



# Focusing on BOK Part 1: General Administration and Management

By Jack Hug, APPA Fellow

The famous phrase *scientia potentia est* is a Latin maxim “For also knowledge itself is power” stated in this form by Sir Francis Bacon, which in modern times is often paraphrased as “knowledge is power.”

The phrase implies that with knowledge or education, one’s potential or abilities in life will certainly increase. Having and sharing knowledge is widely recognized as the basis for improving one’s reputation and influence, thus power.

Ask any group of senior facility officers if they consider knowledge management an important component to the success of their facilities organization, and most will enthusiastically say that they do. Yet, saying that knowledge management is crucial, and knowing what to do about it, are two different things. As Donald Trump has stated, “It is true, knowledge is power, but only if you know how to acquire it.”

## BOK PART 1

The APPA Body of Knowledge (BOK) (the fourth edition of *Facilities Management: A Manual for Plant Administration*) is the source which educational facility managers turn to for acquiring knowledge and information. This new edition does not eliminate or erase the earlier editions, but adds considerably to this most substantial body of authoritative knowledge and information available anywhere.

This article will focus on Part 1: General Administration and Management—The first of APPA’s four Core Competencies.

The chapters that are included in General Administration and Management were not selected at random, but rather chosen as a complementary part of

the more comprehensive and integrated knowledge instrument—the entire APPA BOK. The chapter authors do not attempt to stuff the reader’s head with thoughts and practices of earlier facility innovators, but rather focus on the most current practices and injected their own relevant experience as professional practitioners. Most significantly, the chapters are not written by each author as the absolute *last word* but are rather written to motivate us to expand our knowledge on the subject, and to have at our fingertips when we need a ready reference. This is the source of relevant and useful information to augment our own acquired knowledge on the subject.

A dominant orientation of the general administration and management section is a look inside the facility organization with an eye on the future. It is recognition of two critical practices most apparent in successful facility organizations: management’s critical self-assessment of current organizational capabilities, and an obsession for renewal of organizational capacity. Both practices aimed solely at avoiding organizational decay and aimed at positioning the organization for adapting to changing requirements. Achieving this requires insight and understanding of the facility department’s knowledge: subject matter strengths and weaknesses.

The successful use of the facility management knowledge resources begins with a clear understanding of the know-how that resides in the department. The General Administration and Management Section subject matter (leadership, communication, strategy, human resources, staff development, change management, organization, information management,

financial analysis, accounting, and facilities business management) align perfectly with the general administration and management core competencies.

These core competencies are an absolutely essential component to the organizations foundation for creating value. In essence they represent *life-supporting services* for the organization by providing support and assistance to others delivering facility management services. Mastering the core competencies for general administration and management are also a way of making those who are delivering daily facility services to the campus aware of the working knowledge pool that exists in the organization, and aware of the knowledge links that are essential to improve processes, services, and customer relationships.

## A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Every facilities management organization is already sitting on a vast storehouse of knowledge, but much of it is underused. Organizations that are *APPA Active* and use the Body of Knowledge (BOK) within an organizational environment that fosters a desire for knowledge are organizations that have earned the reputation for regularly making attempts to do things faster, cheaper, and better. In today’s changing campus economy, the key to faster, cheaper, and better is to bring the full force of the organization’s knowledge to bear on the effort. Knowledge has become the lifeblood of a successful facilities organization. Know where and how to acquire it. §

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