MESSAGE FROM
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT
CHARLES KENNEDY

I want to extend my sincere appreciation for all of you who participated in the October second annual Day of Service. Our service to others and upholding our Facilities Services values was exemplified on this special day. We exceeded our previous years’ turnout, the weather was better and we accomplished so much with our neighborhood partners. I thank you for coming in on your day off and for giving so much back to our university community!

As our calendar winds down I think about the many accomplishments we have achieved, the challenges that we have overcome together, the new faces we have welcomed into our organization and our exciting goals and aspirations that we have set for 2017. The next newsletter will highlight our many successes and will recognize the hard working employees and teams who comprise our world class organization.

During this month, and always, your family and friends come first. Reflect on the good things that you have been a part of and enjoy your time at home without thinking too much about work.

I want to close with an overall appreciation of this amazing Facilities Services organization full of caring and dedicated employees. You come to campus each day with a goal of making our University a more beautiful and productive environment for our students and fellow co-workers to learn, grow and develop. Enjoy a safe and happy December.

+TRAINING
FS Practical Leader:
How to hire a winner
Thursday, February 2, 2017 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

2017
FS Practical Leader:
Managing for Performance
Thursday, January 19
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

FS Practical Leader:
Safety it’s more than PPE
Thursday, January 5
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Making Cents out of Payroll
Thursday, February 16
10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The Training Academy Course Catalog can be found at: uw.edu/facilities/orgrel/training/academy/catalog

Recommend a class! https://goo.gl/fKg8zN
FIRST-EVER HELICOPTER DELIVERY
A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

BY ALICIA HALBERG

On Sunday, November 20, UW Facilities Services used a helicopter to remove and replace HVAC equipment on the rooftop of UW Medical Center's BB Tower.

UW Facilities Services’ decision to use a helicopter, rather than a crane, was months in the making. The project originated when the rooftop cooling unit, an integral part of the HVAC system for the BB Tower’s elevators, failed and couldn't be repaired. Although HVAC technicians installed a temporary rental unit in August to keep the elevators operational, it was clear that Facilities Services had an immediate challenge: to efficiently deliver and install a new rooftop cooling unit in the safest and most cost-effective way possible.

Seattle’s construction boom presented the staff’s first major hurdle: a crane large enough to deliver the new unit was booked more than six months out. And the crane operation could have blocked traffic and caused congestion in the major medical corridor for hours and even days.

That’s when forward-thinking Facilities Services staff began to explore creative options and seek bids, ultimately hiring Hi Line Helicopters, long known for their safety and service track record.

“Our FS mission statement includes adapting and innovating to preserve physical assets to deliver best services,” said Health Sciences Zone Manager Roy Wechselberger. “This helicopter lift operation is exactly what we’re talking about in our mission statement—adapting and innovating to serve our campus.”

The logistics necessary to pull off the massive operation included daily staff briefings (required by the Federal Aviation Administration) and evacuations of some portions of the always-busy UW Medical Center.

More than 30 UW Facilities Services maintenance personnel assisted with the operation, alongside staff from UW Medical Center, UW Police Department, and Seattle Fire Department.

“It really was a team effort to get this done,” said Health Sciences Maintenance Zone Project Manager Tim McGrath. “From everyone up on the floors to central command and everyone in-between, it’s been an impressive effort.”

Wechselberger agreed.

“A true team effort can yield huge results. Through an incredible FMC team combined effort and weighing out all possible options, we safely and successfully performed the first helicopter lift operation in our history,” said Wechselberger. “There were many challenges along the way, but in the end we learned valuable lessons which will benefit all departments involved. Facilities Maintenance & Construction can now look at this type of operation as being a viable option in the future.”

