F&S Strategic Plan: Foundations for the Future

SEE INSIDE

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A MESSAGE FROM THE

Executive Director

Every day, F&S provides and maintains a physical environment that supports the learning, discovery, engagement, and economic development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The F&S Strategic Plan highlights our role as an essential service provider that benefits all of the campus; this plan provides the pathway to meet the challenges of supporting the mission of a world-class university with a global impact.

The plan details how we will continue providing excellent service, while also expanding our capabilities, and using new technologies and cutting-edge methods to do our work more safely and efficiently than ever. Our plan aligns with The Next 150 strategic plan authored by the U of I.

This edition of Insider outlines the objectives and actions in the plan, with each of our 10 themes providing the purpose of our services. The first theme is "Invest in Our People" because employees are our greatest strength. Building service workers, crafts and trades professionals, planners, engineers, and administrators value the University’s role as a pre-eminent public research university. We have a passion for service, whether it is maintaining heating and cooling, clearing snow and ice, or quickly responding to an urgent building situation. Our operations maintain the campus 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

The full plan is available online at go.fs.illinois.edu/strategicplan now. We look forward to working with the entire campus community to accomplish our goals in making this university the best it can be.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mohamed Attalla, MBA, P.Eng.
Executive Director, Facilities & Services

The State of the University

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign chancellor Robert J. Jones gave his ‘State of the University’ address to a filled ballroom at the Illini Union on January 24.

Jones proudly announced the first capital bill in a decade from the State of Illinois, saying he views the $400M investment as a “vote of confidence” in the strategic direction of the U of I.

Throughout his talk, Jones outlined both opportunities for the future, and upcoming challenges. Near the end of his speech, Jones took questions from the audience, which included one about bike pathways on campus. Jones asked F&S Executive Director Dr. Mohamed Attalla to address the subject:

“Promoting sustainability and healthy lifestyle choices is an important part of the university strategy.” Attalla noted the increased use of bikes and bike sharing programs like VeoRide, and The Bike Project of Urbana-Champaign, which offers affordable refurbished bikes for sale, in addition to more traditional shops and stores.

“Improving bike paths is essential to fulfill the Bike at Illinois plan, as well as F&S’ efforts to enhance campus aesthetics,” said Attalla.

Attalla noted the development of new and improved bike lanes across campus—particularly in transportation corridors upgraded by the MCORE Project—which balances all modes of transportation. Bike infrastructure in good condition helps promote sustainability and exercise, and soon, many high-use thoroughfares will have those enhancements.
Pre-Apprentice Program Leads Millar to Success

A new summer program gave high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to work in crafts and trades shops and other departments within F&S. One of those students has now entered the industry at a local business, thanks to the program and some helpful managers.

John Millar, a recent graduate of Novak Academy, worked as a pre-apprentice with the machinists under the supervision of foreperson Stuart De Haro starting in June 2019. Millar and 20 other local high school students worked for different shops in the first year of the F&S Pre-Apprenticeship Program. As he approached the maximum number of hours he could work, Millar searched for a full-time position in the field. He secured an interview with Wagner Machine Co. and had the perfect resources to ensure his interview went well: De Haro and Ken Buenting, assistant superintendent of building maintenance.

Their advice proved constructive as Millar got the job and started in November.

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“I've had a lot of learning experience and been out on a lot of jobs,” said Millar of his experience. “It's good to be involved and behind the scenes, see the stuff you don't get to see every day.”

Millar hopes future Pre-Apprenticeship students make the most of their time, saying, “It is a job, after all, so you've got to work hard. I encourage future students to take full advantage of it.”

Millar always liked tinkering with machines and working with his hands. He became aware of the program after his father, an employee at Housing Food Stores, saw an ad on campus. Millar knew he wanted to work with metal but said he “wasn't picky about it.” He credits having other family members who are ironworkers for his interest in the field.

“John’s hard work and dedication during the program led to his hiring, and he should be very proud. We hope more students like him participate in the program to further their careers in the crafts and trades.”

