

11.0

Maintenance and Operations Administrative Guidelines for School Districts and Community Colleges

Maintenance and Operations Program Performance Criteria

11.1

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Measuring Departmental Effectiveness

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY			
DESCRIPTIONS	FACILITY	CUSTOMER	COST EFFECTIVENESS
MAINTENANCE:	3	4	5
OPERATIONS:	4	4	5
GROUNDS:	4	4	5
OTH	5	4	5

Measuring the performance of an entire maintenance and operations department is no easy task. However, when done correctly it can paint a good picture of the organization’s effectiveness in support of the educational process and ensuring the functionality of facilities. Assessing the department’s performance also provides vital information that can be used in both “top down” and “bottom up” situations. For a community college or school district’s central administration, performance evaluations of maintenance and operations programs clarify the nature and volume of the department’s overall workload and justifies its budget. They also demonstrate how well a department meets or adheres to board policies, standards, and objectives. For maintenance and operations foremen and supervisors, performance assessments indicate how successful various divisions are in maintaining the school facilities and supporting educational activities.

Evaluations of this type should be done on an annual or as-needed basis and incorporate a practical set of standards that can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively.

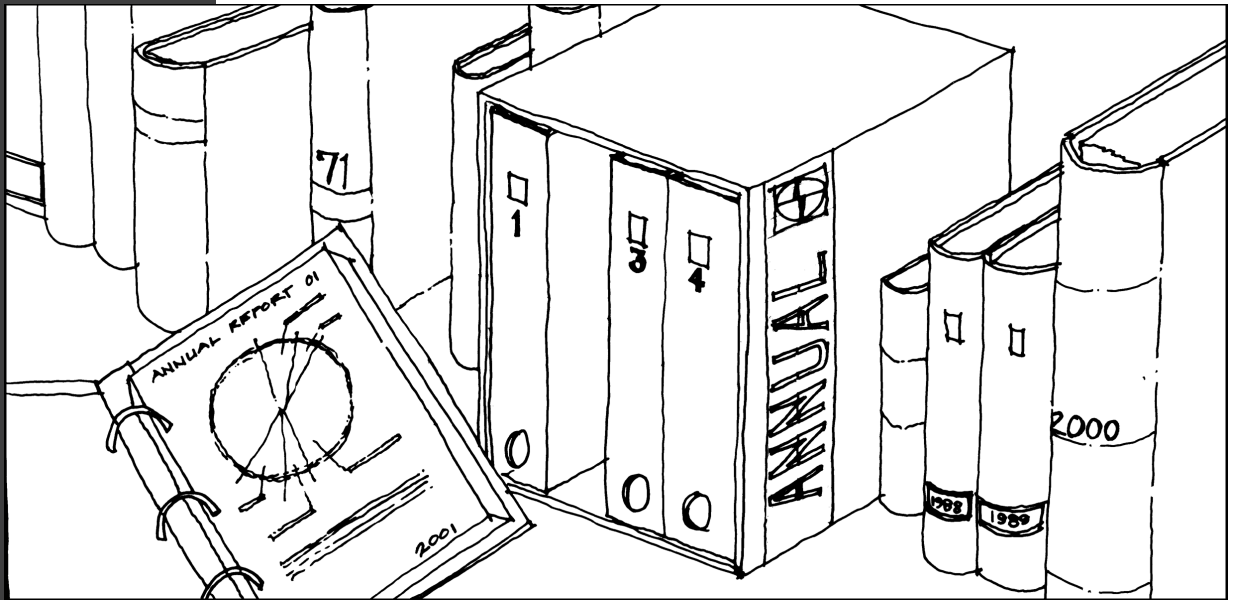
Standard	Reference Measures
Adequate levels of maintenance	Did the department provide maintenance, custodial, and grounds services that were adequate to meet board, administration, and the general public's expectations?
Improved facility conditions	Did the department provide services that resulted in improved or enhanced conditions?
Cost effectiveness	Did the department conduct maintenance and operations activities in a cost effective manner?
Strategic plan implementation	Did the department develop and implement a strategic plan aimed at defining and addressing facility needs, shortcomings, and deficiencies in the years to come?
Cost-saving measures	Did the department implement measures to contain or reduce costs in certain areas of operation?
Educational support	How much and what types of services did the department provide that were in direct support of the educational process?
Overall effectiveness	Did the department achieve a level of effectiveness that is reflected in customer attitudes and perceptions?

