



## Information and Research Committee Shakes Things Up

by Vickie Younger

During the time I have been associated with APPA's Information and Research Committee (formerly called Information Services), I have witnessed changes in the committee name, charge, forms, processes, ideology, and even personnel. This article highlights the most dramatic and exciting change yet—the total revamping of APPA's data collection process!

Our two most well-known survey instruments are CCAS and SAM, with the results published in the biennial *Comparative Costs and Staffing Report for Educational Facilities* and the *Strategic Assessment Model*. Our earliest formal efforts at the CCAS survey occurred in 1965 with the "Unit Cost and Wage Rate Report on Maintenance and Operation of Physical Plants of Universities and Colleges." (And you think our acronyms are bad now!) We have even found some 1928 APPA meeting proceedings that refer to the comparison of the cost of coal and the wages paid to the building watchmen. We have been interested in these figures for a **long** time. SAM is a relative newcomer, conceived in 1995 and first published in 1999, with the focus on measurement of organizational effectiveness through continuous improvement.

Interest in the data and resulting comparisons taken from both surveys have continued to be steady, but participation has been up and down, with overall lower numbers. As we look at statistics, we want stable, consistent results in order to assure the membership that we are actually measuring what we say we are and that the results can be relied upon as both "repeatable" and "consistent." The more participants who complete the surveys with accurate and complete information, the greater value to all.

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To strive for these results, the Information and Research Committee has gone through a series of modifications to the Comparative Costs and Staffing Survey (CCAS) and the Strategic Assessment Model (SAM). In both cases, we have worked to provide better definitions, refine the way questions are asked, and improve the format and ease of completion. But, even with these modifications we didn't see significant increases in participation. So, we asked the question, "Why?" And, we found that confidentiality, understanding of the process, clarity of definitions, choice of surveys, time, and benefit to the member to be among the barriers.

With the above answers in mind, we decided to take a fresh look and re-think the whole process and then create a new approach that allows for:

- more flexibility,
- more ease and help with the completion process,
- more automated calculations,
- more focus on "what's in it for me,"
- more collaboration with other organizations,
- more support for our new Center for Facilities Research, and
- more outcomes that will assist members in their work.

As you might guess, we had to break away from tradition. Changing a few words or processes would no longer get us to where we needed to be. So we got a clean sheet of paper and asked ourselves, "What do we want to know?" and "How can we get this information?"

### We Have a New Product

We think you will like it. The survey will be done annually. It will be more clear. It will be easier to use. It can be divided among staff members. It will have basic and previously provided information already input. It will be based upon coordinated, clear definitions of terms. It will provide results to you from CCAS, SAM, and other ongoing research efforts. It will have a totally new format. And, most important, it will provide clear **facilities performance indicators**.

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## Modules

Eight modules will be the base for the new data collection process. Each will have basic organizational information already entered (i.e., FICEID, Funding, Carnegie Classification, APPA region, Enrollment Range). Specific information on the person completing the survey element will be asked so that questions can be directed to that responsible person concerning any data points that fall outside expected ranges. Previously submitted information will show up in data fields to give a reference point. The participant may update or leave the information showing as current.

The eight modules are identified as:

- General Data
- Operating Cost Data
- Strategic Financial Data
- Process Data
- Staffing Data
- Customer Satisfaction
- Innovation and Learning
- Process Level Self-Evaluations on Finance, Internal Business, Customer, Innovation and Learning

The beauty of the new format is that it is easy to delegate by sections and does not require a commitment to provide all data. A participant is encouraged to complete as much of the information as they can. The more we have, the more we can feed back to the membership—therefore, the more valuable the results are. Another outstanding feature of this new format is the flexibility to add information to any specific module or to add new modules based upon our needs for research and to answer specific inquiries that APPA regularly receives from the media and other university-affiliated organizations (i.e., NACUBO, CAUBO, SCUP, CUPA-HR).

Samples of the new survey tool are depicted in the figures on the facing page. There may be a little fine tuning before final publication on the Web, but this will certainly give you an idea of how the changes are being introduced.

We are hoping that for the good of your department, your institution, and APPA that you will participate in this new survey. The information that will be collected is necessary and useful for the decision makers at your institution and governing body.



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## REGISTRATION

This registration is valid for all APPA web-based surveys during the 2003-04 fiscal year. You will use the User Name and Password established with this one-time registration to log into any/all APPA web-based survey modules.

Username:  Please read REGISTRATION instructions first!

Username Hint:

Password:

Re-type Password:

Password Hint:

Institution:

REGISTRATION Instructions

Data reported for all survey modules through this registration represents

K-12 school district or individual public/private primary/secondary school ☒

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Registration

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## Section I: GENERAL DATA

This survey references AUXILIARY ENTERPRISES in many definitions. Auxiliary enterprises are defined as activities that normally are self-supporting from cash sales/billings versus activities that are allocated budgets. Examples are parking that sells permits and receives income from fines and meters; residence halls, housing and food services that sell room and board to students, and have cash food sales; bookstores, movies theatres, athletics receiving income from sports events ticket sales. The campus accounting or budget office normally can provide a list of auxiliary enterprises.

