

# Survey says: Campus Security Tops List

## Facilities Strategy Team Researches APPA, E&I Member Facility Procurement Priorities

By William M. Elvey and Maggie Kinnaman

A recent survey on priorities for campus facilities revealed that locks and security are top concerns. It's not a surprising result. Physical security for everyone on campus is of critical importance, but in the current economic recession, there's another kind of protection that's just as important for higher education: financial security. More on that later.

Conducted jointly by APPA and E&I Cooperative Purchasing in November and December of 2008, the survey reached more than 300 APPA members and purchasing professionals at E&I member institutions. With more than 1,600 member colleges and universities, E&I is the nation's largest higher-education purchasing consortium.

The survey, which garnered a 10 percent response rate, asked respondents about the level of importance, suppliers used, and most recent fiscal year spend for specific facilities categories on their campuses:

- HVAC
- Building automation controls
- Locks, security devices, and door access
- MRO supplies and building materials
- Electrical equipment and supplies
- Mechanical and plumbing supplies
- Fire alarm and fire protection
- Emergency response systems

Topping the list, with 84 percent of respondents placing it as a high priority, were locks, security devices, and door access, followed by emergency response at 83 percent and fire alarms at 81 percent.

Following in the priority rankings were building automation, 79 percent; HVAC, 70 percent; electrical, 56 percent; maintenance, repair, and operations, 28 percent; and mechanical and plumbing, 13 percent.

### STRONG CONTRACTS

The survey was an outgrowth of work conducted by the E&I Facilities Strategy Team. The team's purpose is to assist in strengthening existing and future facility contracts, and its members include both facilities and procurement professionals from various regions, including those from private and public academic institutions, and some who are particularly interested in sustainability issues as they apply to facilities contracts.

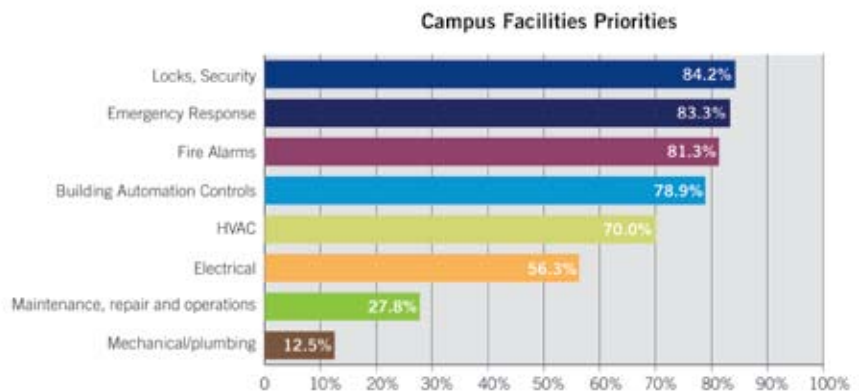
Revealing strong agreement among campus facilities and purchasing professionals, the survey results showed that they are advocates for and implement-

ers of the strategic directions of their institutions. The facilities-purchasing partnership is one that the E&I Facilities Strategy Team is very interested and involved in (we are both Strategy Team members, and Maggie serves on the E&I board of directors).

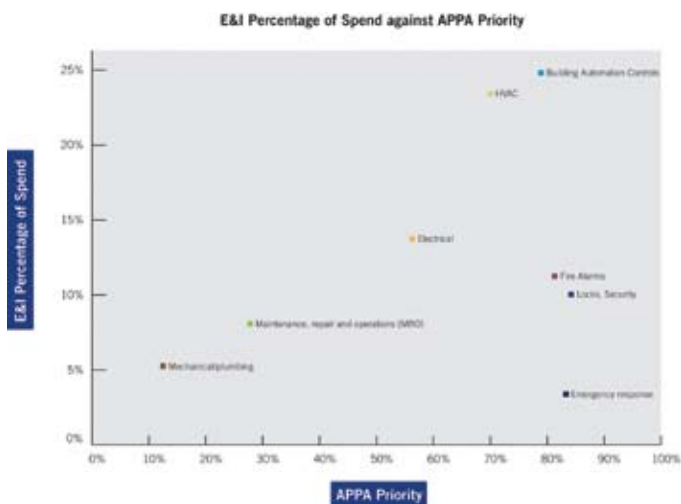
The survey is helping the Facilities Strategy Team better understand where to concentrate its efforts. Formed last year, the team first met in October 2008 to discuss building a portfolio of best-of-breed facilities contracts. Because the Facilities Strategy Team is composed of members from both the facilities and procurement worlds, it has the right people to conduct proper research and reach sound conclusions. The value of this cross-department collaboration already is revealing itself through the innovative work of the team and its early results.

We started by reviewing E&I's existing facilities contracts and determining their focus and scope. We then determined the type of spend data we would use in our analysis, and identified a target list of suppliers and opportunities. Finally, the group made strategy recommendations that would guide the future planning and implementation of E&I facilities contracts.

The team's recommendations for management of the facility contracts portfolio included a trifecta of facilities-contracts planning: growing existing contracts, working with a second genera-



tion of contracts (RFPs for contracts to replace initial ones), and establishing new contracts. The survey grew directly from this work, as the group quickly determined the need to gather spend information from APPA and E&I members. The graph below maps E&I spend data against the category priorities as identified by APPA respondents. This analysis reveals a wide range of opportunity across the spend spectrum.



## COST SAVINGS AND PURCHASING COOPERATIVES

With economic conditions that many believe are worsening, cost-savings is non-negotiable. In the world of higher education, perhaps the hardest hit are facilities management departments, which are the largest administrative units on most campuses.

At the intersection of acquiring what colleges and universities need to upgrade and maintain facilities, and saving money and time, is cooperative purchasing. We can think of no better way to optimize scarce facilities resources than to procure smartly by encouraging procurement officers to utilize cooperative purchasing contracts. One example of a purchasing cooperative is E&I, which provides members with access to a diverse portfolio of high quality national and regional contracts from best-in-class suppliers. E&I's member-driven competitive solicitation process has been

validated by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP).

It is critical to continue this collaboration between our associations. We are doing it through the formation of teams that will issue RFPs for several new contracts—some in direct response to the priorities established by the APPA/E&I survey results. Through competitive solicitations that include requirements and services needed by the institutions, spend data, vendor/

supplier support, member involvement, a strong cooperative purchasing initiative will result in what we all want access to: best-of-breed contracts. There are opportunities for APPA members interested in helping draft RFPs and evaluate responses to both participate in this project and engage in APPA as an association.

As we continue our collaboration, we realize that it is important for the team to effectively communicate the results of our work—especially what we're doing across association lines—to make best-of-breed contracts available to higher-education institutions. With member support and usage, the contracts will initially be a source of financial and contractual benefits. As usage and volume grow for each new contract, the strength of this strong cooperative purchasing initiative will be a source of financial and contractual advantages that will benefit both higher education and the vendor/supplier community.

Just as physical security was a high priority for APPA and E&I members, we also share the responsibility to contribute to the financial security of the institutions we serve. That, in the end, is a major goal of cooperative purchasing, and one that is especially critical in these demanding financial times.

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