MESSAGE FROM ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT CHARLES KENNEDY

For those of you whose schedules allowed you to attend the 2016 All-Staff Meeting on January 28, it was great to see you there! A lot of hard work went into planning this year’s event and I want to thank the planning committee for their usual great efforts. I also hope you found the information shared by the presenter interesting and useful.

The theme of the meeting, and our mantra for 2016, is about service and how the service we provide as Facilities Services does a world of good for our University.

As you know, our organizational motto is serving today... preserving tomorrow. One of our own employees developed this motto, and it is significant in telling the story about Facilities Services. Service is about assisting or helping others – Facilities Services is all about assisting others by helping make the campus a better place to work and thrive for our students, faculty and staff.

I want to emphasize the importance of delivering excellent service to our own employees by working together to provide a safe work environment. Through enhanced training, following safe work practices, and making safety a part of our daily business, we have decreased our incident rate over the past four years by 41.5 percent.

In a more direct service effort, we had 100 employees participate in our first annual FS Day of Service in October. During a rainy Saturday morning, FS employees washed and cleaned, and most importantly, demonstrated a cohesive team spirit of service in the University community.

An attitude of service can come in many forms—it’s about caring for our environment and getting involved in making the world around us a better place.

Thank you, as always, for your service to this organization and to the University of Washington.

UW Safety, Sustainability and Preparedness Expo

light refreshments • emergency kit swag • door prizes • the wheel of misfortune • and so much more!

Wednesday, February 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
HUB Ballroom
Learn more and rsvp online: http://goo.gl/rhHjD5
Stepping Stones is a training program offered by the FS Training Center, in conjunction with the sponsoring department, which gives frontline staff opportunities to learn leadership skills that are necessary for moving up to lead, supervisor and management positions.

“There are people in this department who have been here forever but don’t have any management experience,” explained Shop 41 Lead Eric Yerxa. “There’s a little more of a path for [FMC and CEO staff] to leadership than there is for custodians because we have lead positions, but it still isn’t a very clear path.”

Stepping Stones remedies this issue by providing students with leadership skills and experience they can use in their current jobs, and when applying for lead, supervisory or managerial positions.

In June 2015, Building Services graduated its first cohort of custodians through the first phase of the Stepping Stones training program. In Autumn 2015 Facilities Maintenance & Construction and Campus Engineering & Operations launched their first group together because of the similar nature of their shop work. This group completed phase one of the program in early January 2016.

“People with gumption and desire seek out the opportunities to advance, and now the department is trying to codify that by providing set opportunities and paths for employees who want to advance,” said Yerxa.

This Stepping Stones cohort, the first from FMC and CEO, consists of leads from across both departments.

“This group was very different from the first group,” said Training Manager Mary Jo Blahna. “This group was very interactive and willing to share their experiences. They were open to new ideas and activities that may have stretched their comfort level, but I think they learned a lot from those sessions.”

Stepping Stones classes involved readings, assignments, role playing, discussions and more.

“I’ve already used some of the things I learned in the class in my current position, and glory be, it works!” said Power

The latest group of Stepping Stones phase one graduates from Facilities Maintenance & Construction and Campus Engineering & Operations includes Norm Kwasinski (pictured), James Boeckstiegel, Ron Frees, Eric Yerxa, Mark Pekarek, Jeff Kopeć, Carl Woods, Erik Brihagen and Theo Schmitz.
Plant Mechanic Lead Ron Frees. “I thought it would be another boring class with my eyeballs dropping out of my head, but it went deeper than I thought possible. Mary Jo tailored the class specifically to our backgrounds at Facilities Services.”

Frees wasn’t the only Stepping Stones students who started out skeptical.

“I completed the University’s supervisory certification back in 2004, and I was worried this would be just another training class,” said Heavy Equipment Operator Lead Erik Brihagen. “But it’s good to be reminded about leadership skills and practice them regularly, and Mary Jo placed everything in a context specific to my position and workgroup.”

For Facilities Maintenance & Construction, the class represents an opportunity to make employees more competitive for promotional opportunities.

“We started tracking how many lead, supervisor and manager positions we fill from within,” said FMC Director Damon Fetters. “We do pretty well, especially in lead and supervisor positions, but we’re better at promoting journey-level employees to leads than we are at promoting leads to supervisors, which is why we launched our first class with our department’s leads.”