~ Ken Buenting, assistant superintendent of building maintenance

Once in the program, Millar said he didn't want to squander it and “wanted to leave a good impression. I just wanted to be remembered in a good light.”

The program helps F&S fulfill a strategic objective of promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce by recruiting from local high schools with an emphasis on underserved populations and hiring student interns and recent graduates. F&S’ Pre-Apprenticeship Program aims to strengthen relationships within the local community, to address the growing need for more skilled-trade workers, and to prepare interested individuals for non-degree employment opportunities through training, recruitment, and retention, and long-term succession planning.

“John's hard work and dedication during the program led to his hiring, and he should be very proud,” said Buenting. “We hope more students like him participate in the program to further their careers in the crafts and trades.”

2020 F&S PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

• Application deadline, April 1, 2020
• Open to juniors or seniors 17-19 years old currently attending or graduates of Champaign Centennial or Central High School; Novak Academy; Urbana High School; or Rantoul Township High School
• Must be able to work five days per week for nine weeks during summer 2020
• For questions and applications, please contact F&S Human Resources: Anna Ratcheva-Staneva, ratcheva@illinois.edu, 244-0130, or Syed Arshad, sarshad4@illinois.edu, 244-4698

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**F&S Strategic Plan: Foundations for the Future**

**Invest in Our People**

People are our greatest asset. We will attract and maintain a motivated, high-quality workforce. We will increase productivity while retaining the accountability that is indicative of a world leader in higher education.

- Offer continuous professional development
- Inform employees
- Promote a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Foster a culture of values and respect
- Foster collaboration and understanding across divisions
- Acquire and retain high-quality staff
- Recognize great effort
- Connect with the community

“There is success in F&S is dependent on its ability to create a workplace where its employees will succeed,” said Eric Smith, director of Human Resources, Diversity, and Strategy. “The primary purpose of this strategic theme is to ensure we are providing a workplace culture where our employees are engaged, thrive professionally, and are recognized for their good work.”

**Communicate with Stakeholders and Customers**

We are the round-the-clock caretakers of the campus. As such, the work we do can often go unseen and fade into the backdrop of university life. Communication is key to gaining the support of our customers and stakeholders and ensuring that they understand our goals and objectives.

- Identify stakeholders
- Encourage underrepresented vendors/contractors participation
- Enhance relationships with vendors/contractors
- Promote responsive customer feedback
- Create awareness of F&S and campus initiatives
- Leverage public engagement programs
- Build and maintain customer relationships

“At F&S, we are committed to delivering the right service outcomes in an efficient manner,” said Malika Gordon, manager of Customer Relations. “We will operate with transparency by communicating internally and externally with honesty and respect, and will continue to embrace diversity in the workplace, which leads to more innovative ideas and fosters a more productive work environment.”
Practice Sound Project Management

Producing a high-quality product or service is the product of employees who follow well-defined procedures and expectations working closely with engaged stakeholders. We will attain the goal of continuous process improvement using sound project management objectives.

- Communicate regularly
- Deliver projects on time, on budget
- Standardize reporting
- Develop risk management intelligence
- Simplify project delivery and workflow processes

“Project management is important because it ensures proper expectations are set around what can be delivered, by when, and for how much,” said Clarence Odom, associate director of Capital Programs, project management. “Effective project managers should be able to negotiate reasonable and achievable deadlines and milestones across stakeholders, teams, and management.”

Foster Financial Accountability

Completion of projects and delivery of services on budget calls for careful planning, reporting, and strategic allocation of dollars. We will adhere to a systematic budgeting process that accurately and efficiently anticipates and funds our services.

- Improve operating efficiencies and effectiveness
- Stay on budget
- Create and analyze rate structures for services
- Produce key performance indicators and benchmark against our peers
- Explore opportunities for grants, rebates, and revenue generation
- Investigate cost-saving, synergy opportunities

“Completion of projects and delivery of services on budget requires insightful and strategic planning, reporting, and allocation of funds,” said Curt Taylor, director of Shared Administrative Services. “We will adhere to a systematic budgeting process that anticipates campus needs and aligns with financial resources.”

