

University Facilities

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2004 - 09



## **Message From The Associate Vice President**

I am honored to present the Strategic Plan 2004 - 09 for University Facilities that will guide our organization over the next several years. This process was the result of eight months of discussions, considerable input from a cross-section of staff and an extensive situational analysis. The outcome is a refocused mission/vision statement and a challenging but attainable course for Facilities.

This document continues the work of its predecessor, the Facilities Five-Year Strategic Plan 1998-2003. During that period, considerable change occurred and change will undoubtedly continue as the University at Buffalo welcomed a new President January 1, 2004 and greeted a new Provost effective July 2004. Given this environment, overarching goals of Facilities include: (a) improving communication with senior administrators to optimize services for the campus community, (b) forging a partnership with University leadership to ensure that capital and operational planning is aligned with institutional needs and priorities, and (c) promoting safety and regulatory compliance to provide a safe and healthy campus environment, reduce risks and preserve positive public relations.

This new plan will allow us flexibility to pursue changing needs while remaining true to our fundamental values of customer focus, performance focus, technical excellence, fiscal stewardship and environmental stewardship. We look forward to increasing our communication with customers and gaining valuable feedback. All of us in Facilities are committed to improving our customer service, efficiency and quality to ensure our efforts and resources are invested to maximize the support of the University community.

*Michael Dupre*

## **University Facilities STRATEGIC PLAN 2004 - 09**

In the pursuit of education, research and public service, the University at Buffalo (UB) operates in a dynamic and challenging environment that demands adaptation to changes in resources, technology, and institutional advancement needs. In order to ensure our efforts and resources are invested to maximize our support of UB's mission, and to be responsible stewards of campus facilities, University Facilities periodically engages in a strategic planning process. We seek to assess our performance relative to institutional priorities and needs; improve our efficiency and effectiveness; and build and strengthen relationships with University leaders, other customers and employees. This document summarizes our assessment and subsequent plans for retaining operational strengths and enhancing future performance.

The Facilities Strategic Plan 2004 - 09 will guide Facilities in our continued pursuit of demonstrable service excellence for the University and Western New York community by providing technically competent, environmentally sound, efficient and customer-centered services across the wide spectrum of our responsibilities. The new Strategic Plan builds upon past accomplishments while advancing several new initiatives to continue improving customer service, efficiency and quality in all aspects of our operations.

### **The Strategic Planning Process**

The strategic planning process engaged management and staff in a systematic assessment of Facilities' mission, vision and operating values. The process evaluated past performance, identified existing and evolving needs, and anticipated resource availability to set a course for the efficient and effective provision of quality services.

The Associate Vice President for Facilities convened a twelve-member Strategic Planning Group in October 2003 (*see Appendix 1*). We engaged an independent facilitator to assist with structuring our process, to provide an objective perspective, and to solicit direct and candid input from our employees, a vital step we believed best accomplished by an individual without organizational ties.

Over eight months, the Strategic Planning Group held thirteen meetings that updated Facilities' mission, vision and values; conducted situational analyses of internal and external factors impacting current and future operations and plans; reviewed benchmark information; and identified strategic initiatives.

To provide the widest possible perspective within our organization and to foster ownership of the plan, the Group obtained input from managers and staff at two critical

points. First, the facilitator conducted seven separate focus groups through which 120 Facilities' managers and staff provided their perceptions of Facilities' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Second, in ten facilitated meetings, 68 managers and staff reviewed the revised mission, vision and values and new strategic initiatives, and provided input to the development of plan objectives.

We also examined external resources for input to our planning process. We reviewed a 2003 *Harvard Business Review* study on best management practices that offered insights and practical applications for our strategic plan implementation efforts.<sup>1</sup> To assess our plan against standards in our industry, we reviewed the Association for Higher Education Facilities Officers "Facilities Management Self-Evaluation Program." This enabled us to ensure that we have included all critical elements and considerations in our Strategic Plan.<sup>2</sup>

## **Strategic Plan 2004 - 09: Context**

The Strategic Plan is wholly driven by Facilities' mission to support the University goals for student and faculty recruitment, status as a premier public research institution, and service to the Western New York community. Facilities takes great pride in the supportive role we have played in the University's progress and as reflected in the Strategic Plan, will continue striving, with all the means available, to be faithful to its mission. Facilities also recognizes several significant realities, as budget reductions have steadily impacted our capacity to respond to an increased scope and volume of customer demands in routine operations and to meet critical—though less visible--infrastructure, health, safety and environmental needs.

