

MISSION & MOTIVATION

Powerful Points

Communication is key during busy summer months, fostering connections among different sides of the business office as well as staff and faculty members upon their return to campus.



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Graduation is behind us and our students are away for the summer, but work in the business office and facilities is in full swing. Our maintenance staff is tackling a large workload in a short time frame. Communication between the business office and facilities during this critical time can pay dividends.

Recently at Foxcroft, for example, the business office was preparing to remove an old transformer from a past renovation project. When we shared our plans with the maintenance staff, they reminded us about another transformer stored in the woods, which we should remove at the same time. The simplest questions can make a big difference. When beginning a summer maintenance project, ask, who will lead it? How will a project impact vacation schedules? What supplies will be needed? What other projects will be impacted? Answers to these questions should make for smoother sailing.

Fostering collaboration among different trades within your maintenance staff can help keep them excited about what they do to support students and faculty. Simply installing new white boards, for example, could be a way to connect:

as the carpenter removes an old chalkboard, the painter arrives to clean up the wall around it.

Solidifying the business office-facilities partnership over the summer can also pay off when planning budgets. Balancing a school's investments in its plant and new programs with available financial resources can be a challenge, and prioritizing facilities needs is

key. Maintenance staff can help business officers understand when minor repair work could evolve into serious problems, and when promptly addressing work can save money down the line.

Finally, I have found that sharing the hard work of the facilities and business office staff with faculty upon their return to campus is eye-opening and rewarding. Throughout the summer, I document facilities work, taking before, during and after photos, and track what data points will resonate with faculty and board members. This summer, for example, we are resealing the parking lots, and before the project began, I asked the asphalt company how many gallons of asphalt sealant would be used and how many square feet they would cover. These photos and data points go into a PowerPoint that I share at the return-to-school meeting. Last year, which was the rainiest on record in the DC area, I set the slideshow to a song about rain, and everyone chuckled. More importantly, our refreshed faculty better understood the heavy workload that went into refreshing the campus.

Our plant is as important to Foxcroft's success as our faculty; it is the foundation on which the faculty can create a program that engages our students. At summer's end when I see students return, with eyes wide, noticing all the new and improved areas around campus, I am reminded how lucky we are to have such a talented, committed and passionate maintenance staff. Their work reflects the pride of the institution and each individual team member, who together ensure a clean, well-maintained and safe environment for the entire community, and especially our students now and into the future. **N**



Slides from last year's PowerPoint that Anderson created to share with faculty highlights of summer facilities work. See the full presentation with this article on NetAssets.org.



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