

APPA's Center for Facilities Research (CFaR)

By Steve Glazner

The Center for Facilities Research (CFaR) was established in 2002 by APPA to organize and consolidate research in educational facilities management. APPA promotes leadership in educational facilities for professionals seeking to build their careers, transform their institutions, and evaluate the value and recognition of facilities in education. APPA provides its members the opportunity to explore trends, issues, and best practices in educational facilities through research, publications, professional development, and credentialing.

CFaR MISSION

The mission of CFaR is to advance the body of knowledge of facilities management through research, discovery, and innovation. To accomplish this mission, CFaR has been established by APPA to function through its directors and project-specific peer review panels. Adding to the information and body of knowledge related to educational facilities occurs at many levels.

The development of information and knowledge may occur from simple inquiries

between members to preparation for a presentation to specific, well-defined research projects.

CFaR AUDIENCE

The primary audiences for CFaR engagement are assistant/associate vice presidents for facilities, allied associations, as well as directors, managers, first-level supervisors, emerging professionals, and frontline employees involved in facilities issues. Intended audiences also include other administrative areas within the college, university, or school environment such as the business office, information technology, environmental health and safety, state governing bodies, regulatory agencies, foundations, and federal agencies.

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STRUCTURE

APPA invites researchers to the APPA community in order to enhance visibility around the annual Thought Leaders Series Top Critical Issues. APPA encourages submissions for CFaR research based on the previous year's identified top critical issues within the facilities profession.

Once a CFaR research proposal is submitted online, APPA staff will review the proposal and submit it to an appropriate CFaR director. The directors have expertise in the four core competencies:

1. General Administration
2. Operations and Maintenance
3. Energy, Utilities, and Environmental Stewardship
4. Planning, Design, and Construction

The completed proposal will be submitted to APPA staff and a member of the CFaR advisory group, who will primarily serves as an advisor to the principal investigator throughout the research process.

Throughout the research phase, APPA staff will act as a facilitator for the project and may be able to provide some resources for the project.

Once the research is completed, it will be submitted to APPA. A select panel of peer reviewers will be chosen to review the final submission. The peer review process will be confidential and should take approximately one month. Based on the review, the document may require further research and revision.

APPA will accept all completed research submissions for consideration of that academic year's "Researcher of the Year" award as well as other publication and/or presentation forums. Each researcher who completes a research project under CFaR receives a CFaR Research Award certificate at the next scheduled APPA annual conference.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

CFaR research is focused around the annual critical facilities issues from the previous year's APPA Thought Leaders symposium. Principal investigators are welcome to address topics of interest to them so long as the research topic applies to the facilities profession as a whole and is not focused on a particular institution or segment of the profession.

RESEARCH TYPES

The Center for Facilities Research is designed to encourage participation among a broad spectrum of people with an interest in education regardless of formal research experience. Research within CFaR is defined broadly within four specific types:

INQUIRY: Simply posting a question about an aspect of educational facilities using APPA's electronic discussion lists. All inquiries and responses are archived on the APPA website.

SHARING: Case studies and success stories shared through publication in *Facilities Manager* magazine, on the website, at an APPA conference or seminar, or through another APPA medium.

SYNTHESIS: The integration, critical examination, or cross-analysis of existing research to bring a new perspective to the body of knowledge for facilities professionals. This research type requires evaluation and oversight from one of CFaR's directors and a peer review panel.

CREATION: Original research conceived, conducted, and interpreted specifically for the industry and CFaR, typically with guidance and oversight from one of CFaR's directors and a peer review panel. Ultimately, Creation research results in a dissertation-like report of findings.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

Historically, effective management of educational facilities has been the primary focus of APPA's membership and its programs. The survival and success of the institutions themselves now demand that facilities planners and

managers more clearly understand and articulate the link between what they do and what they manage. Thus, more attention must be placed on institutional policy, academic planning, budgeting and finance, community relationships, and education policy at the state/provincial, regional, and federal/national levels. By developing a body of knowledge and expertise on specific issues that can influence these environments, APPA and facilities professionals will become more influential in making decisions at the most critical institutional levels. ☎

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Current CFaR projects can be found at:

<http://www.appa.org/Research/CFaR/current.cfm>

Completed CFaR projects can be found at:

<http://www.appa.org/Research/CFaR/completed.cfm>

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