### Fiscal History

Since 1990-91, budget reductions totaling over \$7M, coupled with underfunding or no funding for new buildings totaling \$2.2M, summed to a \$9.2M impact. On a cumulative basis over the past fourteen years, the Facilities' budget has been effectively reduced by \$37M. In part, this impact resulted from five new buildings, expanded parking lots, increased research activities and associated customer needs, and extended summer programs. Additional demands and requirements for Facilities' services currently require a six-to-seven day per week operation at up to fourteen hours per day while funding continues to assume a five-day per week, eight-to-ten hour per day operation. This gap seriously compromises Facilities' ability to fulfill our commitment to customer-centered service excellence.

As revenues were reduced, Facilities aggressively reduced staff to gain OTPS flexibility, allowing the mandated return of funds to the campus and the purchase of labor-saving tools and contracted services essential to meeting our mission with a reduced workforce. Contracted services have more than doubled in the past five years, now totaling over \$3.4M. While cost effective in the short-term, contracts, as well as other

OTPS expenses, are subject to inflation. The impacts of inflation without commensurate budget allowances have resulted in a virtual \$5.1M budget reduction.

### Staffing and Succession

An effective 37% reduction in staffing since 1990-91 reached a critical point in 1999-00, beyond which minimally adequate services could not be maintained unless attrition and cost savings made outsourcing possible. Many positions remain unfunded and there are critical needs for positions due to new, ongoing or projected demands. In addition, our employee base is aging and many retirements in key positions will occur over the next five to seven years. For example, 55% of our Chilled Water Plant staff, a department operating 24 hours per day, 7 days per week that is the “eyes and ears” of the campus systems, is over 50 years of age. Eighty-nine percent of the Controls staff and over 40% of Electricians are over 50. There is a dire need to add staff now in order to permit transfer of knowledge about our many unique systems. Staff reductions over the years have not allowed orderly succession or supplementing existing staff while new hires gain the necessary expertise. Resources are needed to replace impending retirees, allowing adequate time to accommodate new staffs’ learning periods.

### Infrastructure

The campus infrastructure is aging and there is a significant and growing backlog of deferred maintenance. The State University Construction Fund extended its five-year capital plan to six years, but without added funding. Capital renewal benchmarks established by the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers and the National Association of College and University Business Officers place UB at a fraction of recommended renewal levels. Backlogs in preventive maintenance and appropriate replacement schedules place the University at high risk of electrical and mechanical system breakdowns that result in expensive, labor-intensive repairs; interrupt essential services; and create potentially hazardous situations.

### Health and Safety

A recent external review and a pre-Environmental Protection Agency audit provided many recommendations to increase the quality of campus health and safety and to eclipse the potential for very costly fines imposed on universities for violations. Measures to correct current deficiencies will likely cost several hundred thousand dollars and additional staff will be needed to monitor compliance. We must develop and update programs that assure compliance with a variety of federal and state statutes, all requiring significant deployment of personnel. In addition, budgetary constraints have resulted in neglect of several safety systems (fume hoods, fire detection and alarm systems, safety showers, etc.) that dramatically increase liability for personal injury and create vulnerability for fines. Terrorism threats require increased campus security such as emergency plans, building evacuation plans and compliance with the Patriot Act.

Nuclear reactor fuel removal and decommissioning is yet another looming Facilities' obligation, with early cost estimates of \$10 -15M.

### Environmental Stewardship

The Governor's Executive Order 111 mandates energy efficiency, green design; and procurement of energy efficient products, green power and clean vehicles that are more costly than traditional purchases. The Executive Order requirements increase initial costs to projects and incur ongoing higher costs for specialized maintenance.

### **Mission, Vision and Values**

As part of the strategic planning process, we reviewed the current mission, vision and values of Facilities. It became evident that though they have served us well since their inception on 1992, these needed to be revised and clarified.

Our commitments, as outlined in *Appendix 2*, will guide Facilities' implementation of the Strategic Plan 2004 - 09.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

To advance our mission, we adopted several strategic initiatives aligned with our values (*see Appendix 3*) and generated numerous action items. Knowing fully that we must focus our efforts if we expect to be successful in implementation of our Strategic Plan, with input from Facilities staff, we then selected those actions of highest priority for immediate focus, given current constraints and realities, with other items remaining active for future years.

Major, overarching objectives include:

#### Customer Focus

- Build relationships with customers
- Improve customer service

#### Performance Focus

- Increase performance accountability
- Promote employee growth and development
- Plan for succession
- Improve collaboration and alignment
- Build a high performance culture
- Create a culture of safety

### Technical Excellence

- Maintain technical excellence

### Fiscal Stewardship

- Enhance fiscal stewardship
- Improve resource planning

### Environmental Stewardship

- Increase commitment to environmental excellence
- Provide state and national green campus leadership
- Meet or exceed requirements of mandated environmental regulations

## **Conclusion**

Our strategic initiatives recognize that there are many opportunities for continued business and service improvements that can be implemented within the boundaries of anticipated resources. Our Strategic Plan 2004 - 09 reflects our commitment to continue seeking every possible avenue to improve efficiency and effectiveness while striving to deliver excellent service. To that end, we are dedicated to conducting an annual review of our Strategic Plan to select priority items, incorporating new or changing directions or emphases and new opportunities.

