

A Renewed Focus on Collaboration

By E. Lander Medlin

Collaboration has long been a part of APPA's strategy to effectively leverage its resources. Frankly, collaboration is an imperative if we are to deliver what's best for our members and their institutions. Furthermore, collaboration has allowed the organization to greatly expand the depth and breadth of programs, products, and services for our members benefit. A true win-win-win for everyone. Yet collaboration is complicated, requiring time and effort, discipline and focus, commitment and communication. All geared to a shared vision and clear goals if we are to truly encourage cooperative engagement by all parties.

COLLABORATION STARTS AT HOME

Indeed, the significant update and revision of APPA's 2020 Strategic Plan is laser focused on engagement and collaboration as critical elements for our future success. And, in fact, our president,

Pete Strazdas, AVP for facilities at Western Michigan University, is passionate about broad-based engagement in collaborative activities. So much so that the theme for his presidency is "Advancing the Profession through Engagement & Collaboration." In his banquet speech at the July 2015 annual conference, Pete stated,

"Member engagement is all over our strategic plan, but we intend to put engagement on steroids! In order to do more for our members, we must partner and collaborate with other associations. Our members need services or alignment with a myriad of associations. Our collaboration between other professional organizations will provide better value and increased membership for APPA. The theme of engagement and collaboration for this year is integrated into the strategic plan. It's now time for all of us to work that plan!"

Now that's clarity! Accordingly, our 2020 Strategic Plan serves as the framework providing this kind of rigor, focus, and direction for our collaborative engagement efforts.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

Additionally, we invited the volunteer leadership (current APPA board and committee members and current regional board members) to take a quick survey to help us finetune the collaboration component of APPA's new strategic plan. We asked this group of volunteers to answer just one question: "To identify the Top 10 association or organizations with whom you believe APPA should increase its collaboration for the benefit of APPA's members."

As you can well imagine, NACUBO (National Association of



*MOUs or Strategic Alliance Agreements in Place.

College & University Business Officers), ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers), and SCUP (Society for College & University Planning) were viewed as the top three organizations with whom APPA should be collaborating.

Others included: AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education), ACUHO-I (Association of College & University Housing Officers-International), ANSI (American National Standards Institute), NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), AIA (American Institute of Architects), PGMS (Professional Grounds Management Society), USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council), and CSHEMA (Campus Safety, Health, and Environmental Managers Association).

This list affirms the organizations with whom we have been engaged for many years and renews our commitment to develop these relationships even further. As such, we will be strengthening these relationships by undertaking even more collaborative activities (writing articles, coordinating conference presentations, elaborating on meaningful and mutually beneficial metrics, expanding our codes and regulatory discussions,

and identifying mutual research needs among others).

The outcomes of the survey have most definitely given us renewed commitment toward these and other collaborative activities and provide the necessary momentum moving forward. See the collaboration wheel graphic for the connections these organizations have with various facilities management roles and activities.

We have had an impressive array of strategic partners with which to collaborate (sister associations, agencies and organizations, corporate entities, etc.) who share our vision for long-term, mutually beneficial engagement for the success of our members and their institutions. Ultimately, it's all about building effective relationships and forging a successful path forward together for the long haul. The leadership and staff remain committed to paving a great future so you can be successful at your institution and prepare the next generation of educational facility professionals. §

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