



Hello FMCC members and colleagues, Ask The Experts again, with a special COVID problem involving leadership and well-coordinated FM staff. The theme of the September/October issue is People and Leadership. At this time, the COVID pandemic is still with us, stronger than ever in several large economies and a hazard everywhere. The situation changes daily in each nation, region, location, organization, and facility. The impact on people who use and depend on facilities is momentous.

CHALLENGE: Your client is Director of Facilities for a multi campus urban university of 12000 students, faculty, and staff in a metro area of two million. The university halted in-person classes several months ago. The medical school teaching hospital and health science research facilities, located downtown, remain fully active. The main campus, several miles away, includes dormitories for up to 2100, in rooms and suites of 2-4 students. Living on campus is normally required for 1400 undergraduates in their first year of study. After that, students occupy rental properties off campus, commuting via walking, bicycle, motorbike & motorcycle, automobile, and public transportation streetcar and bus.

The Executive Committee, headed by the University President, wishes to begin reopening in late October, starting with first-year undergrads. They have asked FM to provide assistance and information to help decide which buildings to operate and the resulting numbers that can be accommodated. First year students have priority.

What are the considerations for reoccupying buildings required for lodging, instruction, study, and meals? What data and support will your staff need so that FM can assist the Executive Committee?

RESPONSE FROM FMCC MEMBERS AND COLLEAGUES: The challenge went out on July 10 to subscribers to the FMCC Newsletter. What follows is a digest of responses in Q&A form, received over the next two weeks.

Two of the responses that cover entire challenge in compact, economical writing, appear in full at [FMCC Ask the Experts](#).

Q - What extraordinary uses will the facilities have to accommodate?

A - Facilities to be operated will include specialized instruction rooms and labs, lodging, dining, and student services, including a much-enlarged clinic for testing and even temporary separation in the event that someone tests positive for infection. Parking, walkways, doorways, stairs, hallways, and elevators may be limiting. Bus and car pickup areas outdoors are considerations and may impose limits even when meeting areas are sufficient. FM consultants working in space management are rapidly calibrating their services to support capacity planning.

Supplies will be a challenge. PPE and cleaning supplies can limit operations, especially when someone has tested positive and deeper cleaning ensues, along with a required wait before reoccupying.

Q - How about staffing?

A - Staff are under exceptional demands and at hazard as much as students, faculty, and administration. Cleaning requirements will increase substantially. All FM staff - every O&M role - will require initial and ongoing updates on hazards and techniques, team orientation toward student behavior, virus testing, and flexible scheduling including time off for rest and family. With substantial parts of the University shut down, employees in those areas may be prepared to work in the occupied areas and participate in training. Certain FM technical staff may be able to work from home via the CMMS. Take full advantage of online gatherings such as Zoom, GoTo (Meeting or Webinar), Teams, etc. for communications.

Q - What in addition to facilities and their operation would be necessary?

A - Messaging at all levels, definitive communications that are persuasive, instructive, and repeated often and everywhere by everyone, FM staff included. The University will have to gain and keep the attention and support of faculty, families of incoming students, and especially the students themselves. Pressures and priorities vary among students. Some who will be pushed hard with difficult studies at once and others will expect to socialize. Both priorities invite bypassing healthful behavior, emphasizing the need for watchfulness and reminding. Messaging in every form and at every opportunity will be top priority, with consequent expenses. One respondent (Peter Stroup) pointed out that the Harvard Medical School campus of 2.5 M SF will require over 12000 new signs, reminding people of safe practices.

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* Full responses can be found at [FMCC Ask The Experts](#).