



# Expanding Community College Involvement In APPA

By William R. Ward II

**A**s a graduate of the APPA Institute for Facilities Management and the Leadership Academy, I have found the organization's training and educational programs to be of great benefit to me and my staff in our efforts to provide outstanding facilities for our students, staff, and the general public. I feel strongly that other institutions, especially my fellow community colleges, could also benefit greatly from membership in APPA.

APPA's mission statement, "To support educational excellence with quality leadership and professional management through education, research, and recognition" is definitely in line with the goals of any institution of higher learning. For APPA to provide support to community colleges achieve their goals, there needs to be greater engagement in the Association by non-participating schools.

## SPREADING THE NEWS ABOUT APPA

Pima Community College's Chancellor and Board of Governors have been very diligent in and supportive of our efforts to upgrade and modernize our facilities. In the winter of 2010, facilities staff completed a number of major accomplishments that have greatly enhanced the operations of our multi-campus district. These include the remodeling of our district-wide Student Services facilities and the replacement of the Desert Vista Campus central plant with a state-of-the-art modular unit. We also completed other equally significant projects such as a complete audit by an outside agency of all our facilities, and

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an in-depth study of all college utilities and infrastructure.

During this same time period, we constantly heard bad news from the State of Arizona concerning the future of funding for higher education. With budgetary cuts looming on the horizon, we felt that it was important that we share the lessons we learned from these and other projects with our fellow community colleges, so that they can benefit from our experiences. We also wanted to hear about the accomplishments of our colleagues at other schools. Since there was no existing in-state facilities management group or organization to allow for this exchange of ideas and lessons learned, we took action to create a forum to accomplish this goal.

I thought it would be an excellent opportunity for all Arizona community college facilities management teams to meet and to address current facility issues facing all state community colleges. I talked with Polly Pinney, executive director, facilities management, at Arizona State University,

who was also the APPA President at the time. After discussions with her, we decided to bring one of our APPA business partners, GLHN Architects and Engineers, on board to provide assistance as event facilitators. Pinney offered to host this event at the Arizona State University in Tempe. We chose the title *Best Practices Symposium* to help generate interest from other schools that were invited to attend.

The drive-in symposium was an overwhelming success. We think of this as the first of many future events where we can periodically gather to discuss best practices, efficiencies, and lessons learned.

It also provided an opportunity to meet together to explore common issues and to arrive at solutions of these issues. Of great importance to the APPA organization, this event provided an excellent venue to share the benefits APPA has identified for community colleges and to encourage participation in the Association.

## EXPANDING INVOLVEMENT

Our symposium served as a model program for APPA to expand community college involvement in the organization. In the spring of 2010, APPA developed Strategic Objective #1 with the goal of increasing membership (particularly in underserved areas such as Community Colleges, K-12 schools, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and to arrest renewal losses stemming from the global economic crisis that has dramatically affected all


colleges and universities. Approximately 15 to 20 percent of APPA member institutions are community colleges, but they represent a small share of the institutions attending APPA educational programs. It should be noted that there are approximately 1,500 community colleges throughout the United States alone. Recognizing this disparity in participation, Darrel Meyer, APPA President and the director of facility services, at Metropolitan Community College, Kansas City, Missouri, has established a Community College Task Force to address improved engagement and recruitment of community colleges and other two-year institutions.

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This engagement group has community college “champions” from various institutions throughout the country as its members. These champions are facilities officers and directors from community colleges within APPA’s existing membership. They are all participating in a grassroots effort designed to reach out and engage their local area colleges in APPA, to raise visibility of APPA, and to help show the value and benefits of APPA membership to prospective colleges. One of the ways they are doing this is to provide drive-in workshops for potential members to learn the benefits of APPA membership. Various community colleges have already sponsored these events, and the organization is beginning to reap the benefits.

In conclusion, APPA has been the recognized leader in the area of educa-

tional facilities management for many years, and continues to light the way for facilities management. However, like any organization or group, it must continue to expand its membership in order to develop the facilities leadership of the future. The message of the benefits and rewards of membership in the Association must be spread by other “champions”

within the organization who also desire to see APPA continue to expand and be inclusive of all the various size educational groups. 

Bill Ward is assistant vice chancellor, facilities, at Pima Community College in Tucson, AZ. He can be reached at [wward@pima.edu](mailto:wward@pima.edu). This is his first article for *Facilities Manager*.

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