January 31, 2013

Happy New Year, and welcome back to work. I hope you enjoyed your break and spent time enjoying friends, family, and fun activities. I have heard positive feedback about this newsletter, and several people thanked me for sharing information about important topics that impact our division and the university as a whole. This newsletter focuses on the following topics: Facilities Management reorganization, University budget model, deferred maintenance backlog, diversity efforts, and FS staff recognition.

The new university budget model is transforming how we do business at Cornell. The goal is to increase transparency on budgeting and charging for services. Rather than a central, general purpose budget that pays for services, the new model distributes those costs to the units, which will be assessed an operating charge based on square footage. This will not impact the amount of funding FS receives, but it will have an impact on the units that are charged for services.

Maria Cimilluca is completing a reorganization of Facilities Management, which was mandated by the ASP initiative. This thoughtful approach minimizes impact on Maria’s staff and also assures that everyone will have a place in the new organization. I hope you will join me in supporting these changes. Change can be difficult; it can disrupt our work, and can make us feel uncertain or insecure. I understand these feelings; and I share some of these thoughts, too. One way I deal with change is to embrace it, using change as an opportunity to do even bigger and better things. I encourage you to take advantage of upcoming changes and use them for your own benefit and that of your work groups.

We have deferred maintenance on numerous projects across campus, and our backlog is significant. In the coming months, Maria Cimilluca and her team will make a case to senior leadership for funding the most dire and urgent projects. I am hopeful that with a more manageable list of projects, the university can develop a funding strategy to address the backlog. I am encouraged by my conversations with senior leadership and our agreement that Cornell cannot continue to ignore the backlog of maintenance projects.

A new university-wide diversity initiative has been launched. Respect@Cornell is a training program that focuses on bias and discrimination in the work place. More than half of our Facilities Services staff have already taken this training, and I look forward to implementing new procedures in the months to come. Jessica Lang will provide additional details about Bias Reporting Liaisons in her weekly newsletter.

Facilities Services is a campus leader in staff recognition. Each year, the Keystone, Cornerstone, and Steve Wright Bridge awards recognize the service and accomplishments of our staff. Along with the Employee of the Quarter award, these awards serve as the backbone of our recognition program. I encourage you to nominate your colleagues for these awards, which are open to every FS employee. Our employee rewards and recognition committee includes staff from across the division; they treat each nomination fairly and impartially. Please reach out to any member of the R&R committee if you need help completing a nomination. The deadline to submit nominations is April 30, 2013.

Head’s Up: Watch for progress in the development of the Cornell Tech campus. We will complete the site plan approval process and take possession of the 13-acre property on Roosevelt Island in 2013!

Thank you all for all that you do and please keep your thoughts and suggestions coming.

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