

# FACILITIES

## iN *REVIEW*

2022

**EMPOWERING CAMPUS EXCELLENCE**

*Innovations and Insights in UH Facilities*





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# LETTER FROM SENIOR AVC/AVP DAVID OLIVER



Dear Reader,

When I look back on 2022, I remember the feeling of relief as we started a new school year and saw students back on campus with all of the energy and activity that they bring. This felt like a return to normalcy and reminded me of why I chose a career in Higher Education.

We talk extensively about Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence during our monthly orientation. New employees get to hear me ask the “why” of our purpose here at UH. When I ask the question “Why are we here”, I initially get many answers. Some responses focus on personal goals such as having a job, making a living and growing a career. But as I tease out the “Why” of our purpose, every group eventually realizes that our purpose for being here is to support our students. Without that purpose, the University and the need for the Facilities/Construction Management department ceases to exist. This must always stay in sharp focus as we pursue initiatives, make improvements and pursue excellence within facilities management.

Mission/Vision and Guiding Principles focus our energy. I tell new team members that I want them to remember one thing from the F/CM orientation, ***Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence***. It sums up and focuses our energies so that we as a team are prioritizing correctly. As a part of this conversation, I tell a story about the custodian at NASA and their conversation with President John F. Kennedy. That custodian recognized and understand that regardless of the role, his purpose for being at NASA was to put a man on the moon. For us, ensuring student safety and a quality learning environment as stewards of the facilities infrastructure for UH is our purpose, regardless of individual contributions.

Throughout this Facilities in Review for 2022, we have compiled some of the highlights.

In Sept of 2022, Mike Oestreicher joined our team and I want to welcome him and recognize his contributions. He has quickly gotten up to speed and has the Facilities Services team building futures and maintaining excellence. Welcome Mike!

Recognizing excellence in our team members is always a priority. To accomplish this goal, we have been awarding the F/CM “Coin” at an astonishing rate. 150 individuals have received a coin in the last year for their efforts with some receiving more than one. Nominations are accepted from all, so don’t hesitate to recognize a deserving team member.

*Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence,*

David Oliver

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Dear Reader,

It is with the greatest of pride that we are sharing the 2022 edition of Facilities in Review.

We hope that as you scroll through the pages, you are able to understand even more about the accomplishments of the UH Facilities/Construction Management department. We are one of the largest and most unique departments on campus with responsibilities over the facilities and infrastructure for the campus and within the UHS.

On behalf of the Editorial Team, we are sincerely impressed with the successes of Facilities/Construction Management department and are happy to be helping support the purpose of Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence.

We also would like to express our thanks to Facilities Communications Student Tyrese Franklin. He started with our department in September 2020 and will be graduating from UH in May 2023. He has helped produce the Facilities in Review for the last three years and we are ever thankful for his commitment and dedication over these last three years.

We are happy that being a student employee has enabled him to enhance his graphic design portfolio through this magazine, designing signage, and producing event graphics. He also said that he was able to increase his project management skills by meeting deadlines and collaborating with other team members. We are excited that Tyrese decided to build his future with our department while he completed his degree. He has maintained excellence over the years. We wish him the best of luck and look forward to the amazing journey he is about to encounter.



Sincerely,

Jennifer Rea

Executive Director, Facilities Partnerships and Engagement

Tyrese Franklin

Communications Student Worker



# FIXIT Service Requests



In August 2022, the FIXIT Service Request system received a major upgrade. Facilities/Construction Management changed from the software that was over a decade old to a new software.

This transformative change is now more intuitive than ever before. The requester can easily see icons to identify the category for the type of request they would like to submit.

Once the category is chosen, the user then can click from a short list of choices within that range of service. “We were able to minimize the choices and make it much more user friendly. We previously had 182 choices which has been significantly streamlined.” explains Director of IT Chad Thome.

Once the information is submitted, the service request goes through the approval process and becomes a work order. The work order is triaged by the FIXIT Frontline who make sure the information is as accurate as possible before it heads to the appropriate F/CM team to manage the repair. These Zone Managers and Customer Service Liaisons communicate information back and forth between the customer and the technicians.

Assistant Director Danna Elizarraras leads the FIXIT Frontline team and worked closely alongside the F/CM IT team to help with this implementation. She stated, “This software is key to our operations and we wanted to make it as easy as possible for our customers to submit their requests.”

An additional new feature is that the FIXIT service request link has its own URL which means although it is still available through Access UH and the FIXIT icon, it can also simply be bookmarked on a device. The website has the single sign-on using a Cougar Net identification.

