SEE MORE

- In-Person Teaching Returns
- High School Students Tour F&S
- St. Mary’s Road Construction
Letter from the Executive Director

As the university welcomes students back to on-campus learning, we again recognize the efforts of those like our building service workers, who adjust to new challenges brought by the response to the pandemic, and other staff who stayed on the front lines even during the height of stay-at-home orders. Properly and safely running essential services across campus had to continue.

And yet our staff continue to delight and demonstrate pride and humanity more each day. I hope you take the time to read the story of Vinh Nguyen, one of our water station operators, who fell victim to a life-threatening emergency, and how his coworkers helped save his life. I want to recognize these F&S heroes: A fellow water station operator Brian Barto acted quickly and bravely in a traumatic situation, and carpenters Lucas Burton and Bryan Helfrich selflessly gave their time and efforts to help first responders, two UIPD officers Jason Bradley and Rodney Mitchell, before EMTs arrived to get Nguyen to the hospital.

Incredibly, Nguyen has recovered and is even back at work. His first action was to professionally and publicly thank and recognize Barto and the rest for saving his life, the gratitude felt by his family.

This event only furthers my appreciation for our workforce, and their vital role in protecting the health and success of the campus and its students, faculty, and staff every day. Sometimes, in ways you don’t expect.

~ Dr. Ehab Kamarah, interim executive director of F&S, director of Capital Programs

Position Updates for Gordon, Neighbors, Watkins

In recent months, several F&S employees have taken on new leadership positions throughout the organization. Malikah Gordon was named associate director for Customer Relations & Communications. Jenny Watkins was tabbed as interim director of Shared Administrative Services; and Jeremy Neighbors was added as interim director of Safety and Compliance. Gordon has been with F&S as the manager of customer relations since 2019 and has more than 15 years’ experience in customer relations and satisfaction roles. Watkins is a certified public accountant who has been with F&S since 2013. Her division supports planning, budgeting, and financial resources across all of F&S. Neighbors has been with F&S since 2008, serving in various capacities in occupational safety.

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F&S, UIPD Help Save a Life

“I and my family are forever grateful to everyone who was involved in saving my life that day, especially to Brian for his quick response to my medical emergency and for his leadership, professionalism, and calmness he displayed in the midst of what must have been a very stressful and chaotic situation.”

~ Vinh Nguyen, F&S water station operator

Brian Barto (water station), Lucas Burton, and Bryan Helfrich (carpenters) recently exhibited calm and grace under pressure when they assisted another F&S employee, Vinh Nguyen, who was experiencing a life-threatening health emergency. Their quick action allowed emergency personnel to get to the scene quickly to administer life-saving techniques and transport him to the hospital.

On June 28, while driving in an F&S service vehicle on campus, Nguyen suffered a medical incident near the intersection of Illinois Street and Goodwin Avenue in Urbana. Barto, the passenger, managed to direct the truck out of the oncoming lane and to the edge of the road and stopped just outside Burrill Hall, all without endangering any nearby pedestrians or parked cars. Barto couldn’t even safely reach the brake pedal from his seat, but Nguyen’s foot was in the right place to help the vehicle slow down to a stop.

After exiting the vehicle and going around to the driver’s side to check on Nguyen, Barto requested a passerby assist the situation by calling 911. Attracted by the commotion by happenstance, Burton and Helfrich made the scene and helped to get Nguyen out of the truck and flat on the sidewalk, and started first aid under the direction of the 911 dispatcher.

University of Illinois Police Department (UIPD) officers Jason Bradley and Rodney Mitchell were on the scene within minutes of the 911 call, and they offered more advanced aid before Nguyen was transported to the hospital.

Together their quick actions saved a life and set an excellent example for the care of a coworker and fellow human being. After his recovery, Nguyen is feeling well and is back at work. After his return, a small reception was held to honor and congratulate all involved. One of his first actions was to recognize those who helped him in a time of need.

“I and my family are forever grateful to everyone who was involved in saving my life that day, especially to Brian for his quick response to my medical emergency and for his leadership, professionalism, and calmness he displayed in the midst of what must have been a very stressful and chaotic situation,” Nguyen wrote in a thank-you and employee recognition letter to F&S leaders.

