are pressure pumping the wall with the concrete. The workers tap the wall periodically to see how high the concrete is rising. In the tenth picture you can see concrete oozing from the top of the formwork which means that formed wall is filled and time close the wall fitting and to move on to the next wall. In the eleventh picture the hose has been moved into the drum of the concrete truck so they can empty the unused concrete that is left in the pumper truck. The unused concrete is typically returned to the concrete plant and poured into molds which become what are called “Eco Blocks”. An example of such is the last picture. You may have seen these around being used as vehicular barriers, or perhaps stacked and used as retaining walls. Not much goes to waste with a concrete pour!

More formwork and concrete pouring next week. I’ve been told that next week will be void of any concrete saw cutting and jack hammering!

Have a great wet windy weekend!
Tim