Although there is new software, there are still the traditional 4 Ways to FIXIT including phone, email, text and now the upgraded service request system.



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# UH Hosts TAPPA Conference 2022

University of Houston staff members from the Facilities/Construction Management department hosted the 2022 TAPPA Educational Conference and Business Partner Fair in Spring, Texas. The University of Houston was initially set to host the conference in 2020, but the conference was canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The 2021 edition was entirely virtual, making this year's conference the first in-person one since 2019.

TAPPA is a non-profit organization that promotes common interest, proficiency, and professionalism in college and university facilities operations. The organization's annual conference allows attendees to get educated and informed on better managing the facilities department in their respective colleges and universities. The 2022 TAPPA Conference was attended by 33 higher education institutions with close to 400 participants. And there was a sea of red across the conference as over 40 UH staff members attended — some for the first time.

The conference featured education sessions to improve how facilities departments across Texas universities can work more efficiently. The facilities staff didn't just attend the break-out sessions - they led some of them. Magda Alanis, Woody Sutton, Connie Hammack, and Jim Norcom took on the role of presenters. The topics included:

- “Revolutionizing Customer Service”- Creating a Culture of Customer Excellence - From Development to Implementation
- “Red Zone” Meet the Process that Accelerates Construction Project Completion
- Space Audit Planning and How to ACE the Space Audit
- Avoiding the Pitfalls and Complications of Furniture Specification

Aside from attending the break-out sessions, attending the TAPPA conference allowed staff to network with peers and business partners. “The opportunity to network with peers and business partners in an in-person environment was critical in creating and strengthening the network of partners to continue making UH successful,” said David Oliver, Senior Assistant Vice Chancellor of Facilities/Construction Management. Networking with industry peers allowed staff to see how other Facilities departments work in their respective state universities.

“It was enlightening to see that most, if not all, of the Institutions for Higher Education that were present at the conference are experiencing some of the same challenges related to operations, maintenance, staffing, etc. as we are,” said Facilities/Construction Management Executive Director Jennifer Rea. “It’s nice to know that we are not alone.”

After a successful job hosting this year's TAPPA Conference including a tour of the UH Fertitta Center and Indoor Practice field, the Facilities/Construction Management department looks forward to the 2023 conference in Denton, TX.





# New AVP for Facilities Services



Mike Oestereicher joined the UH Facilities/Construction Management department as the Assistant Vice President of Facilities Services in September 2022. He has over 25 years of experience in facility operations and services, engineering, and contracting.

He is originally from Colorado, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering and a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado. He has lived in 4 countries and 10 states over the last 31 years while serving in the United States Navy as a submariner and Civil Engineer Corps Officer. He is a licensed professional engineer in the State of Colorado. He successfully completed the Keenan-Flagler School of Business Advanced Management Program and the Wharton Advanced Management Program.

Oestereicher has oversight over the Facilities Services unit which is comprised of the following areas.

- Campus Services
- Lab Services
- General Maintenance
- Preventive Maintenance
- Utility Operations
- Campus Construction Services

He is extremely proud to be able to now support the University of Houston and is ready to help build futures and maintain excellence.

# Facilities Services Leadership



**Mike Oestereicher**  
Assistant Vice President for Facilities Services



**Liliana Simmonds**  
Sr Director, Campus Services: Custodial, Moves & Events, Solid Waste & Recycling



**Mario Carrera**  
Director, Lab Services & General Maintenance



**Hussain Alkinani**  
Director, Campus Construction Services: CCS & Minor In-House Construction



**David Geis**  
Director, Preventive Maintenance: Elevators, Auto/Fleet, Fire Alarm, Preventive Maintenance



**John King**  
Director, Utility Operations: Central Plant, Electric, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, Building Management Systems



**Willard Brewster**  
Director, Sugar Land & Katy



**Michael Knight**  
Director, Technology Bridge



**Rudy Jimenez**  
Assistant Director, Cougar Access Control Services: Locks, Keys, Electronic Access Control



# First Grant Received in Years for UH Facilities



Facilities/Construction Management and UH Energy partnered together to submit an application for a grant pertaining to the replacement of a solid waste truck in summer 2020. The received grant totaled \$290,980.

This particular grant was targeted to reduce nitrogen oxides (NOX) emissions from mobile sources. The criteria for the grant was dependent on the age of the current trucks being used.