Strengthen Campus Accessibility

The Urbana campus has been recognized as an early leader in accessibility among higher education institutions. We will build upon this legacy by continuing our efforts to update the campus Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Transition Plan through field surveys and work to eliminate identified barriers to accessibility in campus walkways, street crossings, facilities, or programs.

- Develop an understanding of building accessibility barriers
- Commit to ADA compliance and leadership
- Improve accessibility of campus walkways

“We are committed to continuing the efforts of our predecessors to ensure that everyone can access and utilize our campus as envisioned by the ADA,” said Craig Grant, associate director of Engineering and Construction Services, code compliance and fire safety. “We will continue to look for any barriers or obstacles to this universal access and take action to address them.”
Maintain a Safe and Healthy Workplace

Creating a safe and healthy workplace is our first priority. We will invest in the training and procedures that help prevent workplace injuries, maintain a healthy workforce, and comply with applicable laws.

- Train employees properly
- Maintain up-to-date safety manuals, training, and safe work practices
- Comply with applicable laws for campus operations and staff
- Reduce and minimize workplace injuries, lost time, and workers compensation claims
- Enhance, enforce, and encourage a safe work culture

“While we may follow different paths to get our jobs done, we all work toward a common goal: satisfying our customers,” said Maureen Banks, director of Safety and Compliance. “In doing this, we also have a common safety responsibility to take positive actions to prevent accidents.

“Production and safety should not compete for our priorities. We should not have to choose between performing our work on schedule and on budget and selecting the right tool and wearing personal protective equipment. We must align our priorities so that safety is a by-product of the work that we do not a competing priority.”

Lead in Energy Management and Sustainability

The university is at the forefront of innovative techniques to create and manage the energy we use on-site and with renewable resources. This commitment to sustainability conveys a preservation philosophy that touches our customers’ daily lives in the classroom, the cafeteria, and residence halls. We will develop and expand our environmental management programs to conserve resources and reduce waste and pollution.

- Develop and implement an energy conservation plan
- Reduce energy consumption
- Increase renewable energy
- Reduce water consumption
- Reduce vehicle emissions and fuel consumption
- Reduce non-point source pollutants from campus landscapes
- Divert waste going to the landfill
- Increase use of environmentally friendly procurement
- Decrease the number of vehicles on campus
- Manage landscapes sustainably
- Provide utility service to campus that is reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible

“The reliable, efficient, and controlled delivery of energy impacts our customers every minute of every day, and all members of the Utilities & Energy Services division understand the importance of providing reliable and efficient services to our customers,” said Mike Larson, associate director of Utility Operations. “Energy management and sustainability are at the core of what everyone within the group strives to optimize.”
Assess Long-Term Plans for Deferred and Preventive Maintenance

The elegant facades and distinctive design of our buildings and green spaces create the unique learning environment distinct to the U of I. Maintaining our architectural heritage as well as planning for new buildings and roads requires collaborative planning and regular assessment.

- Update the facility conditions assessment
- Develop a plan to regularly update the facility conditions assessment
- Create a long-term Asset Management Plan (AMP)
- Establish a comprehensive project management plan

“Our many academic buildings on campus require regular facility renewal to keep ready to support teaching, learning, and discovery,” said Brad Klein, assistant director of Capital Programs, maintenance planning. “Prioritizing the many competing needs requires up-to-date information on building conditions.”

Support Research and Academic Collaboration

Our training and industrial expertise are valuable assets to the university’s teaching mission. We seek out opportunities to share this knowledge with faculty and campus leaders.

- Contribute significantly to the research and teaching mission of the university

“F&S has a long history of supporting the use of the campus as a living learning laboratory and our recent academic collaborations have allowed for exciting innovations, like the Geothermal Coalition, the Illinois Solar Decathlon, and the Red Oak Rain Garden project,” said Morgan White, associate director Facilities & Services, Sustainability. “By providing access to campus facilities and data for research and teaching, we are able to contribute to the university mission in a truly systemic way.”

