Although the FS Training Center opened its doors in March, we were recently able to host its official Grand Opening on May 23, as we continue in our mission to train and promote world class employees.

As you recall, at our well-attended Open House event on April 25, every FS employee was invited to tour the FS Training Center and many stopped by throughout the day. The Grand Opening event in May took place on a much smaller scale due to fire code and available space so we asked the directors to invite and recognize ten to twelve employees from each of their departments to watch the ribbon cutting ceremony and to hear remarks from UW President Young and Senior Vice President V’Ella Warren. President Young and V’Ella toured the facility and both expressed their appreciation for the vision to re-purpose warehouse space into a high-tech learning environment for our FS staff. In their remarks, they also shared how this training center illustrates that FS is a forward thinking organization that believes in the importance of empowering and training employees to meet the challenges of a changing university business environment.

As a reminder, the FS shops who contributed their great efforts to the repurposing of the training space include Carpentry, Grounds, Metal Trades and Paint Shops, as well as those in Moving & Surplus whose Lean improvements helped create space for the training center in the Plant Services Building. Thank you also to Breona Gutschmidt for taking photographs and telling the story of the training center since its inception and, of course, to Training Manager Mary Jo Blahna and Training Specialist Mary Mahon for keeping the academy operating on a daily basis.

Our Mission: We learn, adapt and innovate to preserve physical assets and deliver best services to enable the University’s pursuit of excellence and discovery.
What’s in the Trash? Trash-In Sorts It Out

On April 24, UW Recycling, in collaboration with student groups Earth Club and the UW Garbology Project, hosted its annual Trash-In, a mini trash sorting event where staff and volunteers explore how much recyclable and compostable material is still being thrown in the garbage on campus. The objective of Trash-In is to increase campus-wide awareness of the materials that make up our waste stream. For the second year in a row, the event was held on Red Square, a highly visible location where passersby can stop in to ask questions and learn more about recycling and composting on campus. Results from the event are used to guide the development of future waste reduction programs and strategies.

The breakdown of materials sorted in 2013 was fairly similar to previous years. This shows that existing recycling programs are working well because recyclable containers and paper made up less than 20 percent of the overall garbage during the sort. However, there are still opportunities to get more recyclables out of the garbage.

The UW has a comprehensive composting program, but because more than half of the garbage sorted was compostables, opportunities remain for capturing additional compostable items. To do this, UW Recycling is increasing the number of Solar Kiosks in outdoor public spaces on campus and expanding the number of buildings participating in MiniMax, its desk-side recycling program.

Coffee cups make up a large portion of the compostable and recyclable material being thrown away as garbage on campus. These are items that would not exist in the waste stream if people used their own coffee mugs. For more information on the Trash-In or other Recycling & Solid Waste programs, go to: www.uwrecycling.com.

Tips from Tracey: Heat Stress

Recent warm weather has been a reminder that hot summer days are ahead, and it is time to refresh our knowledge of the recognition, prevention and first aid of heat-related disorders. Working outdoors in hot weather can put employees at risk for heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Heat exhaustion is a serious health problem, and heat stroke can kill. If you work outside more than fifteen minutes each hour, your supervisor will provide training on heat stress. For more information EH&S has developed focus sheets for both employees and supervisors.

Employees can find the information at: http://www.ehs.washington.edu/ohs/ehs_focussheet_heatstress_employee.pdf.

Supervisor information is located at: http://www.ehs.washington.edu/ohs/ehs_focussheet_heatstress_supervisor.pdf.

This topic should have been covered in more detail at your May shop meeting as part of the Monthly Meeting Topics.

100 Best Fleets 2013

Fleet Services has again been named to the 100 Best Fleets list. Way to go!

UW Named Tree Campus USA for 2012

Thanks in large part to the hard work of Grounds Management, the UW has recently been named a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for the fourth year in a row. The University of Washington achieved the title by meeting Tree Campus USA’s five standards, which include maintaining a tree advisory committee, a campus tree-care plan, dedicated annual expenditures toward trees, an Arbor Day observance and student service-learning projects. Congratulations!