Our planning process, however, identified several realities that command Facilities' attention in the immediate and longer term, and for which resources are currently inadequate or lacking, that pose significant challenges to meeting our service mission. Nonetheless, we remain optimistic about our potential to address them with the University's support. We are fully aware that resource constraints resulting in neglect of the infrastructure and other needs can carry costly consequences. Our most sought-for goal is a planning partnership with University leadership to establish priorities and secure necessary funding as the first, preventive step toward protecting University assets and avoiding negative consequences. We stand ready to participate with University leadership to address concerns about the operations and maintenance of our campus and pledge the very best of our efforts and expertise to address the current and emerging issues we have identified through our planning process.

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## **Notes**

1. N. Nohria, W. Joyce and B. Roberson, "What Really Works," *Harvard Business Review* (July 2003): p. 43-52.
2. <http://www.appa.org/recognition/fmepself.cfm>

## **List of Appendices**

- Appendix 1:* Strategic Planning Group Members
- Appendix 2:* University Facilities: Mission, Vision and Values
- Appendix 3:* Strategic Initiatives

## **Appendix 1**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP MEMBERS**

Michael Dupre, Associate Vice President for Facilities  
Joanne Fletcher, Director, Administrative Services  
John Hayes, Manager, Facilities Operations  
Martin Hohle, Assistant Director, Facilities Planning & Design  
Mary Lloyd, Senior Programmer-Analyst  
Linda O'Rourke, Manager, Information & Technology Services  
Robert Puleo, Assistant Director, Facilities Planning & Design  
Joseph Raab, Director, Environment, Health & Safety Services  
Louis Schmitt, Director, Facilities Operations  
Walter Simpson, Energy Officer  
Kevin Thompson, Director, Facilities Planning & Design  
David Vasbinder, Assistant Director, Environment, Health & Safety Services

Kristina Young, Facilitator, Kristina M. Young & Associates, Inc.

## Appendix 2

### University Facilities: Mission, Vision and Values

#### MISSION

University Facilities serves students, faculty, staff and visitors in support of the University mission with a commitment to quality service. We use our expertise to provide both direct and advisory services to instill confidence among the customers we serve. We design, construct and maintain new and existing facilities to meet evolving needs and ensure a safe, healthy and attractive environment.

#### VISION

Customers will have the utmost confidence in our ability to meet their needs. We will create a superior campus environment by providing technically competent, environmentally friendly, efficient and customer-centered services across the wide spectrum of our responsibilities.

We will fulfill our vision by applying the following values:

##### Customer Focus

We value our customers' satisfaction with our services. We will strive to meet their expectations while providing a safe, healthy and attractive environment.

##### Performance Focus

As a service organization, the quality of our results depends upon the performance of our employees. We will support employees in their pursuit of professional growth and continuous learning to enhance their ability to provide superior service.

##### Technical Excellence

We will maintain and demonstrate the highest possible level of technical expertise in our respective disciplines. We will use our knowledge and skills to meet University needs in an efficient and effective manner, seeking out and applying the best technological strategies for the University's benefit.

##### Fiscal Stewardship

As stewards of University resources, we will conduct our business with integrity to achieve the highest possible effectiveness and cost-efficiency. We will prudently balance the need to conserve resources while safeguarding and maintaining the assets entrusted to our care.

##### Environmental Stewardship

We are committed to environmental excellence in all facets of our management and operations and to providing statewide and national green campus leadership.

## Appendix 3

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

#### CUSTOMER FOCUS

##### 1. Build Relationships with Customers

- a. Inform customers about Facilities' goals, objectives, service standards, requirements and costs to enable them to make good decisions about projects

##### 2. Improve Customer Service

- a. Develop standardized, consistent protocols and practices for orienting and educating new staff
- b. Identify workflow interdependencies
- c. Develop Facilities-wide customer service standards
- d. Ensure accountability for adherence to Facilities-wide customer service standards
- e. Train all staff in basic customer service interpersonal skills
- f. Improve and expand the process to obtain customer feedback
- g. Formally incorporate customer feedback into routine staff meetings at all levels within units
- h. Consider and identify ways to determine the cost benefit of additional outsourcing

#### PERFORMANCE FOCUS

##### 1. Increase Performance Accountability

- a. Ensure supervisory skills are up-to-date and consistently applied
- b. Foster peer level accountability
- c. Improve the performance evaluation process
- d. Increase senior managers' involvement in staff performance management

##### 2. Promote Employee Growth and Development

- a. Advance staff empowerment
- b. Foster constructive, efficient outcomes during procedural and technology changes