Manage Our Learning Spaces Efficiently

We will be good stewards of the learning spaces we have for students. We assess campus space needs and develop plans to put underutilized buildings to better use as well as plan to eliminate those spaces that have outlived their utility.

- Optimize space utilization

“We are the trusted stewards of nearly 24 million square feet of campus space,” said Ted Christy, associate director of Capital Programs, project planning. “With the enormous capital investments required to build, operate, and maintain our campus infrastructure, space is a critical asset that must be managed effectively to ensure the continued success of the university.”
Shop Spotlight: Paint & Sign Shop

The Paint & Sign shop leaves its mark all over campus in many ways. Have you seen an interesting color painted on a campus building wall? Or maybe been struck by a cool sign giving you directions? Those tasks (and so much more!) have been the work of the painters.

Q&A with painters foreperson Dave Middleton

What should people on campus know about painters and the quality of your work?
All of the journeymen painters in our shop have years of experience both on and off campus. The work we do here is held to a very high standard, and the painters we have here have gone above and beyond to meet that expectation.

What are some examples of things you’ve done that people may not expect?
Within the paint shop, we also have sign painters and glaziers. In the sign shop, we do all of the interior and exterior building signs, street and traffic signs, and graphics for university branding. The glass shop does all interior and exterior glass, aluminum storefronts and doors, glass marker boards, and window tinting. We have a spray booth in our shop where we finish everything made by the millworkers and everything that is fabricated by the other shops within F&S. We also tape and finish drywall and hang a variety of different wall coverings, including wallpaper and vinyl.

What’s a noteworthy recent job you did that you’re especially proud of?
Last year we stripped all of the old paint off of the columns and woodwork in the entrance and first floor of the Architecture Building. After removing the old paint, we sanded, stained, and finished the wood. The final result was beautiful.

How many types of things do you paint?
We paint everything you could think of, including walls, doors, ceilings, refinish floors, cabinets, stairs, lugers, and signs. Almost anything that needs to be painted we can paint.

What’s so great about your crew of painters?
We have a very diverse and talented group of painters here at F&S. Everyone in the paint shop possesses a wide variety of skills and has a strong desire to serve our customers to the best of their abilities.

Painters Union Signs MOU with F&S

F&S signed its second memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a local union in January. Executive Director Dr. Mohamed Attalla led the ceremonies on behalf of F&S. The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, District Council 58, Local Union 363, was represented by Chad Anderson, business representative, and Gregg Smith, business manager, secretary, and treasurer.

The MOU allows F&S to either have an apprentice referred from the union, or refer an individual to the union who would then be hired as an apprentice at F&S.

Calling it “a great moment for us to work together,” Attalla noted that two apprentices are starting soon and that F&S is already looking to grow the program and increase the numbers.

After the MOU was signed, the two newly hired apprentices, Raul Aceves Cisneros and Nico VanDeVeer, explained how working in the Paint and Sign shop will help them support their families and how grateful they are for the opportunity.

A similar MOU was signed with UA Local 149 Plumbers and Pipefitters in June, and Attalla hopes to continue bringing back relationships with unions to grow the pool of apprentices in the crafts and trades.

“We are thrilled to bring apprenticeships back to F&S,” said Attalla. “There are many benefits to our relationships with local unions. It helps provide better succession planning for trained crafts and trades to serve our customers better. Additionally, the new agreement is bringing better cost efficiency to the university. It’s a great collaborative effort with the union to enhance our recruitment of employees from diverse backgrounds in line with the university’s strategic direction.”
Maureen Banks, director of Safety and Compliance at F&S, knows the value of mentoring. She began by volunteering at local Booker T. Washington (BTW), STEM Academy, where she was able to follow her passion for helping children in the community—many of them below the poverty line or in a one-parent home.

