MESSAGE FROM CHARLES KENNEDY

When we think of character we might reflect about character in terms of an individual, and whether they are of good character or poor character. However, work units, departments, and especially organizations, also have character. The components that make up the character of an organization depend largely on the traits and qualities of the employees within that organization.

Character can be defined as a combination of behaviors that distinguishes one person or group from another, public estimation of someone, someone’s reputation or a person’s integrity.

The character of the Facilities Services, as perceived within our own organization and within the University of Washington community has been built on integrity and respect. Our employees take pride in their work and in working for the University. But we can’t just stop there—how do we raise the bar and continue to nurture and grow our FS organizational character?

The answer to this question comes from our own exceptional FS employees. Continuing to speak to one another with respect and dignity and remembering to give each other a break—everyone has some burden in their life that they are dealing with. If a customer or co-worker says something in person or in email that bothers you, simply ask them about it and try not to take it personally. Chances are it’s not about you, and if you step back, you can remain calm and help them to solve the problem at the lowest level possible.

This idea is at the core of one of our most powerful Lean principals: Respect every individual. The image that we portray inside and outside FS not only reflects on us individually but also on the organization. We can make a difference, person by person, together as a team.

NEW PAYROLL SYSTEM NOW STAYING WITH 24 PAYCHECKS PER YEAR, NOT 26

The University has decided to stay with its twice-monthly pay cycle, on the 10th and 25th of each month, instead of switching to a biweekly pay cycle (every other Friday).

The HR/Payroll modernization team could not find ways around issues related to the pay cycle’s alignment to the academic calendar, and how the University reports compensation and retirement contributions to the state’s retirement systems.

The University will still be transitioning to the Workday payroll system from its 33-year-old system in late 2015, early 2016. The Facilities Services payroll team will continue to keep you informed of any upcoming changes and decisions made about the new system as they are announced.

Do you have questions about the new Workday system?
Contact FS Payroll Manager Katie Savoie at kannada@uw.edu.
“I really feel like I have campus’ back sometimes,” said Shop 41 technician Jim Rossi. “We see where lights are out that might create some extra darkness, a safety concern. If we find an unlocked door late at night, we work with UWPD and lock it up. We’re all together here; we’re one University and we want to help keep it safe and running smoothly.”

Support and care. That’s the feeling you get when you talk with any member of Shop 41, Facilities Maintenance & Construction’s night maintenance team.

Shop 41 is responsible for night-time maintenance, which typically falls under electrical lighting work, building filter maintenance and corrective work orders. They’re a dedicated team, working from 4 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Mondays through Thursdays (or early Fridays, depending on how you look at it.)

“We replace a lot of light bulbs, ballast, lamps and fixtures,” said interim Shop 41 Supervisor Eric Yerxa. “This also includes a lot of life-safety lighting, such as emergency and exit signs, blue emergency phones and other lighting systems.”

But while they may be known as the nighttime bulb-replacement team, they’re also responsible for maintenance across hundreds, if not thousands of campus classrooms and spaces.

“Shop 41 also has a preventative maintenance side. Every month we check each building’s intake filter. Sometimes we have to change pre-filters, rotate filter media, or sometimes even replace entire filter rolls.” said Sheet Metal Mechanic Lead Dan Hansen. “We also handle classroom support work orders, such as desks and chairs across all of campus.”

Building filters are larger than garage doors, composed of fiberglass and coated in dirt and other particulates. Employees with Shop 41 make their way down to mechanical rooms in dark basements, bringing plenty of gear while outfitted in Tyvek protective gear.

Tasks are detailed and time-consuming for this team. Checking classrooms
means going around and testing every seat of every chair, flipping each desk and tightening every screw. Missing one seat could mean a student falling to the ground, or a research project ruined.

Like many shops, positions in Shop 41 were eliminated in recent years as the result of budget cuts, and other positions remain open because of the qualifications required to be a Lighting and Filter Maintenance Technician.

“The amount of projects we receive can sometimes be overwhelming. Everything is urgent, but we can only do so much,” Hansen said. “We do what we can, and our shop’s employees really step up to the plate.”

WHY NIGHTS?

“I'm kind of a night owl, so this shift really appeals to me,” said Rossi. “It's really satisfying on night shift because you can finish work, and you're not in anyone's way.”

But for others, night shift can actually provide a unique work-life balance.

“Working at night and having a family is the best. I work four 10-hour shifts. I sleep in most days, but I get to pick up my kids from school and have an hour or two of time to spend with them either doing homework or goofing around before I go to work,” said Virgilio Hernandez. “I still get to see my kids, and that's really important to me.”

But beyond the preferences, night shift has other benefits.

“We can finish a lot of work during our shifts because nobody is in our way,” said Ramil Hernandez, another night shift technician. “During the day it can take two or three times longer to get to a job site, just because of campus traffic.”

“It's kind of nice that nobody knows who we are or ever sees us,” said Danilo Lambino. “Our work speaks for itself when campus just works.”

“I like the night shift because I'm more removed from the hustle-and-bustle during the days,” said Hansen. “I get to side-step all of the rush-hour traffic. I like to be invisible; I get so much work done because I'm working unencumbered by all of the constraints day shift has.”

Currently working on building filter maintenance, Virgilio Hernandez describes the constraints his team would face on day shift:

“I can go into a building in a full hazmat suit, ready to rotate a building's filter, a very dirty job, without freaking out students, faculty or staff. Let's face it, if you worked in a building and saw someone walking around in a hazmat suit you would wonder what's going on! You might be concerned, but it's just a regular part of building maintenance,” he said. “I can also go into buildings with a lot of equipment and not worry about displacing a bunch of students or employees, or having to set up as many detours around my work because, well, nobody's there.”
A CLOSE-KNIT TEAM

Shop 41 doesn’t just provide support and care for the University of Washington—they make it clear that their team is all about supporting each other.