Figure 6.5: Maintenance and Operations Department Effectiveness Standards

11.2

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Annual Reports



Increasingly community colleges and school districts are requiring annual reports from the various divisions within their organizations. For maintenance and operations departments, this means preparing a comprehensive assessment of the previous year's activities, their associated costs, identification of goals and objectives that were met, and the level of customer satisfaction achieved. In addition to this, annual reports should also outline new initiatives and priorities for the upcoming year.

If thoughtfully prepared and presented in a professional manner, the maintenance and operations department's annual report can serve as a public relations tool within the institution and also to the general public – building greater awareness of the department's accomplishments, as well as a method of self-assessment. Information from the department's computerized management system and various other sources can be used to illustrate characteristics of the previous year's activities in such areas as:

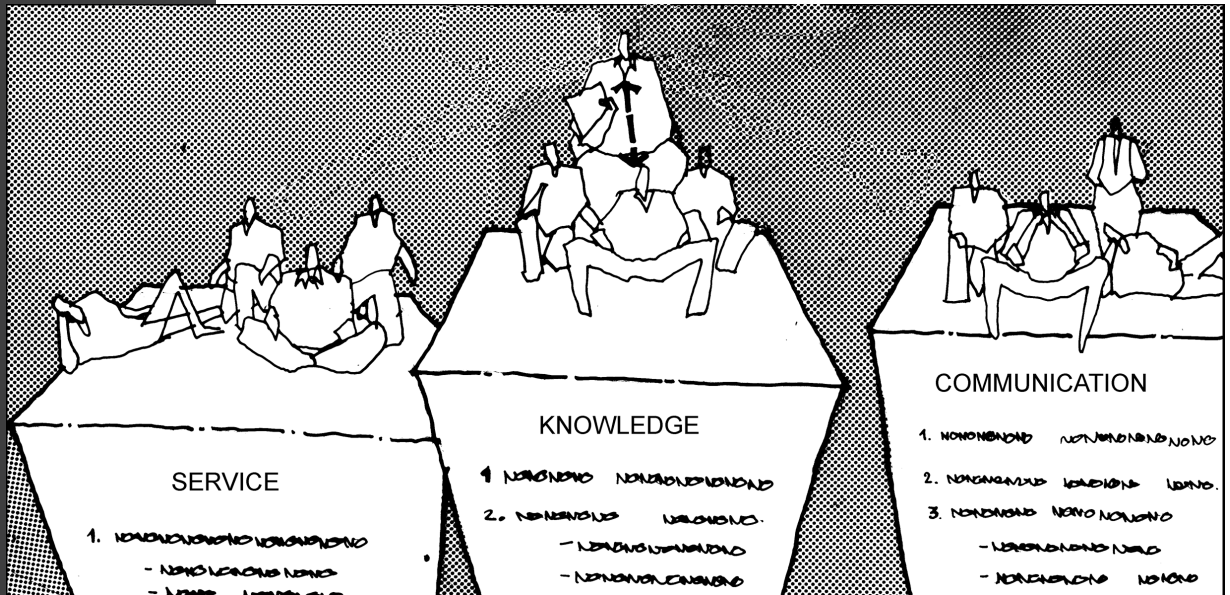
- Range of services provided

- Volume of work orders completed
- Amount of preventive maintenance performed
- Number of emergencies responded to
- Number and types of facility improvements/upgrades made
- Description of major budget expenditures
- Budget projections for the next year
- Customer satisfaction ratings
- Implementation of the strategic plan, other initiatives, and priorities
- Overall effectiveness in support of the educational process

11.3

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Customer Relations and Satisfaction



Maintenance and operations departments provide a number of support services that are vital to the educational process and extend the useful life of school facilities. As the primary service provider for schools and community colleges, it is important for administrators and individual staff members to recognize the customer service oriented roles they play and how it determines the success of the department. One of the major challenges facing many maintenance and operations organizations today is providing quality services that meet or exceed customer expectations. To accomplish this, services should be provided in a professional and timely manner – ensuring that each encounter with facility customers is a positive collaborative experience for all involved.