In 2005, Banks helped set F&S up as a partner with CU One to One, a school-based mentoring program of the Champaign Unit 4 School District and Urbana School District #116.

The relationship has strengthened over time. Recently, Banks and Lauren Smith, community outreach coordinator for Champaign Unit 4, celebrated this 15-year relationship with a lunch recognition for the nearly 100 F&S employees who have mentored during that time.

“The F&S Mentoring Program is one of the many ways where employees can make a difference in the community in which they work. But, the real winners in this partnership between F&S and CU One to One Mentoring are the mentors and mentees and the many benefits from the mentoring relationship,” said Banks. “F&S mentors and their mentees learn to trust and respect each other, and they learn to be accountable to each other. These are many of the same behavior-based values that we work towards every day at F&S.”

Currently, 45 F&S employees mentor local students, starting with third graders at BTW. The relationships are not purely academic or centered around an activity, but rather, based on developing trust and confidence with each other to form a bond. The mentors are asked to commit for one year, but hopefully, the pair will maintain the connection until the mentee graduates from high school. Mentees benefit greatly, as statistics show they are more likely to go to college, volunteer, and develop leadership skills.

Macie Sinn, transportation clerk with the Transportation & Automotive Services department, has been a mentor for four years, all with one student.

“One day, I had a great conversation with my mentee about our values and what it means to be a good person. The next week, she handed me a note expressing how much I meant to her and how thankful she is that I came into her life. The note is still hanging on my fridge.”
A mural that recently returned to campus at the Illini Union and Spurlock Museum tells a story that dates back five decades and honors a vital cultural house.

The La Casa Cultural Latina mural was painted directly onto the walls in a house on East Chalmers Street in 1974 under the direction of artist and student Oscar Martinez. In line with the Latin American tradition of painting murals to claim ownership on contested space, the art symbolized the struggle of Latinx students at the university. At that time, Martinez's work specifically protested the Latino Cultural Center's potential closing and demolition – he was inspired to give the entire mural the name “La Victoria.” The Center became La Casa Cultural Latina and remained in the house until 1995. Successfully staving off the facility’s demise, the house would ultimately become the home to the Department of Latina/Latino Studies from 1996 to 2013. In 2004, students fought for and asked support from the university administration to have Martinez complete and restore the mural; hence, Martinez was asked by the Office of the Chancellor to come back to La Casa to restore and finish the mural. This acted as the seed to eventually have the mural components on display where they are today.

The mural, many parts of which were painted directly onto the plaster walls or onto sections of wallpaper, was carefully removed from the La Casa Cultural Latina in 2016 by the Chicago-based Terry Dowd, Inc. The mural was then consequently conserved and restored by the Chicago-based Parma Conservation. The conservation and restoration of the mural came from a collective effort between F&S, the Department of Latina/Latino Studies, La Casa

Molly Baldes is grateful for F&S for improvements made to her worksite which houses her favorite “boys and girls”: more than 40 horses, including a 20-year old stallion named Sagebrush. “He can’t see very well, but he’s happy,” said Baldes.

Baldes and student workers run an operational horse farm at the Animal Sciences K40 Facility, commonly referred to as the Tile Barn, a facility of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. They feed, clean, and breed them, and assist in the birth of foals. When Baldes first began caring for the animals and managing the facility, she took note of the windows, walls, ceilings, and other fixtures that needed to be modernized.

For instance, in one stall, the ground often became untenable for mares to give birth due to a leak in the roof.

“When F&S has come to make repairs, they’ve shown up and done a wonderful job,” said Baldes. “We never would have
On February 21, Chancellor Robert J. Jones hosted a celebration of the reinstallation at Spurlock Museum, welcoming many advocates for La Casa Cultural Latina, including former directors of the house, and the mural’s artist, Oscar Martinez.

The murals at Spurlock will remain there for 10 years.

“The murals remain a powerful symbol of the struggles and achievements of Latino students on this campus,” said the artist, Oscar Martinez. “It symbolizes our history of oppression, struggles, and movements to create change. It serves as a reminder that our university community has come a long way since the time when the mural was painted, and that there is still progress to be made.”