Once UH Energy made UH Facilities aware of this opportunity, our Fleet Manager helped gather the needed information for this project. After the confirmation came in that it would be received, even more work was put into the purchasing of the truck because it had to adhere to the more stringent federal emission standards for NOX.

The day finally came when the truck was delivered in the fall of 2021 and the hard work paid off in multiple ways. "The effort that was put into this process felt worth it when I saw the truck finally come down Entrance 17," explained Sr. Director Liliana Simmonds. It was a point of pride that she was able to help the Solid Waste and Recycling Team obtain a more efficient and reliable recycling truck.

# Women in Construction



Facilities/Construction Management Celebrates Women in Construction Week 2022

March 6-12 marks Women in Construction Week, an annual event that highlights the contributions of women in the construction industry. This year, Facilities/Construction Management would like to take this opportunity to recognize and celebrate the women who are making their mark in the industry.

Construction has been a male-dominated industry for many years, but women are breaking barriers and proving their skills in all areas of construction, including project management, engineering, architecture, and more. Women bring a unique perspective to construction projects, with their attention to detail, strong communication skills, and ability to work collaboratively.

We want to take this moment to thank all the women who are working hard in the construction industry, and to recognize their contributions to the success of our projects. From project managers to architects, engineers to laborers, women are making a difference in the industry, and we are proud to celebrate them during Women in Construction Week.

Their hard work and dedication is paving the way for more women to join the industry and make a difference. Keep pushing forward and continue to inspire others with your strength and determination.



# Custodial Appreciation



Custodial Appreciation Week is celebrated each year in September. This is a great opportunity to thank those who work behind the scenes to build the future of the students, faculty and staff.

University of Houston Facilities/Construction Management has over 125 in-house custodians and close to the same number of contract custodians. This is the largest team within the department and is led by Senior Director Liliana Simmonds. Specifically supporting and coordinating the in-house custodians is Assistant Director Ana De Los Reyes. Organizing and delegating the contract custodians is Assistant Director Katie Alvarenga. This strong leadership team has been working closely together through the COVID-19 pandemic, contract changes and additional square footage.

The Custodial Team are dedicated employees that cover the cleaning and maintaining of 160 campus buildings, twenty-four hours a day through three assigned shifts. The majority work on the second and third shift which begins in the afternoon and runs through early in the morning. Many of the duties that custodians perform go unseen because of the schedule they work. Custodian responsibilities cover anything from emptying trash, dusting, performing floor care, cleaning restrooms and so much more.

When new buildings open for use, the custodian team schedules and assignments shift to cover the new areas. Most recently, they began supporting the new building that houses the Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine as well as the John M. O'Quinn Law Center building, home to the UH Law Center. Their efforts and accomplishments help maintain excellence for the sixteen million square feet of space at UH.

# UH Facilities Ride-Out Team 2022



Each year, Facilities Services organizes a Ride-Out Team. These dedicated individuals are responsible for staying on campus when there is an emergency weather situation. After completing the FEMA NIMS certification, we entrust them as stewards of the campus to keep an eye on the buildings and report any damages. In addition, they must do the preliminary cleaning and attempt to minimize further damage as best they can. The team is comprised of representatives from different areas of the department in an attempt to help have different types of expertise available during the emergencies and make repairs if possible.

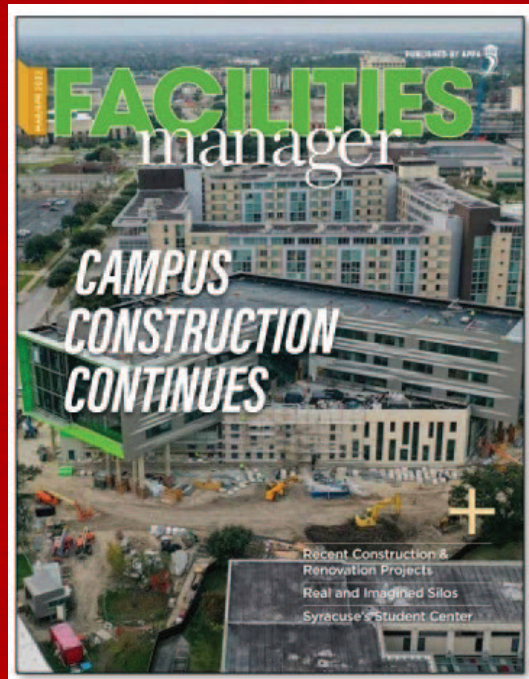
The 2022 team captain was Assistant Director Steven Shadow. He held multiple meetings prior to and during hurricane season to educate and review the procedures when an emergency occurs. "We were prepared to help if an emergency situation took place and it was a learning experience to be the one in charge of the process." explained Shadow.