*Photos taken during the period when the indoor mask requirement was temporarily removed

From l-r: Barto, Burton, Nguyen, Helfrich, Officer Bradley, and Officer Mitchell

Mark Barcus, Dave Boahm, Dr. Ehab Kamarah, and Matt Dalton were on hand to congratulate Barto, Burton, Nguyen, and Helfrich.
Student Program Brings Next Generation to Tour F&S

To best explore a potential career in the crafts and trades, local high school students were able to walk a mile in tradespeople’s shoes. Or in this case, carry the 40-pound tool strap of ironworker Erik “Cable” Davis.

“It’s not too heavy now, but carry it on your back for a full day’s work and you’ll feel it,” Davis explained to groups visiting teens. Many did try it on, marveling at the weight. F&S hopes they’ll not only “try on” a career in the crafts and trades, but that they’ll be part of the next generation of tradespeople.

More than 30 local high school students participating in the Parkland College-led “Education for Employment System (EFE) #330” toured F&S shops like the ironworkers, plumbers and pipefitters, painters, and electricians. There, shop experts and forepersons helped explain why they were interested in crafts and trades, often noting familial relations to other tradespeople like a parent or other close relative. Positions also do not require a bachelor’s degree and can provide a wage and lifestyle many want. The work can be challenging, but extremely rewarding. Early exposure to this type of work may help students understand the path to F&S shops, and addresses goals in the F&S Strategic Plan “Foundations for the Future,” to invest in the people of F&S by growing and training the next generation.

The EFE #330 program directs state and federal funds for career and technical education programs at schools in Champaign, Ford, Piatt, and Douglas counties. “The opportunities for young people in trades are endless,” said Nick Elder, director of Education for Employment System #330. “What we seek to do is to expose as many students as possible to those opportunities. I think more young people would choose this route if they could experience it in a hands-on fashion. It can be a rewarding career with opportunity for growth.”

Elder values how F&S shops make themselves available, even while functioning at a high work completion rate. Located at the Physical Plant Service Building (PPSB), F&S Crafts & Trades workrooms are all located on-site; plumbers are just down the hallway from carpenters, elevator mechanics, electricians, and all of the rest. “F&S is a perfect facility for us to tour because there are so many different tradespeople located in a central location,” Elder said. “It’s a safe and clean work environment. The students can interact with tradespeople from all different backgrounds performing different tasks. It’s a great way to expose the students to people who have made a successful career in the trades.”

Mark Barcus delivered presentations to the students before their hands-on learning began. Barcus is the assistant superintendent of Building Maintenance, Operations, Maintenance & Alterations, a position that oversees hundreds of craftspeople. Barcus made sure to note how his story, and that of his coworkers, might provide an example to younger generations.

“I worked for my family’s carpentry business and then went into the Navy, and that was the right path for me,” said Barcus. “I hope these kids know they should find what they’re passionate about and do that. But they should know, this is a great option: you can work with your hands, make something to be proud of, and take your skills anywhere in the world to get good work.”

“We just want them to know it is a great option,” said Elder. “We tell students to figure out what they are interested in and can be good at and pick the best route to help you be successful. The workplace is moving towards requiring some type of post-high school education, but that doesn’t mean only college or university.”

**Photos taken during the period when the indoor mask requirement was temporarily removed**

“F&S is a perfect facility for us to tour because there are so many different tradespeople located in a central location... It’s a great way to expose the students to people who have made a successful career in the trades.”

— Nick Elder, director of Education for Employment System #330
For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic started in March 2020, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign will welcome the majority of students and faculty back to on-site learning.

Getting to that reality has taken courageous leadership and quick functioning administrative action, but just as important, actual work on the front lines.

The F&S HVAC Response Team, a collection of a handful of experts from across divisions that formed shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic, looked at ventilation and filtration in more than 800 classrooms; but there’s also 2,623 shared spaces on campus, as well. Every spot where students, faculty, and staff could conceivably gather needed to be examined.

Most spaces have outside air provided by mechanical systems, but the very few that do not are mostly used for storage. By opening doors and windows—and in some cases using a portable HEPA air filter—just nine classrooms without mechanical airflow systems will still function safely and effectively, per guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

Every section of every class needed proper oversight, so the F&S Classroom Assessment Team evaluated and provided enrollment capacity to Facility and Management Scheduling (FMS), which is the administrative unit that makes the schedule for classes. It was found that 30 classrooms, for instance, are either under construction or to be used as storage, while hundreds of more rooms can continue and hit protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and its variants.

Throughout the pandemic, F&S labored to move furniture and moveable walls/guards to adhere to social-distancing guidelines; reviewed and replaced air filters and ventilation; and added and removed signage, tape, and stickers with different information on each iteration of the response. New service levels have been released, which outline the work services and schedule for the fall semester for custodial activities, including scheduled cleaning, trash pick-up, and disinfection guidelines in case of a positive case.