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Employee Profile: Damon Fetters

Damon Fetters, Director of Facilities Maintenance & Construction (FMC), joined Facilities Services only two months ago, but he brings extensive, diverse experience to his new position from 21 years as an engineer for the U.S. Navy. The move to Seattle for his role in FS, which he considers the start of his second career, is a return to his beginnings: After earning an engineering degree from the U.S. Naval Academy, Damon began his military service nearby as an A-6 Intruder bombardier/navigator flying out of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station. Since then, his career has taken him all over the country and the world. “Eighteen plus years ago, I made the transition to the Civil Engineer Corps,” he says, explaining that the CEC is responsible for all base infrastructure for the Navy and Marines. He has worked in Construction Facilities Management for the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. “It was a wonderful career that literally took me around the globe working on everything from $100 million construction projects to smaller humanitarian assistance projects in Africa,” he says. His accomplishments include base master plans, regional master plans, public works, capital projects and operational support for the Seabees (the U.S. Navy Construction Battalion). He’s lived in “all four corners of the U.S. from the East Coast to California,” as well as Okinawa, Japan. “The capstone of my career,” he says “was in 2011 when I spent a year in East Africa.” While in the region, he worked on building schools, clinics and water wells, in addition to base operations.

As director of FMC, Damon is now overseeing the multi-faceted building and maintenance needs of our 643-acre campus. “I’m responsible for each of our maintenance zones, the grounds zone and Construction, which handles projects under $90,000 for clients on campus,” describes Damon. Although initially it took some time to learn the organization of facilities and the University as a whole, as well as how FMC fits into the bigger picture, “where my focus really is,” he says, “supported by very capable managers and a top notch workforce, is making sure the direction we’re going is the right direction in terms of value for our customers.”

Damon supports FMC’s existing vision of delivering world-class service twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. “How we get there really goes back to understanding what it is we do that is of value to our customers.” He stresses asking what value means to the customer and delivering that level of service, “from the highest level of quality for the president’s office and Hillcrest to good, solid target brand quality that fits another customer’s time and budget.” He sees a flexible organization and empowered employees as key to achieving this vision. He is also focused on enhancing the work environment, “so employees want to come to work, are engaged, and see that they themselves are that value because that is how I view our team.”

He’s excited about the people in Facilities Services and the UW campus as a whole: “Coming to UW has exceeded my expectations,” he says, “the organization and the larger campus, as well. What really gets me excited is the people. We really do have high quality, dedicated, highly competent people here who want to make a difference.” As for challenges ahead, he says, sometimes it’s necessary, “to pull back the curtain to look behind stage and ask, ‘What are we doing? Why are we doing it?’ And search for a way to do it better. . . It’s essential that we do look at things in a different way. The environment has changed. Technology has changed, and there have been changes in the budget environment.”

One example of looking at existing practices from a new perspective is the new safety philosophy FMC released a few weeks ago. The philosophy and associated goals aim to prioritize safety, lower risk and reduce lost work time. “Nothing we do requires that we put life and limb in harm’s way,” says Damon. “If it’s not safe, we will not do it until we can find a way that is safe to do so.”

Outside of work, Damon enjoys family, football and the great outdoors. “My real pride and joy are my two daughters,” he says. “They live in Utah and the oldest is starting at the University of Utah this fall. Personally, I love being active, whether that’s running, yoga, playing sports or other outdoor activities. I’m just starting to get involved in that here,” he says, adding that he’s looking forward to seeing the sights our region has to offer and getting out into the wilderness this summer. He’s also anticipating Husky football this fall. “I’m a huge football fan. I’ll be cheering for the UW . . . Unless they play Navy.”

Damon appreciates the beauty of campus and its “mix of historic buildings and modern construction, the water, Mt. Rainier, evergreens — it’s one of the most beautiful campuses I’ve seen as I’ve travelled around the country,” he says. But it was the people of FS and the opportunity to have an impact that brought him to the UW. “Since I’ve been here, I’ve been impressed by the mechanics and tradespeople on up to the senior leadership I’ve met. What drew me here was the opportunity to come in and help make a difference in the organization and campus as a whole and the potential to take the organization even further in providing that world-class service.”