“A TRUE TEAM EFFORT CAN YIELD HUGE RESULTS”
Roy Wechselberger Health Sciences Zone Manager
ROY WECHSELBERGER WOULD LIKE TO 
EXTEND SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Jon Parkin for all his support and being patient with my team throughout this process

Tim McGrath for project managing the overall operation and providing detailed safety education to our teams

Liz Penttila for her leadership, bringing the enormous amount of detail together and leading the command center

Rex Corpuz for implementing the elevator machine room temporary cooling strategy, lift operation equipment planning/implementation and safety support

And special thanks to all staff involved in the lift operation:

SHOPS 17 AND 35 
(HEALTH SCIENCE MAINTENANCE)

Tim McGrath  Liz Penttila  Craig Steiner
Dennis Garberg  Trevor Anderson  Rex Corpuz
Daimon Ortiz  Ed Brandes  Henry Poltorak
Jerome Wrenchey  Gary Blendheim  Don Carter
Charles Uskoski  Joe Hubbell  Robbie Lawrence
Steven Lloyd  Eric Pettersen  Gayle Clute
Mark Nance  Max Cerezo  Mark Mayfield
Mansur Meshalla  Jeffery Knowles  Rafeeq Islam
Stew Fyfe  Steve Deyesso  Steve Kerby
Richard Johnson  Richard Gonzales

FS COMMUNICATION
Alicia Halberg

FS SAFETY
Tracey Mosier

FS STORES
Gail Gokey  Mark Leider

ELEVATOR SHOP 23
Dave West  John Sala

FIRE ALARM SHOP 24
Don Stevens  Mark Berkheiser
Terry Wood  Geoff Hallett

CONSTRUCTION SHOP 58
Riley Nelson  Tom Horne
Mike Karther  Grant Folstad

We also extend our thank you to Hi Line Helicopters, the FAA, Seattle Fire Department, UW Transportation Services, and University Police Department for their support during this operation.
BY ALLISON NITCH

UW Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) and Building Services Department (BSD) recently partnered up for the Safety & Health Investment Project (also known as the SHIP grant project or Participatory Ergonomics Project). Funded by State of Washington, Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), the project team engaged BSD custodians and leadership, UW EH&S leadership, Facilities Services Safety Team, and professional ergonomists in a year-long collaboration. Their collective efforts focused on the goal of developing ergonomic solutions to reduce risk of musculoskeletal injuries among custodial staff.

“Worker injuries and how we can prevent them are really important to me,” said Dr. Debra Milek, medical co-director for EH&S within the occupational medical clinic at Harborview Medical Center. “I looked at the data and saw that the third highest area for workplace injuries was in facilities and custodial work. There’s a lot of focus out there on office ergonomics, using the right chairs, desks, lumbar support, keyboards, screens, etc. However, there isn’t a lot available for custodial workers. The BSD custodial team had already worked with L&I on building a better custodial cart, but there wasn’t a programmatic or systematic way for them to make safety improvements. I spoke with Facilities Services Safety Manager, Tracey Mosier, and it seemed like BSD would be very receptive to the idea of pursuing this grant and taking on this big task,” said Milek.

Mosier was right. Gene Woodard, director of Building Services Department, quickly agreed to the collaboration when he was contacted by Dr. Milek and EH&S. “BSD leadership cares deeply about our custodial team’s health and wellness—along with the outcomes of the work that they do every day. Custodial work is very physical, so we had a strong sense that this project could help us discover ways to make the work more comfortable. Our unit immediately got to work with EH&S in developing the grant proposal, objectives and what we would like to accomplish,” said Woodard. The project plan was also shared and discussed with the union that represents custodial employees.

STEP BY STEP

Collecting information about cleaning tasks involved the development of a pre-modification survey highlighting 16 common custodial tasks. “The first phase of the project was to find out what repetitive tasks were causing BSD custodians the most discomfort, as discomfort itself can be a predictor of future injury,” said Milek. “To do so, we used pictures to help identify tasks within the survey format. We then administered surveys to volunteer groups of custodians and supervisors.” Interpreter services were also provided for individuals in need of assistance while reviewing survey materials.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
“A big concern we've researched is the intensity of discomfort that our custodians feel,” said Woodard. “We systematically went through each task and had a group of custodians identify which ones create the most discomfort for them,” he said.

“If you don't ask, you're not really going to find out,” said Milek. “Custodian input has been so valuable and integral to this entire process. We couldn't have done it without them.”

During phase two, the pre-modification survey results were used as a guide in determining the five tasks that custodians cited as causing the most discomfort, which include: wearing/using vacuum backpacks; scraping floors before waxing; cleaning toilets; opening dumpster lids; and picking up trash from auditorium/lecture floors. The group then set out to develop improvements through a participatory process.