Definitions in the General Data Module instruct you when to include auxiliary services in entries for this module.

Person to contact regarding General Data Module entries:

Name

Telephone Number

Fax Number

Email address

Entries you are making in this General Data module will be used for all APPA 2003-04 surveys in which you participate.

General Data

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## Section II: FINANCIAL DATA OPERATING COSTS

Person to contact regarding Operating Costs Module entries:

Name

Telephone Number

Fax Number

Email address

Statistics reported in this Operating Costs data module (unless otherwise instructed by a definition) ☒ Include auxiliary services

TOTAL ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT COSTS\* FY 2003-04

Total GSF for which department performs specific function in this category

Total in-house labor costs (including salaries, wages, benefits)

Total in-house non-labor costs (including supplies, equipment, training, etc.)

Total costs for contracted services

Grand Total Preliminary cost/GSF

A\* in an entry title indicates that there is an expanded definition for your examination. Double click on the title to read the expanded definition.

Operating Costs

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## Section II: FINANCIAL DATA STRATEGIC FINANCIAL MEASURES

Gross institutional expenditures\*:

Annual Capital Renewal Expenditures\*:

Deferred Capital Maintenance Backlog\*:

Capital renewal cumulative need\*:

Renovation, modernization, and adaptation annual expenditure\*:

Renovation, modernization, and adaptation cumulative need\*:

Capital expenditures for major building renovations during the 2003-04 fiscal year\*

A\* in an entry title indicates that there is an expanded definition for your examination. Double click on the title to read the expanded definition.

Financial Measures

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## Section V: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION DATA

Customer Satisfaction Results: If your organization assessed the satisfaction level of its customers in FY 2003-04 using a numerically calibrated survey instrument, please indicate the following results:

Overall Average Customer Satisfaction Index\*: ☒ Very Satisfied

Distribution Index\*: Indicate the percent of customers whose overall scores averages were in the following ranges. The total of the entries must equal 100%.

Extremely Satisfied	<input type="text"/>	%
Very Satisfied	<input type="text"/>	%
Satisfied	<input type="text"/>	%
Very Dissatisfied	<input type="text"/>	%
Extremely Dissatisfied	<input type="text"/>	%
Total	<input type="text"/>	%

Customer Satisfaction

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## Section VI: PERSONNEL DATA AND COSTS

TRADES	Number FTE Employees	Union Yes/No	Average Annual Salary
Shop Supervisor/Foreman		No	\$
Carpenter		No	\$
Electrician		No	\$
Locksmith		No	\$
Machinist/Weilder		No	\$
AC/Refrigeration		No	\$
Mason		No	\$
Painter		No	\$
Plumber/Pipefitter		No	\$
Roofer		No	\$
Sheetmetal Worker		No	\$

Double click on job function to read the definition for the position.

Personnel Data and Costs



The beauty of the new format is that it is easy to delegate by sections and does not require a commitment to provide all data.

You can see by the following comments that others are finding this information to be critical in their decision making and for presentations for support of their organizations efforts.

### Why You Need This Data

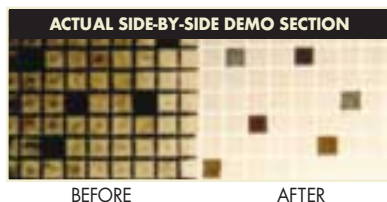
- If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.
- Improvement or decline is only determined relative to a base line.
- Data collection and presentation adds credibility to the member.
- Data collection helps the facilities professional tell his story to campus decision makers.
- Information helps to assess the organization's financial performance.
- It's necessary to determine the readiness of employees to embrace the future.
- Data collection helps to determine our ability to delight customers.

### How You Can Use the Data

- I use these tools for self analysis; the more data the more valid.
- I use the data to make my case for budget requests and to help depict what impact budget cuts might cause.
- I use the data in conversations concerning reasonable expectations with senior administrators and the Board of Directors.
- I use the data to see what would happen if our organization decides to shrink or grow.
- I have gone to specific publications that result from data collection to help with staffing for our grounds department as we anticipate increases in the landscaped area of our University. We were able to increase our FTEs by two staff members and dedicate an additional \$50,000.

We will be offering a hands-on training session at the Educational Leadership Facilities Forum in Washington, D.C. in July to demonstrate this new survey tool and answer any questions that you may have on how to complete the information and how these tools might be of greatest value to you for planning and benchmarking. Please join the Information and Research Committee on Tuesday, July 27, 2004, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. for this session. It will definitely be worth your time! 🏰

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not his  
fault.



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