Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities – Custodial

By Alan S. Bigger, APPA Fellow

One of the benefits of being an APPA member is reading the many articles in *Facilities Manager*. In the last edition Maggie Kinnaman, APPA Fellow, reviewed a research report published by APPA in 2006 that addressed the impact that facilities have on student recruitment and retention, and Kinnaman stated ". . . the survey suggested a significant number of respondents *rejected* an institution because facilities were missing, inadequate or poorly maintained." A significant component in maintaining facilities is the custodial operation that maintains the level of cleanliness and appearance of those facilities.

APPA recognized the important of custodial operations in 1992 and published the seminal work, *Custodial Staffing Guidelines for Educational Facilities.* It was the first work that sought to correlate the productivity of custodial operations (the amount of space cleaned) with the level of cleanliness (levels of appearance) and what a stakeholder could reasonably expect of the custodial function. Due to the popularity of this publication it was revised in 1998 and republished in 2012 as *Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities: Custodial* as part of a trilogy of publications that also included the Grounds and Maintenance operations. APPA also offers a companion software program that enables the reader to input the data suggested in the book into a computer in order to make calculations, projects and worksheet that document the implementation of the

guidelines in quantitative form.

Have you as a facilities manager ever wondered if you are getting value for the dollars expended in your operation? Is your staffing adequate? Is the level of appearance or the level of clean adequate for your stakeholders? The Guidelines seek to address these questions and many others. seventeen authors were involved in writing the new edition to include members of the academic faculty, facility managers and students. The book includes 33 room types and enables the facility manager to add additional specialty rooms for his or her facilities.

> THE BEAUTY OF THE GUIDELINES IS THAT IT PROVIDES A SIMPLE APPROACH TO CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEING ROBUST AS ATTESTED TO THE FACT THAT IT HAS ENDURED FOR NEARLY 25 YEARS.

We have all heard the acronym K.I.S.S. (Keep it Simple etc.). The beauty of the Guidelines is that it provides a simple approach to custodial operations while at the same time being robust as attested to the fact that it has endured for nearly 25 years. The Guidelines is based upon these simple elements:
- The task to be performed (example: mop a floor)

- The amount of time it takes to do a task (example: the amount of time it takes to mop a floor)
- The frequency that a task should be performed (example: daily)
- The type of space, or room type, to be cleaned

These four elements are used to make projections of how much space a custodian can clean (cleanable square feet) and what quality or level of appearance a manager can reasonably expect for the effort and resources expended for the custodial operation. APPA has collected data from member institutions over the decades and in this edition integrated the current data provided by ISSA—The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association. With the inclusion of these data sources the overall productivity of the new data provided in this edition are significantly higher than the 1992 and 1998 editions.

In addition to the elements addressed above, APPA has collected data as to the amount of a specific space that a custodian can be reasonable expected to clean give the tasks to be performed, the amount of time allocated to the tasks, the frequency of the tasks and the room type. The data was collected for 33 specific room types such as classrooms, offices, shower rooms, entrances, public circulation, and others.

The book has a table that clearly displays what productivity can be expected and the outcome, or level of appearance of that productivity by room type (NOTE: If you have rooms that do not

neatly fit into these room types you can design your own room type by using the tasks and times provided in the book). These are called appearance levels ranging from Level 1 to Level 5. The levels are clearly defined in the book and include:

Level 1   Orderly Spotlessness
Level 2   Ordinary Tidiness
Level 3   Casual Inattention
Level 4   Moderate Dinginess
Level 5   Unkempt Neglect

The following example extrapolated from the Guidelines provides a chart indicating the productivity and the expected level of cleanliness for two room types:

Standard Space Category	Classroom with hard floor*	Office with carpet*
Level 1	7,200	12,300
Level 2	17,000	24,500
Level 3	18,100	45,600
Level 4	23,600	74,000
Level 5	24,500	116,800

*The figures are for cleanable square feet (CSF)

The example illustrates that if a custodian is to clean 24,000 cleanable square feet or more of office space, that the expected outcome would be a Level 5, Unkempt Neglect. Likewise, it clearly illustrates that if a custodian is cleaning 17,000 CSF (an expectation of Level 2) of classroom space and a quality assurance assessment of the area cleaned indicated that the custodian is cleaning the space at a level 5, that there is a misalignment of expectations.

The book clearly explains how to collect data for your institution and how to compare and contrast the data, and is invaluable for benchmarking your custodial organization with peer or cohort data, and encourages facilities managers to use APPA's Facilities Performance Indicators along with the data provided in the book.

The Guidelines does not provide data about costs since that will be different from one organization to another, from one region to another, however it does allow the facilities manager to use the data in the guidelines to compute his or her costs based upon the hourly rate of pay and benefits, and then to compare that data against APPA's FPI or other industry standards. This will enable the facilities manager to determine if his or her costs are reasonable when compared to like organizations or regions.

The book enables the manager to analyze his or her operation and to provide clear and consistent data about how the custodial organization is performing, and this data can be used to building a benchmarking matrix that displays gross square feet, cleanable square feet, the level of appearance and using budget data, the cost per square foot to clean this facility. Keep this information current and on-hand is a critical during tight fiscal times, and can be clearly used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the custodial operation.

The Guidelines also looks toward cleaning in the 21st century, and addresses scientific cleaning and the measurement of clean with a clearly documented case study that can be used to quantify clean. Using this data and qualitative data provided by auditing an organization's cleaning program will enable YOUR organization to be on the cutting edge of custodial operations.

Facilities managers are being challenged to be effective and efficient managers of the resources allocated to their operations. The implementation of the Guidelines in your custodial function will enable YOU to clearly demonstrate that you have risen to the challenge!

Alan Bigger is an APPA Fellow and a Past APPA President. He was the Operational Guidelines Trilogy Editor-in-Chief and can be reached at *frugalperson@comcast.net.*