To recognize this team's commitment, each of them were issued a 2022 Ride-Out Team jacket. Facilities/Construction Management is thankful for their dedication and appreciates the ways in which they are building futures and maintaining excellence.

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## Law Building Featured in Facilities Manager



F/CM is proud to have the John M O'Quinn Law Center project featured on the cover of the Facilities Manager March/April 2022 Issue. Details on the new building were also included as part of a special edition on projects across the nation.

## Graduate College of Social Work Project



The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) 1,500 SF lobby addition & first floor renovation has transformed the GCSW into a fresher space with modern style and character. A large table with seating is centered in the new lobby space providing students space to gather and study. Its significance is that everyone is welcome and everyone has a seat at the table, which reflects the college's mission "to achieve and sustain justice for all".

This project continues to be recognized in the construction industry. In 2021, the project received the National Excellence in Construction Eagle Award (Institutional <\$5M) from Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC) and the Excellence in Construction ICE Award from ABC of Greater Houston. In 2022, the project received the Award of Merit, Small Project Category from Engineering News-Record (ENR). Go Coogs!

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## Topping Out UH-Downtown Wellness & Success Center





# National Safety Month



June is National Safety Awareness Month. A month when employees and employers refocus their efforts and commitments on keeping their workspaces safe and free from accidents. The University of Houston Facilities Construction/Management has partnered with the National Safety Council to observe this month and participate in its initiatives.

This year the focus is on the following topics:

- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Workplace Impairment
- Injury Prevention
- Slip, Trip, and Fall

These topics constitute some of the significant causes of job-related injuries and deaths, so our goal this year is to provide as much information to our team regarding these topics.

The Facilities/Construction Management department has recommitted itself to ensuring that safe working conditions are established and maintained within the department. This commitment can be seen through the Facilities Construction/Managements' safety training program.

The Facilities/Construction Management department completed its strategic training initiative earlier this year, and safety training was a vital component of that review. The safety training program was codified, presented, and approved.

The program will consist of OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 General Industry and Construction as the foundation. CPR-First Aid-AED Training, Departmental specific safety training certifications, EHS mandatory safety training, and a robust online safety training tool to support day-to-day operations.

This comprehensive approach will create greater safety awareness among our staff, foster a safety culture, and provide improved productivity for our department. So, as we celebrate National Safety Awareness Month, let us recommit and embrace safety as a part of our culture and work to ensure that we "leave works the way we came."

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# Incentive Program Anniversary



In June 2021, an exciting new recognition program was begun to celebrate the Facilities/Construction Management purpose of Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence. Custom created UH F/CM coins began to be distributed to F/CM team members committed to the Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence mindset. The tradition of these types of coins being incorporated into the department's culture signifies a

visible and lasting memento that recognizes that team member's contribution to achieving the strategic mission of both UH and F/CM.

It has now been over a year since this new incentive program for Facilities/Construction Management has started and the response has been tremendous. These coins are presented to employees who exemplify going above and beyond. Most of the time a preset presentation is scheduled on the calendar with Sr. AVC/AVP David Oliver that includes an invite to the team member's entire chain of command. This helps reiterate the importance of receiving this honor.

190 coins have been distributed to over 150 different employees and the list is always growing. There is already one employee that actually has four coins!

Recipient names are included monthly in the F/CM employee newsletter. Since starting this tradition over a year ago, coin stands have been added so that they can be displayed proudly.

Since everyone might not have the same sentimental value for the coins, an employee can also decide if they would prefer to exchange them for items displayed in the AVC Office cabinet. Prices for these additional choices range from one coin to four coins. Many team members have their eyes on the UH backpack or the multiple tool sets but they typically wait to get their second coin before an exchange occurs.

"Building a culture of appreciation is part of what we want to develop in our department. We have amazing employees who are dedicated and continue to help customers and their other team members on a daily basis. They need to be recognized for these efforts and these coins were a great way to achieve this goal." states Oliver.

Facilities/Construction Management can only continue Building Futures and Maintaining Excellence through employees who go above and beyond.

# Facilities Builds Pathways Forward



Facilities/Construction Management continues to create an environment of accessibility by ensuring appropriate standards for new construction with regards to the Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS). The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and their Architectural Barriers Advisory Committee develop and maintain the TAS. They are then approved by the United States Department of Justice as being equivalent to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines. By law, TAS must be equal or more stringent than ADA Accessibility Guidelines. In turn, this means that the F/CM projects are constructed with these standards applied.