- c. Provide opportunities for training and education to enhance performance proficiencies

### **3. Plan for Succession**

- a. Create a plan and schedule for succession
- b. Identify and develop a process to support senior managers, supervisors in a staff development process, e.g., ways to get employees to accept higher levels of responsibility
- c. Assess future increases and decreases in personnel needs

### **4. Improve Collaboration and Alignment**

- a. Enhance the functions and outcomes of the Alignment group
- b. Facilitate cross-functional work planning, project coordination and learning
- c. Continue improving communication

### **5. Build a High Performance Culture**

- a. Ensure Facilities' mission, vision, values and principles are communicated and linked with performance expectations
- b. Ensure that the performance appraisal content and process reflects Facilities work performance goals
- c. Promote transparency in management/staff relations
- d. Promote accountability and team approach

### **6. Create a Culture of Safety**

- a. Promote personal ownership of a safe and health workplace
- b. Inform and influence all UB members about environment, health and safety matters and take the lead role in promoting campus-wide safety
- c. Initiate trade-specific attention to safety through shop supervisor daily translation of safety issues and practices; promote cross-functional dialogue about safety
- d. Inventory and self-assess safety equipment and supplies
- e. Promote consciousness/awareness of safety impacts of actions and inactions on others
- f. Promote an environment where safety concerns may be reported without fears of reprisal
- g. Incorporate safety issues into performance evaluations
- h. Emphasize safe computing practices
- i. Reinforce emergency response procedures and protocols
- j. Provide more campus-wide technical and general safety training.
- k. Widely disseminate notes from internal Facilities' safety committee.
- l. Publicize costs of worker's compensation cases; reward safe behaviors.

## **TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE**

### **1. Maintain Technical Excellence**

- a. Maintain current knowledge of codes and regulations by staying abreast of developments and changes
- b. Teach and train entry level employees
- c. Maintain “hands-on” skills with working knowledge of systems
- d. Maintain expertise in disciplines through continuous training and learning
- e. Maintain up-to-date equipment and tools
- f. Plan for future technological changes and attendant needs
- g. Maintain consistency in guidance and advice to customers
- h. Seek creative technological solutions
- i. Integrate technological decisions with the design of existing and future systems
- j. Develop technical training templates specific to required skills including on-the-job and technical training

## **FISCAL STEWARDSHIP**

### **1. Enhance Fiscal Stewardship**

- a. Develop and plan an approach to review overall organization structure and functions, including business and operations systems. Implement work process streamlining.
- b. Increase the speed and ease of communicating across Facilities’ units
- c. Identify opportunities to share resources, e.g. equipment
- d. Implement document management system Facilities-wide
- e. Identify areas where “thin client” technology applies, e.g. technology most appropriate to the tasks
- f. Identify proactive and enterprise-wide opportunities for contracts
- g. Leverage campus resources: intellectual, technical and social
- h. Review purchases with regard to necessity, long-term durability, appropriateness to needs
- i. Improve warranty tracking and management
- j. Evaluate the efficiency of training, “out-of-house” vs. “in-house”

### **2. Improve Resource Planning**

- a. Identify pathways to engage UB leadership in a process to identify and plan for operational and recapitalization priorities
- b. Increase the use of lifecycle, cost benefit planning in reviewing projects
- c. Implement reliability-centered maintenance
- d. Develop a cross-functional risk management program

- e. Deploy personnel to reflect UB's priorities; advocate with UB senior leadership for resources
- f. Explore using other UB departments for solutions, rather than outside resources

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

### **1. Increase Commitment to Environmental Excellence**

- a. Educate faculty, students and staff about environmental issues, concerns and priorities
- b. Promote environmental responsibility
- c. Reward environmental "stewards"
- d. Build environmental stewardship into staff performance evaluations
- e. Consider instituting electronic "suggestion" opportunities
- f. Promote Facilities' "Day of Caring" for environmental purposes, aligned with "Earth Day"
- g. Enforce the "anti-idling" policy
- h. Implement "green" computing
- i. Identify and implement specific recycling initiatives, e.g., ink cartridges
- j. Examine purchases for energy-friendliness and disposal of rehab trash
- k. Utilize electronic technology instead of paper.

### **2. Provide State and National Green Campus Leadership**

- a. Continue Facilities' support for UB's Environmental Task Force and the Building Conservation Contacts Network
- b. Strive to construct a nationally recognized LEED gold or platinum campus building

### **3. Meet or Exceed Requirements of Mandated Environmental Regulations**

- a. Increase green power purchases beyond requirements.
- b. Develop significant on-site renewable generation.
- c. Continue striving toward a 50% recycling rate.
- d. Ensure proper handling of hazardous materials and disposal of hazardous wastes.