“We’re a close-knit group, and we have to be. A lot of the work we do is based on group knowledge; you’re not going to learn it without people to show you,” said Rossi. “Campus has some incredibly unique and complex buildings and systems. To get to the point where you know campus like the back of your hand, well, that takes a transfer of knowledge you get from your coworkers showing you everything they know. It requires a lot of trust and intimacy.”

Shop 41 operates on a rotating partner system. Every few months the employees switch up their partners and start new tasks, fostering better relationships and keeping the work interesting.

“We’re working at night in dark basements and mechanical rooms. To thrive in that kind of environment, you really need to trust your team and work partner,” said Virgilio Hernandez. “We know the names of our coworkers’ children; we really know and support each other.”

More than half the employees of Shop 41 describe their team as, “like a family.”

“It’s not like we’re a perfect team, we have issues like any family might,” said Lambino. “But we really do help each other out. After all, it’s just us working on night maintenance. If it’s a tough project we’ll do whatever we can to fix it. That’s just how we are, our shop is like that.”
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOLDS ANNUAL DRILL

On March 26, UW Emergency Management activated the Emergency Operations Center for its annual University-wide disaster exercise. More than 60 EOC responders, external agencies, evaluators and observers attended the event, which tested the UW’s response to a boil-water advisory issued to campus and the surrounding areas.

The exercise helped evaluate the University’s response compared to current response plans. As a result, Emergency Management will work with its partners across the UW to make improvements to its plans, systems, networks and policies.
FMC UPGRADES SMARTPHONES FOR MORE THAN 200 TRADESPEOPLE, GIVING ITS EMPLOYEES A NEW AND INNOVATIVE TOOL TO GET THE JOB DONE.

At just 5” by 3”, the Samsung Galaxy Rugby may not seem like much, but for more than 200 Facilities Maintenance & Construction employees, a small but powerful smartphone made a big difference in how tradespeople access and exchange information while on the job.

In late 2014, AT&T notified Facilities Services that it would no longer be able to support the push-to-talk feature found on many employees’ flip-phones. This change became a catalyst for something larger: putting smartphones in the hands of FMC tradespeople, giving them access to information, work orders, schematics, training videos, time cards and more while they work in the field.

“This is a huge step forward that makes us more efficient,” said Southwest Zone Manager John Carroll. “We’re investing in our employees, giving them the tools they need to get the job done.”

Lock Shop Program Coordinator Ken McMaster served as a liaison between FMC and AT&T, helping sort out which information needed to be pre-loaded onto the new phones, and building hands-on training materials and sessions for FMC employees.

“AT&T came back to us with quite the deal. We were prepared to pay $25/phone because we knew getting this technology out there was the right choice,” said McMaster. “They ended up giving us all of the phones we needed for free, plus an extra 10 as backups. We jumped at the chance, but it meant we needed to transition quickly.”

With help from Amanda Grace, Dave Bomegen, Mike Baloux, John Carroll, Jon Parkin, Damon Fetters, Mary Jo Blahna, Mary Mahon and Eric Yerxa, McMaster was able to quickly acquire the phones and create training materials. He also taught classes to all 210 employees, ranging from tech-geek to never-touched-a-smartphone, on the ins-and-outs of their new phones.
“Ken’s training was really valuable, and everything was all set up,” said Electrician Dale Buckenberger. “I’ve figured out how to access our shop’s printer and mobile print, and chase parts in AiM, figuring out exactly where they’re in stock.”

Having access to this information while on-the-go has resulted in fewer trips back-and-forth between work sites and the Southwest Zone office.

“I can go straight to the correct FS Stores location to pick up the part I need, rather than going back to the office to look it up, or traveling from store to store,” Buckenberger said.

“Our tradespeople know how technology can best assist them, and they can share and spread these ideas across FMC” Carroll said. “Smartphones are going to take us to the next level of efficiency. By investing in our people and trusting them with new and powerful tools, we’re growing our employees, their skills, and our department.”

In the Southwest Zone in particular, smartphones are just one way employees are catching up with new, smart buildings being brought online.

“Housing and Food Services’ new residence halls are very technologically advanced. The boilers, lighting and other systems are all software based,” Carroll said. “Our employees need to be able to use that same level of technology to make adjustments and repairs.”

Although this project’s rollout is complete, McMaster expects he’ll be tapped for advice to help roll out smartphones to other units of Facilities Services, with help from Finance and Business Services’ IT team.

“I’ve helped with cell phones in a few different capacities at the UW now, and I’m already receiving inquiries from other teams within FMC, and even Campus Engineering & Operations, about how I went about this project.”

CHECKING IN ON LEAN

In mid-March, Facilities Services Stores held their 90-day report out on a lean process to review parts and tools that would not be used in the next four years, with a goal of making room for more, as well as newer, parts to better serve shops around FS.

As of March 2, 21 supervisors had completed their review of 133 parts and tools lists, with some of these lists containing hundreds of parts.

Out of more than 3,200 parts, 1,892 of those will be sent to surplus. Not only will the extra space make room for new parts and tools, but these unnecessary parts will not need to be inventoried again, saving staff time and effort.

Congratulations to the FS Stores lean team for their accomplishments.
On March 24 and 27, dozens of lean teams from workgroups across Building Services showcased their work at the Facilities Services Training Center.

Employees from across Facilities Services attended the event to learn about these teams and their journeys through lean. They learned first-hand from employees about their experiences with lean, best practices, and heard about some of the great ideas generated by these teams.