Each school district and community college should have a coordinated approach for maintaining ongoing customer relations and satisfaction. This approach should include: responding to all customer requests; helping customers resolve problems; improving customer work relationships, communications, and perceptions; soliciting feedback; etc. To help improve customer relations even further, administrators should be sensitive to the expanding needs of school facility customers. Administrators should also minimize

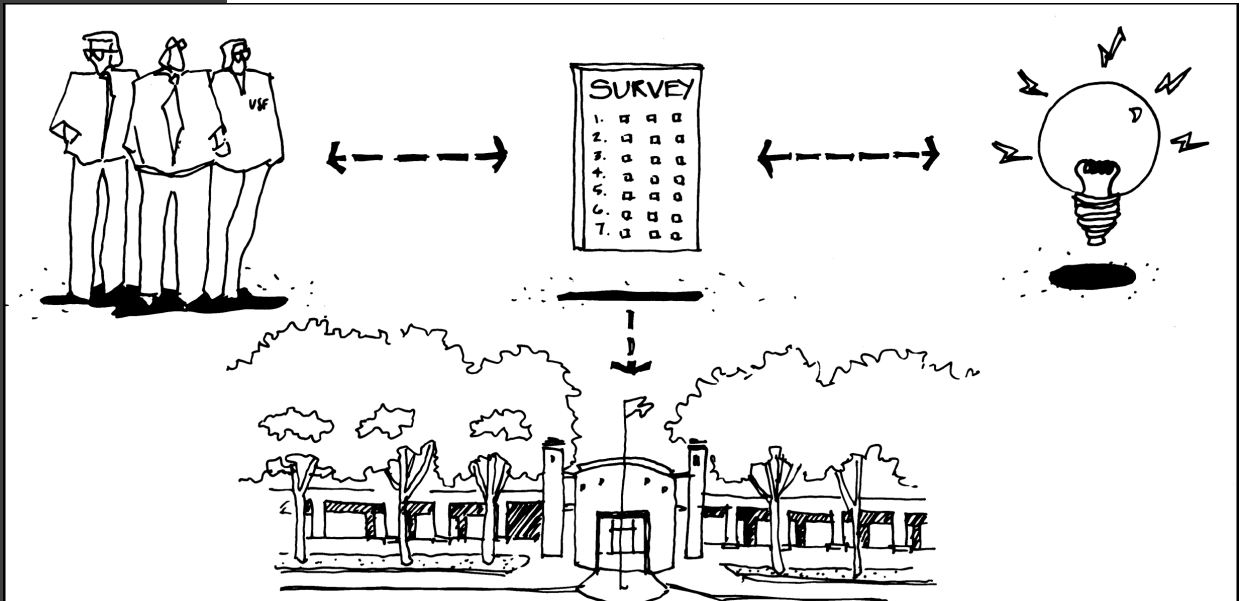
interference with customer or educational activities, make periodic visits with customers, provide direct lines of communication, provide the necessary level of follow-up for each type problem, and seek to “close the loop” with regards to work completion and problem resolution.

Customer feedback is one of the many ways in which a department can measure its effectiveness and how it is perceived within the institution. Feedback can be supplied to the maintenance and operations department in a number of ways. Some of the methods more commonly used include service/repair notices left by technicians, “courtesy calls,” mailing lists, callbacks from the work control center/receptionist after services have been rendered, and distributing customer surveys and guides/manuals outlining the extent of services offered. Formal customer surveys which allow direct input by facility customers have proven to be one of the most effective methods of gauging customer perceptions and satisfaction.

11.4

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Employee Surveys



The success or failure of any maintenance and operations organization depends on a number of inter-related issues. One of the most important ones, however, is staff and employee effectiveness. Administrators should recognize the individual contributions made by each employee, and their individual and collective knowledge of maintenance and operations activities and functions. One of the best ways to improve employee relations, cut costs, gain a better understanding of employee perspectives, provide a mechanism for individuals to be heard, and enhance the effectiveness of the department is to conduct employee surveys on a regular basis.

This personnel management tool can take the form of a conventional “suggestion box” approach, or a more detailed survey that solicits feedback on a variety of topics. Feedback topics can include issues pertaining to administrative procedures, the work environment, and issues pertaining specifically to individual jobs. In some instances, employees may feel “left out of the loop,” alienated and lost in the crowd, and think that their input is of little or no value to the organization – when in fact, this should be far from reality. It is essential that employees at each community college or school district be provided the opportunity to voice

their opinions on issues of vital importance to the department and the institution. Where surveys are used, they can become a critical part of the department's communications channels. They should also be part of a formal process for receiving, assessing, and acting on different types of suggestions. Employees should be encouraged to freely offer feedback and, where appropriate, be duly recognized and awarded for suggestions that are deemed meritorious. At each institution, administrators should allocate resources necessary to maintain such a program on an ongoing basis – if not, employees will become disillusioned and an otherwise effective method of communication will be lost.