In order for projects to be considered compliant, these rigorous standards are adhered to during every phase of the projects. All campus construction projects with a construction cost of \$50,000 or more must contract a Registered Accessibility Specialist (RAS). The RAS registers the project with the State of Texas and performs plan reviews while the project is in design. They also conduct construction inspections to confirm the design of the new facility, renovation, or exterior project meet State accessibility codes once construction is complete.

To help address areas on campus that are not directly tied to an active construction project but might need a compliance assessment, Facilities/Construction Management manages a conservative yearly budget to help with these requests.

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# UHS Facilities Forum 2022



UH System Facilities leaders and business partners gathered to collaborate, network and gain knowledge at the 2022 UHS Facilities Forum. This year's theme was "Digging Deeper into Sustaining Our Evolving Environment." The event was attended by members of staff at the University of Houston, University of Houston-Downtown, University of Houston-Victoria and University of Houston-Clear Lake.

The attendees began the two-day event with a moving video message from Chancellor Khator thanking everyone for their dedication over these last few years of historic events including the freeze and the pandemic. She also welcomed them to the fifth annual Facilities Forum.

The first workshop was a keynote address from Dr. Robert K. Glenn. The President of UH-Victoria shared an encouraging message with examples of resiliency and tenacity. He weaved in stories from his own life experiences and included a list of insightful books that can be used to further develop the participants who attended.

A series of other workshops transpired over the following two days and formed a collaborative, learning environment. Facilitators highlighted the importance of digging deeper into knowing our fellow co-workers, using metrics to improve our processes, realizing the current energy trends, understanding safety aspects, pivoting to the hybridized workforce environment, managing customer expectations and reviewing sustainability initiatives.

Senior Associate Vice Chancellor/Associate Vice President David Oliver said, "Each year the information presented aligns with the current situations we deal with on a daily basis. The time we spend together during the forum builds our knowledge base and helps to encourage the continuous development of new ways of thinking."

UH Facilities/Construction Management thanks all of the participants who engaged during the forum. A special thanks goes out to the hard work and dedication of the Facilities Forum planning committee who met for months in advance to discuss the logistics. F/CM looks forward to conducting many more UHS Facilities Forums in the future.

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# F/CM Continues to Recognizes Employee Contributions with Excellence Awards

With the re-emphasis on employee excellence in 2019, Facilities/Construction Management has recognized department team members who contributed to the success of the academic year. In 2020 and 2021, the recognitions were virtual but 2022 was back in-person.

In May 2022, F/CM hosted their annual department lunch. During this time together appreciation was given for the hard work accomplished through the fiscal year. The inaugural Strategic Teams were acknowledged for the projects they proposed in 2021. The 2022 Strategic Teams were also announced.

The Building Futures, Maintaining Excellence Awards were given by Senior Associate Vice Chancellor/Associate Vice President David Oliver. There are four awards distributed in total including individual and team awards. The top nominated employee finalists were individually emailed to let them know they had been considered for the award. The finalist's included Miguel Elizondo, Rudy Jimenez, Michelle Le, Nguyen Ngo, Richard Pace, Jai Ranganath, Jim Regan, Nabil Sanmiguel, Brad Schmidt, and Bill Wilkins.

The Building Futures Employee award was given to Facilities Space Coordinator Nabil Sanmiguel for her work on the Lab Usage Guideline. This lab space application will be coming out soon to help manage the lab spaces for the entire university. Her efforts on this project included scheduling visits to every lab space, noting the current use, equipment and multiple other details.

The Maintaining Excellence Employee award was presented to Power Plant Electrician Bill Wilkins for his dedication and excellent customer service skills. The department has received numerous emails from customers who compliment his skills and include information detailing the way he never gives up on finding a solution.

Two teams that included team members from multiple areas of the department were recognized for their efforts. The Design Development Team was awarded the Building Futures Cross-Team award for their work on developing an operating procedure manual to help ensure the accuracy of the projects. It is imperative for all units within F/CM to be a part of the design process in order to maintain excellence when the project is complete.

The winner of the Maintaining Excellence Cross-Team award was given to the department as a whole in recognition for their work on receiving the TAPPA Excellence Award. Each area contributed to this achievement.

Facilities/Construction Management continues to encourage all of its employees to build futures and maintain excellence throughout the year and looks forward to continuing this annual tradition.



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Facilities/Construction Management  

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Division of Administration  
& Finance