This group was selected by their managers and supervisors. A second group already began the program in early January because of its popularity.

“If you’re invited to go then it means you’ve been doing something right that’s caught the attention of your supervisors and directors,” said Frees. “We don’t often recognize each other in that way around here, but I think this training is going to make a better environment for our employees.”

The second group consists of journey-level staff from FMC and CEO. A second group of custodians from Building Services also launched in early January.

“This is not a one-and-done program, we intend for this to be an ongoing program for our staff,” said Fetters. “My view is that through our own training and development for excellence that all employees have the opportunity to move up if they want to.”

But the class isn’t just an opportunity to earn promotions, it’s a chance for employees to apply leadership skills in the positions they have now, as well as in their personal lives.

“I think it’s exciting that more journey-level folks in our department will have the opportunity to go for leadership positions within the department,” said Brihagen. “I also think these classes are valuable on a personal level, they help with my communication skills and I have fun!”

“Some people are hoping to advance into new positions, but I think some folks are just looking for the opportunity to enhance the skills they need for their current job,” said Yerxa. “Training is all about bettering yourself.”

Many were surprised about how much work goes in to being a supervisor.

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“A lot of people I think tend to view supervisors as the enemy, but they’re really no different! They just have a different set of priorities,” said Yerxa. “I think some folks might take this class and realize that lead and supervisory positions aren’t for them. The tasks in leadership positions involve a lot of responsibility, and I think some folks are perfectly happy in their current positions, and that’s great! It’s a good thing to be happy with where you’re at, but I’m thankful the department has opportunities for those of us who want to explore further.”

This group of Stepping Stones students began phase two of the program in January, learning about systems and tools they would use in their everyday work as a supervisor or manager, such as AiM, corrective action and other technology. The final piece of Stepping Stones includes completing the Practical Leader six-course series from the FS Training Center.

“I’ve never seen anything like this in my 30 years at the University,” said Frees. “I’m thankful that my department is willing to let me take time to go to class, that they’re giving me the time, focus and opportunity to potentially get promoted! It’s nice to think that the University really cares.”

FACILITIES SERVICES HOLDS ANNUAL ALL-STAFF MEETING

On Thursday, January 28, all eight Facilities Services departments came together to hear Associate Vice President Charles Kennedy and guest speaker Ann Ardizzone, Vice President of Strategic Sourcing and Supply Chain Management for Alaska Airlines.

The theme of the meeting was service, and highlighted ways in which our employees serve in their work, and serve each other. Memorable moments included an opera entrance from Clayton Brainerd, encore attempts by Josh Kavanagh and Gene Woodard, and official recognition of our department’s two Distinguished Staff Award nominees, which can be found on the next few pages.
DISTINGUISHED STAFF AWARD NOMINEE

TRACEY MOSIER

Safety Manager Tracey Mosier, of Facilities Employee Services, has been nominated for the 2016 Distinguished Staff Award. An excerpt from one of Tracey’s nomination letters:

“As Safety Manager for Facilities Services (FS), Tracey demonstrates on a daily basis her constant goal for safe work practices for all employees through awareness and training. The ideas and improvements that Tracey initiates are innovative and continually help to advance the Safety program in Facilities Services. She promotes engagement with such initiatives as the Stop Work Program (See Something, Say Something) that pertains to all FS employees, empowering them to take action when they see unsafe actions by their coworkers or other people on campus. Her ideas to utilize the most current technology to more efficiently track our work progress and practices have enabled us to focus our time on what matters and work more effectively for our clients, the FS employees.”
CARMEN GUMIIT

Custodian Carmen Gumiiit, of Building Services Area A, has been nominated for the 2016 Distinguished Staff Award.
An excerpt from one of Carmen’s nomination letters:

“Carmen Gumiiit radiates positivity whenever I see her on our floor. I have noticed her efficiency, consistency, and passion for the tasks assigned to her...The extra time Carmen spends making sure that our facilities are clean reflect the pride that we have in our program and wish to present to our students and international visitors on a daily basis. While she has many other departments to take care of, she does not hesitate to spend the extra time needed to make sure everything is in the best possible condition.”