Message from the AVP

Thank you to everyone who completed the Finance & Facilities Employee Survey — all 728 of you! Facilities Services had an overall response rate of 79 percent showing a significant increase in participation over the years.

You may remember that this short survey asked only twenty-three questions, but each question was designed to better understand employee engagement and enthusiasm, teamwork and cooperation, and organizational culture. It is heartening to observe that all of your hard work and creative thinking, particularly in regard to our Lean initiatives, have been positively reflected in the overall results. There was a marked positive increase in a number of areas on the survey since you last participated in November 2011. Your 2013 survey answers indicated increased satisfaction in the following survey areas:

- Being part of a team working toward a shared goal
- The spirit of cooperation in the FS organization
- Different groups and departments in FS working well together
- All team members have an opportunity to influence the team’s results
- Your opinion seems to count at work
- Management decisions are based on what is good for the UW
- Quality is a top priority in FS
- Individual initiative is encouraged in FS
- You are comfortable with your supervisor
- You are treated with respect at work
- All employees are treated fairly in FS

Of course, having said this, we know our journey is far from over. We still have a lot of work to do. As gratifying as it is to be moving in a successful and productive direction, we need to stay our course and continue our work to learn how to engage everyone in improving the way we work. Your department leadership will be utilizing the employee survey information and working with you to achieve mutually successful results.

What’s New at the FS Training Center?

The first CPR/First Aid classes offered through Emergency Management and held at the training center began this summer.

The FS Training Academy has been busy putting together an interactive class registration system that will be available soon.

Watch your email for announcements about conflict and communication classes that will be offered again in fall. If you are looking for some training with your shop, contact the training center and they can arrange to come to your shop meeting.

Last month the training center staff began working with some trades employees to provide computer training on how to make a report. As the way we do work changes in FS, there is an increasing need to know how to use computers to accomplish our goals. The training center is a great place to get the computer skills you may need to move to the next step in your career. If you would like to become more skilled on computers, contact the training center for customized training.

For questions or to sign up for classes, contact the FS Training Center at fstrain@uw.edu or 206.685.9452.
Employee Profile: Rick Cheney

“It’s all about the people.” So says Rick Cheney after working in Facilities Services for the past 28 years, primarily as the Director of Maintenance & Alterations (now Facilities Maintenance & Construction).

As a UW alumnus, Rick’s connection to the University and the Seattle area extends beyond his nearly three decades of leadership here. After growing up near Bremerton, Washington, where he attended Central Kitsap High School, Rick earned a bachelor’s degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the UW and participated in R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officers Training Corps) throughout college. Upon graduating, he joined the Navy as a commissioned officer and spent five years flying as a Tactical Coordinator on P-3 Orion airplanes in Vietnam. Following his military service, Rick worked as an engineer for the Veterans Administration Hospital for ten years, including eight years at the Seattle V.A. He made the move to the UW because the campus offered the chance to participate in managing one of the largest facilities in the area.

When Rick first joined FS in 1985 as a Plant Maintenance Officer for Upper Campus, Facilities Services was called the Facilities Management Office and included Capital Projects. During his tenure as Assistant Director for Work Management, Rick developed a work management program, incorporating both computer-based management and new work management processes. “When I first got here,” he says, “there were no project managers at all,” even for large projects. When he became Director of M&A in 1999, Rick was responsible for all of the maintenance and small construction shops. “The shops here have really changed over the years I’ve been here,” he says. “The biggest change in shops has been going from trade-based shops to multi-trade shops,” which included creating zone-based maintenance areas and the construction unit. According to Rick, this transition took time and involved a lot of people, but it’s also one of his proudest accomplishments. Rick has witnessed transformation on the campus at-large, as well. “Campus has changed dramatically,” he says, describing the “explosion” in new building construction over that time. “Technology is another thing that has changed over the years. When I got here in 1985, people were using computers, but not that much. Work management was really just getting started. Now we use computers daily to communicate and manage work.”

Although there have been countless successful and significant construction projects over the years, Rick credits the shops with being responsible for those projects. He’s most proud of the restructuring of the shops and changes made in the department that allowed M&A to deliver a much higher level of service to the campus than when he first started. “It doesn’t mean we don’t need to continue to improve,” he’s quick to add, “and ask ourselves, ‘What are the needs of the customer and how can we best improve to meet those needs?’”

Current FMC Director Damon Fetters joined FS in March, and Rick is now working to “close my time as a director in an orderly fashion,” he says, and assist with the transition to new FMC leadership. This includes documentation and being available for questions about the history of the department.

Outside of work, Rick is “very involved with family and extended family.” He is the father of two sons, one of whom is in the U.S. Air Force. The other works in IT for Group Health in Seattle. Rick has also been participating in caregiving for a new granddaughter. “My wife cares for her daily because the mother is working full time,” he explains, “so that’s really fun.”

Rick also likes to travel and play golf, and he’s excited about working on projects around his home. “Another thing I’ve been involved in all along is sports cars,” he says, describing how he’s eager to restore the Datsun 240Z he’s had since it was new in 1970.

Although he’ll miss the UW, an organization that has been in his life since his undergraduate days, he’s says what he’ll miss most is the people. And while it may be hard for him to say goodbye, Rick feels he’ll be leaving FS in a strong position. “It’s a very good time for FS,” he says. “I think we’re on the verge of making very significant steps toward employee involvement and satisfaction . . . We’ve found a methodology through Lean to really get people involved in how we do the work, which will lead to continuous improvement. I think the future for FS and FMC is really bright and good things are coming.”

Thank you, Rick, for all of your years of dedicated service to Facilities Services and the University!