Cultural Latina, university administrative units, and the Spurlock Museum to make sure that the mural was not damaged while decommissioning the house.

“The conservation work was carefully and expertly done,” said Brent Lewis, university landscape architect with F&S. For the La Casa murals project, Lewis was the project manager, responsible for all aspects of the request for proposal (RFP) to hire the art mover/art conservationist, as well as decommissioning the structure after the mural was carefully removed as entire wall sections by Terry Dowd, Inc. While the mural was being conserved in Chicago, Lewis worked along with Christa Deacy-Quinn, of the Spurlock Museum, to find new homes on campus. “Given its cultural and historical importance to the university, I am so excited to see these vibrant works of student art properly recognized and displayed on campus,” said Lewis.

Two of those sections of the mural are now displayed in the southwest stairwell of the Union, while three more sections can be viewed at the Spurlock Museum.

Ironworkers Todd Hawkins, Ron Cler, Erik Davis, and Mike Paris assisted in the process of hanging the framed mural sections in their new homes at the Union. The group navigated the 8-foot-tall into tight spaces in the Union’s southwest stairwell to establish a new location for the art.

“We were honored to be involved in this project of cultural importance. At F&S, we share in the mission of the University of Illinois to honor and preserve the culture and heritage of the diverse population of our great state.”

~ Todd Hawkins, ironworkers foreperson

gotten the stuff done in time and made it look as good as they did. We really needed it; for me, this barn even takes precedence over my own house.”

Since 2017, when a team of six Clydesdales took residence as part of Homecoming, F&S shops helped update and improve the Tile Barn. Carpenters, millworkers, painters, electricians, plumbers, laborers, operating engineers, ironworkers, sheet metal workers, plus transportation and waste management and recycling staff all assisted in improving the facility.

Repairs were made to two vents on the roof, wood sheathing, window sashes, paint on wood features, and multiple sets of sliding doors. A 20-foot tall brick chimney was removed, and a gas water heater was replaced with a more efficient electric one.

“It was gratifying to see the transformation of the Tile Barn to a refreshed structure that we can be proud of,” said Tim Mininger, maintenance program and project coordinator. “Because the building is well-built and unique, it is important for us to maintain it in the best condition possible for years to come. Our tremendously skilled F&S shops did an excellent job making improvements.”
FULFILLING OUR MISSION IN DIFFICULT TIMES

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
What you need to know.

As part of the university’s continuing response to the COVID-19 epidemic, F&S will remain operational, performing our valued day-to-day service work.

Before the governor’s “stay-at-home” order on March 20, the organization had already implemented workplace guidelines from Chancellor Jones, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO) to protect the well-being and safety of the entire campus community. Presently, each division is updating service delivery strategies using the latest public health recommendations and best practices to help direct these efforts.

Our employees are our most valued resource. Per the statewide order, F&S significantly restricted staff scheduling and limited overall work activities to reduce the risk of exposure to employees performing critical services in areas such as Building Services, Building Maintenance, and Utilities Production. While designated staff remain on-site to support these essential functions, many employees have transitioned to remote work or adjusted their assignments and practices following social distancing guidelines aimed at preventing community spread of the disease.

During this period, F&S will continue to respond to service requests and urgent situations through a combination of both on-site staff and remote workforce support. To report an urgent issue, please call the F&S Service Office at 217-333-0340. In all other instances, use my.fs.illinois.edu.

By taking these precautionary steps and establishing alternative work arrangements, F&S continues to be prepared to find innovative ways to meet your needs, respond to work requests, and address emerging challenges as the caretaker of the physical environment on campus.

As always, please visit covid19.illinois.edu for the current information regarding university-wide operations, and see F&S updates at https://www.fs.illinois.edu/resources/covid-response.

Sincerely,
Dr. Mohamed Attalla, MBA, P.Eng.
Executive Director, Facilities & Services