As the reality surrounding the response to COVID changed—and continues to change—university leaders shifted direction as necessary, per guidelines from the CDC, Illinois Department of Public Health and Champaign-Urbana Public Health District. Even with the July 29 announcement of the return to face coverings requirement for building entry, no social distancing or room capacity was required.

So, welcome back students, faculty, and staff—and know that F&S experts and laborers will continue to provide an environment where you and the community can safely participate in campus activities! For the most up-to-date information, visit: https://fs.illinois.edu/resources/covid-response.
The Urbana campus has welcomed a new notable landmark: the recently redesigned Red Oak Rain Garden, complete with a brilliant, locally culled wood pedestrian bridge.

Completed in June, the bridge is made of local Black Locust wood from Allerton Park & Retreat Center with high tension cable railing. It is 40-feet long, 42-inches tall, and 9-feet wide. The bridge was constructed as a way to improve pedestrian safety while offering a detailed and vivid user experience and promoting growth opportunities for the garden. The original garden was one of F&S’s early sustainability initiatives led by the Environmental Compliance department.

“The design provides a path that honors how people want to move through the location, without harming the trees or impeding the garden’s function as a rainwater management practice” said Eliana Brown, Red Oak Rain Garden director and Extension water quality specialist. “Additionally, it gives people a sense of immersion in a natural area – even if only for the time it takes to cross over the garden.”

The design of the bridge was approved by the F&S Architectural Review Committee (ARC), led in this case by Brent Lewis, Capital Programs, university landscape architect.

“ARC looks at the university as a whole to discern whether some elements go in with the design aesthetic of campus,” said Lewis. “But you also look at areas more locally to see if they fit in aesthetically in a contextual way. That bridge wouldn’t look right on most of the campus, but in this garden space, next to housing, this fits. It is the right use of the materials and the right look for that space. These are elements that last a long time, are more natural, and help us safeguard the rain garden.”

Lewis did note the same high tension cable railing is also used at the southern expansion of Talbot Laboratory.

The garden features 54 forbs, shrubs, and grasses planted in order to best manage rainwater, which has in the past collected into big pools, endangering the red oak’s health, and making for messy, unsafe pedestrian and bike pathways. Environmental art also lines the walkways. In June, for instance, “The rain garden experienced its first major rain event post-renovation. The garden successfully soaked up 5.24 inches of rain in four days with no flooding issues,” according to a publicly-available RORG report (https://redoakraingarden.org/activity-reports/).

The bridge allows pedestrians to enjoy the sights and sounds of the garden, to give an idea of the scale and value of the trees and plants. Even the railing helps a visitor more fully understand the garden.

“Generally, bridges are built keeping in mind how the view looks over the railing. But if you go over in a wheelchair, you’ll just see the picket or guard rails. This way we can showcase beautiful plants, and careful planning and design and care and maintenance. It makes for a more universal experience for all people.”

~ Brent Lewis, Capital Programs, university landscape architect
Seeing St. Mary’s in a New Light

“With the addition of more Research Park facilities, the Illinois Conference Center expansion, and the addition and expansion of several DIA facilities, the traffic along this segment has increased over the years. Our primary goal is to keep all users of the campus transportation network safe by providing the best facilities possible.”

—Stacey DeLorenzo, F&S transportation demand coordinator

St. Mary’s Road is an important corridor on campus, linking south Champaign with key U of I facilities like the National Petascale Computing Facility, home to world-class supercomputers, the Research Park, and of course, access to Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA) buildings and parking lots.

So, what exactly will you see? Well, for one, you’ll see better.

Improved lighting and easy-to-find crosswalks will aid pedestrians and bicyclists, including updated crosswalks compliant to the Americans with Disabilities Act; thousands may walk this path for football game days for years to come.

People driving, walking, and biking can now see renovated features on the street; the way through spotlights a relatively new—and growing—part of campus. Students, faculty, staff, and community members may value the Research Park as much as past generations did the Main Quad, and now have more welcoming, safe pathways worthy of a visit.

Pedestrians will find a new sidewalk on the north side of St. Mary’s Road that connects to Neil Street, improving safety and access between south campus and local businesses. These additions continue the type of work done elsewhere on campus, including the MCORE Project, which drastically improved heavily-trafficked transportation corridors in recent years.