The project team formed four small groups in order to address challenges and determine possible ergonomic solutions for each of the five identified tasks during phase three.

“It was a great opportunity to meet other custodians and specialists,” said George Ceratto, Area D custodian. “I enjoyed learning about the research/development process and the implementation of our findings. It’s interesting to be behind-the-scenes and see what exactly goes into making ergonomic improvements.”

“ BSD’s mantra became ‘We're trying to save our backs’!,” said Woodard. With that particular concern in mind, each group ultimately developed and implemented the following potential solutions during phase four:

- Proper harness fitting and training for vacuum backpacks.
- Scraping floors with longer-handled and height adjustable poles, and/or small scrubber machines.
- Basing length of toilet brush handles on user height.
- Telescopic trash-grabbers with magnets for picking up trash from floors.
- Use of lift devices for holding dumpster lids, (a challenge that students from UW Engineering chose to take on as a class project in collaboration with the SHIP team).

There was an unexpected discovery that popped up while researching toilet cleaning: restroom toilet stalls.

“The doors didn't originate as a problem, but we recognized them as an issue while we were processing the task of toilet cleaning,” said Ceratto.

“Not only were brush handles and bending over an issue with cleaning toilets, but so was using hips to hold stall doors open, as well as bending and twisting at odd angles,” said Milek. “We tried a few solutions and ended up installing magnets on the inside of stall doors so that each door could be held open automatically. It’s a really elegant solution that saves custodians a lot of time and prevents awkward movements.”

BSD maintenance custodians assisted with the installation process.

During phases five and six, a post-modification survey was distributed and pre- and post-risk assessments were observed. “We’re committed to building on our environment of safety and finding real and sustainable solutions that help our custodians,” said Woodard. “We're also committed to working solutions in a way that engages our custodians, so that they continue to have a say in how they do their work and improve the process.”

“Creating change
Along with making a difference in the lives of BSD team members, the SHIP grant project also holds the potential of shifting the status quo in terms of the custodial industry. “In terms of equipment, there’s not a lot of advancement out there. We’re hoping one of the outcomes of this project is that manufacturers are more receptive to feedback,” said Milek. “When Gene (Woodard) presents the project’s findings during meetings and conferences, our efforts can help influence others to take a look at the ergonomics and discomforts of their custodial and facilities work. We can become more involved in creating new and improved designs, because so many of these issues stem from having a one-size-fits-all solution. One manufacturer we’ve worked with is receptive to our feedback and is changing their designs. That pressure, we’ve found, is really necessary to making changes.”

Woodard echoed this sentiment of a large-scale culture change within the field of custodial services: “Making recommendations for improvements to various cleaning tools by end users such as university custodians hasn’t been systematically done before in our industry.”

Additionally, the SHIP grant team’s findings on strain and injuries through repetitive movements are catching the eye of the medical community. “The occupational medic physicians I’ve talked to have treated custodians in the past and continue... CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
to do so. They're very interested in the progress we have made within the last year. It feels like we’re on the cutting edge; we’re trying something new and making improvements that will benefit many people,” said Milek.

Ceratto added: “As we’re learning through our Lean huddles, the work area managers know what we need to do each day, but it’s the custodians that are familiar with the quirks within every building and every cleaning task they’re responsible for. Through this project, we’re seeing ideas that people have developed on their own but were unable to share with others. Programs like SHIP are helping to implement those ideas with a focus on safety. I certainly would recommend other custodians to get involved in this process. I think it’s a best practice to get involved and volunteer for programs. I’ve enjoyed participating; it’s been a pleasure working with the team!”

LOOKING AHEAD
Since funding expired in May 2016, BSD has committed to continue the project as a department-run effort through May of 2017. Working with Dr. Milek on a quarter-time basis, the new ergonomics team—which includes representatives from all custodial work areas—meets weekly to keep the project moving forward. Jessica Lisiewski, who splits her time as ergonomics project manager and UW Recycling program coordinator, oversees the team’s progress.

“The current team has the opportunity to build on the improvements that the inaugural ergonomics project team researched,” said Lisiewski. “By continuing to improve the health of UW custodians now, our department has the potential to impact the entire custodial team within BSD for years to come. The ergonomic study is an important mission to make working within BSD safer and more comfortable.”