



Where are our Senior Facility Officers?

By Frank Brewer

In 2006 APPA completed a review of its activities and educational program offerings. This review highlighted the many things APPA does well and also indicated some high priority opportunities. One such opportunity missing from APPA's programming is the participation of the Senior Facility Officers (SFOs) at our member institutions. SFOs were defined as individuals responsible for the planning, design, construction, and management of institutional buildings, infrastructure, and grounds. And, quite often, these individuals assume other responsibilities such as: auxiliary enterprise, leasing, motor pool, parking, printing, real estate, and transportation.

OFFERING VALUE TO SFOS

In the fall of 2006, the APPA Board tasked an ad hoc work group to identify steps to better engage SFOs in APPA. This work group, composed of me, Brooks Baker, Jack Colby, Bill Daigneau, Kevin Folsom, Rod Rose, Terry Ruprecht, and Kevin McNaughton, along with APPA staff Lander Medlin and Suzanne Healy, recommended that APPA create an annual event focused exclusively on SFO needs. They indicated this new program should:

- Address topics of specific interest to SFOs.
- Encourage high interaction levels among SFOs.

TOPICS SELECTED MUST NOT ONLY BE TIMELY, BUT MUST BE OF INTEREST TO THE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE IN THESE SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS.

- Have SFOs lead most of this interaction.
 - Be limited to a maximum of 125 attendees, by invitation only.
 - Last no longer than 1½ days.
- The APPA Board supported the work group's recommendations. Under Terry Ruprecht's leadership, planning quickly began for the first SFO Summit, immediately before APPA's 2007 annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

FIRST-EVER SFO SUMMIT 2007

Though time was tight for organizing this initial program, participant evaluations at the end of the event indicated it was largely in line with expectations. About 75 SFOs attended. Topics addressed during the Summit included:

- Aligning Institutional Mission and Expectations with Facilities Management's Mission and Strategy

- Alternate Construction Delivery Methods
 - Gas, Electric, Coal, and Renewable Energy Markets (panel discussion)
 - When the Project Goes Bad (a new construction discussion)
 - Influence at the Top
- Additional concurrent sessions included:
- *Buildings...the Gifts that Keep on Taking: An Assessment Investment Strategy*
 - Space as the Driver of Institutional Budget
 - Strategic Real Estate Investment
 - Facilities Performance Indicators: What Are They? What Should They Be?
- There were also roundtable sessions around "hot topics" identified by participants a few weeks before the



Jon Varnell, Guilford College, and Marion Bracy, Xavier University, network between sessions at the 2007 SFO Summit.



Planning committee members Steve Kraal and Terry Ruprecht reconnect with fellow APPA members at an SFO Summit reception in Baltimore, MD.

THE PLANNING COMMITTEE STRONGLY BELIEVES THE SUCCESS OF THE SUMMIT IS DEPENDENT ON GETTING PARTICIPATING SFOs ACTIVELY ENGAGED WITH EACH OTHER DURING THE MEETING.

conference. Finally, Kevin Folsom introduced some technological wizardry to the program, which enabled panelists to ask questions of all participants and receive immediate feedback.

The primary lessons learned from the 2007 Summit were: (1) SFOs like interacting directly with each other, and (2) the format of the event must fully support that interaction. The planning committee also learned that selecting and presenting topics to this audience is not easy. Topics selected must not only be timely, but must be of interest to the experienced

people in these senior management positions. Nevertheless, Steve Kraal, of University of Texas, Austin, provided feedback, repeated by many others: "I really appreciated the opportunity this event provided to interact with other SFOs about ideas and issues that are surfacing on my campus."

PREVIEW OF 2008

Planning for the 2008 SFO Summit in San Antonio is near completion. The 2008 planning committee includes Terry Ruprecht and me as, co-chairs, along with Brooks Baker, Kevin Folsom, Steve

Kraal, Fred Plant, and Curtis Reynolds. Based upon last year's experience, we will make even greater use of technology to facilitate interaction among participants and will provide more time for meeting participants to discuss topics of interest with their counterparts. This year's topic areas include:

- Design & Construction... Risky Business
- Problem Solving in the Operations Area; including Productivity & Accountability, Customer Service, Facility Renewal Funding, and Recruitment & Retention/ Staffing Issues
- Sustainability...It's Not Easy Being Green
- What's Important...and How Do You Keep Your Staff Focused on It?
- Influence at the Top

Our hot topic roundtables will be repeated. The planning committee strongly believes the success of the Summit is dependent on getting participating SFOs actively engaged with each other during the meeting. ☺

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Senior Facility Officers:

We need your help! Please let us share your suggestions on how we can make July's meeting more productive for you. E-mail Suzanne Healy, director of professional development, at suzanne@appa.org.

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