Stacey DeLorenzo, transportation demand coordinator for F&S, ensures projects properly align with objectives and goals from the Transportation Demand Management Plan FY21-26, many of which also correspond with the Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP), the campus strategic sustainability plan facilitated in part by F&S.

“With the addition of more Research Park facilities, the Illinois Conference Center expansion, and the addition and expansion of several DIA facilities, the traffic along this segment has increased over the years,” said DeLorenzo. “Our primary goal is to keep all users of the campus transportation network safe by providing the best facilities possible.”

This “complete street” design is meant to include passage for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit, and single-occupancy vehicles. Shared paths for all modes were added, making St. Mary’s new two lanes for cars and buses, but more inclusive for bike lanes. Pedestrian signals were added at Neil Street, too.

UI Ride Resumes

UI Ride resumed operation starting August 17 after trips were canceled due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This semester, shuttles will make two daily round trips three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday). Each bus can seat up to 18 and includes wheelchair access, free IllinoisNet Wi-Fi access, a restroom, changing room, and a collaborative workspace. UI Ride is operated by F&S, including administration of reservations, maintenance to shuttles, and the actual driving, too! The service began in the fall of 2019.

UI Ride follows COVID-19 safety protocols for transportation services. Face coverings are required for all riders.

“We’re excited to get UI Ride back up and running. This is more good news to see us all take another step closer to full operation after the COVID pandemic response,” said Pete Varney, associate director for Transportation, Maintenance & Alterations, Transportation & Automotive Services. “The new schedule, online reservation system, and state-of-the-art buses all make UI Ride a worthy option to get to and from Chicago.”

For reservations, updates, policies, and more information on buses, visit: https://www.uii.illinois.edu/uiride.

ILLINOIS: LET’S RIDE!

University of Illinois System faculty, staff, and students can again use a shuttle service to travel back and forth between the Urbana and Chicago campuses for university business, now three days a week.

UI RIDE NEW SCHEDULE

(Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday only)

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<tr>
<th>Departure Times</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>URBANA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 a.m. and 3 p.m. Lot E14 (southeast corner)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:10 a.m. and 3:10 p.m. Levi Faculty Center (919 W. Illinois St., Urbana)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:20 a.m. and 3:20 p.m. North Campus Parking Deck Lot B4 (1201 W. University Ave., Urbana)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CHICAGO</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 a.m. and 3 p.m. U Health (UIC West Campus, 1740 W. Taylor St., Chicago)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. UIC Behavioral Science Building (UIC East Campus, 1007 W. Harrison St., Chicago)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Illini Center (Discovery Partners Institute, 200 S. Wacker St., Chicago)</td>
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Arrival time is estimated to be 2.5-3 hours from the last departure stop.
Pipes surround us!
Inside the hundreds of buildings and acres of land encompassing the Urbana campus, F&S plumbers have a lot of responsibilities to keep liquid moving. They are in charge of all fixtures you’d regularly find in any building, including faucets, toilets, urinals, sinks, drinking fountains, sanitary and storm pump systems, and hot water heat exchangers. The plumbers also repair, maintain, and install more complicated systems like deionized water and reverse osmosis water systems, safety shower and eyewash equipment, and whole-building hot water mixing valves, along with domestic hot water heating systems.

3 questions with Terry Bagwell, plumbing shop foreperson
You’re a new foreperson, but have been with F&S for more than 15 years. How important is experience in plumbing and/or any crafts and trades?
As with all the crafts and trades here, experience is very important. We rely heavily on every one of our plumbers and have confidence we have the knowledge to repair anything that is assigned to us. That makes being a supervisor in the plumbing shop a lot easier.

What’s a typical type of project for your team?
Due to the number of older facilities on campus, pipes are in need of constant repairs. But, we’re not just talking about clogged toilets and dripping faucets; we have labs that have glass waste pipes and deionized water lines made of aluminum and other complicated plumbing systems. We also have a lot of storm and waste water pumps that need repairs. We also don’t just repair things, we also have crews that remodel bathrooms and labs; recent examples include Construction Engineering Research Laboratory and Veterinary Medicine. With buildings of all ages spread across a large campus, the 'atypical' job here has become commonplace.

What’s your favorite part about working for F&S?
Sometimes working in older, more unique buildings can be a challenge. That’s what makes it so rewarding because we get to maintain systems that have been replaced elsewhere in the industry. Since we do maintain them, they are still in good working order, and that’s a source of pride for our shop and all of F&S.