

APPA and COAA Launch a Collaborative Partnership

By Don Guckert



APPA and COAA (Construction Owners Association of America) have launched a collaborative partnership centered on the professional development of their members. Aligned with APPA President Chris Kopach's theme of "Harnessing and Transferring Knowledge," Dan Bollman, associate vice president for strategic infrastructure planning and facilities at Michigan State University (MSU) and APPA's Vice President for Professional Affairs, along with Jack Mumma, construction contract administrator at MSU and COAA past president, were instrumental in bringing the two associations together last fall to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

A significant number of institutions belong to both organizations, including current APPA and COAA board members from Carnegie Mellon University; Emory University; Penn State University; the University of Florida; the University of Maryland Baltimore County; MSU; and the University of Iowa. As stated by Gwen Glattes, project controls manager for Penn Medicine's Pavilion Project and COAA's current president, "The higher education sector represents over half of our construction owner members, and so partnering with APPA is a natural alliance for our association." Further, the second largest segment for COAA is healthcare, another crossover area for many APPA members.

COAA extended an invitation to me to deliver the general session welcome remarks for COAA's spring conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in early May. My presentation, "What Happens After the Ribbon Cutting? Why Early and Continuous Operations and Management Staff Engagement Matters" (<https://www.coaa.org/Conference/SESSIONS/Session-18A/>

The-PDC-and-O-M-Relationship), covered topics related to the challenges and opportunities related to developing effective collaborations among those responsible for the creation and delivery of new facilities and those charged with the long-term operation and stewardship of those physical assets. I also discussed how organizational structures and staffing levels could have positive and negative influences on collaboration. Then I presented a sampling of best practices; this list included:

- Giving operations and maintenance an influential seat at the table;
- Aligning decisions to total cost of ownership;
- Closing the gap on divergent goals and expectations between the respective teams;
- Defining the project team's value proposition;
- Overcoming the obstacles that inhibit effective collaborations;
- Contributions that operations staff can provide for more successful project outcomes; and
- Ways that operations staff can inform the design decision-making process in order to pursue effective long-term stewardship of the facility.

The overarching theme of my presentation was that "We Provide this Place" to support the missions of our institutions and companies. Providing a truly successful and productive environment requires that we combine our services to work effectively together. Following the general session, Dan Bollman and I facilitated a breakout session with COAA's members to discuss ways to partner for more effective project results. Dan and I were impressed with the thoughtful discussion that ensued and the commitment of COAA members, and their associate members

(design professionals and construction contractors), to pursue effective, productive collaborations. Many great ideas and practices were captured by COAA session facilitator Howie Ferguson, assistant director and senior project manager for the University of Florida's Division of Planning Design and Construction, to be shared with COAA's general membership.

FROM BIM TO OPERATIONS

BIM (building information modeling) has been a long-standing topic of COAA's preconference workshops at their spring and fall conferences. This year's spring conference featured a three-hour pre-conference workshop on how owners are using BIM platforms to capture and hand off relevant building, systems, and equipment data, with a focus on improving the transition from construction to operations. Because of our emerging partnership, COAA requested that APPA send two representatives to this workshop to share with COAA members how we are operationalizing the information created in BIM from the design and construction teams.

Brett Garrett, technical services director for facilities operations and development at Ohio State University, and Craig Dubler, facilities asset manager for Penn State's physical plant, shared their early adopter successes and lessons learned when they populated their work control systems with BIM information. COAA attendees appreciated learning about the postconstruction current and potential operational benefits gained by the information in their design and construction BIM models.

COMING SOON TO APPA U

APPA recognizes the importance of continuous learning for our members. Although we have a number of solid and successful offerings in our professional development portfolio, including the Institute for Facilities Management, the Leadership Academy, the Supervisor's Toolkit, the Senior Facilities Officer Summit, and our international, regional, and state chapter education conferences, we see an increasing demand to expand APPA's portfolio of training content and opportunities.

COAA has developed successful and popular training courses related to the delivery of design and construction projects

by owners. Its courses are attractive complements to the coursework found at APPA's Institute for Facilities Management. These courses are a deeper dive into the technical aspects that are more broadly covered in the Institute's Planning, Design, and Construction track. Beginning with the January 2019 APPA U in Fort Worth, Texas, COAA will be offering a few of its Owner Training Institute courses alongside our Institute and Academy programs. This program will be led by COAA board member Terry Cook, senior AVP of administrative services for the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

With valued partners like COAA, APPA is accelerating its efforts to "harness and transfer" the knowledge among and within our respective associations to create a sum that is greater than its parts. ☺

Don Guckert will become APPA's President at the August 3-5 annual conference. He serves as assistant vice president, facilities management, at the University of Iowa. He can be reached at don-guckert@uiowa.edu.



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