



Office for Capital Facilities Newsletter



Editors: Jessica R. Miller & Ashley Brainard

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Note from the Associate Vice Chancellor - Karren Bee-Donohoe

COVID: The past eight months have been very difficult for the campuses and especially for the facilities departments staff who have been on the front lines of the work required to keep the campuses operating. I have had many conversations with facilities managers and without fail have been told how great the facilities staff have been. Each manager has indicated the staff have gone above and beyond, making me very proud to be a part of such a great profession.

Further, the collaboration of the campuses as part of the COVID Operations and Maintenance Physical Preparedness Workgroup has been inspiring. COVID fatigue is upon us, but I am confident the facilities staff will continue to be a vital part of SUNY’s success in getting through the pandemic stronger than ever.

This collaboration has been evident not only in SUNY, but also throughout the country, with numerous workgroups providing opportunities to learn from one another how to handle this difficult situation. APPA, the Leadership in Educational Facilities organization has held and made available recordings for over 20 Town Halls on various COVID subjects, along with numerous other resources, all available at <https://www.appa.org/covid19-resources-and-guidelines/>. This content is available for both member and non-member campuses, at no charge.

NY HE LSRE: Bids have been received for the New York Higher Education Large Scale Renewable Energy project. The results are very favorable, and NY HE LSRE campuses are participating in workshops reviewing the financial analysis. The final leg of the procurement is underway and anticipated to be completed by the end of the year. A follow-up procurement is anticipated which will allow additional campuses to participate. Information on that procurement will be provided when available.

APPA APP: APPA356 has launched. This is a new APP for iPhone and Android units to reach APPA content on the go, available at [APPA Releases New APPA365 App!](#)



Inside this issue:

Emergency Planning - Barbara Boyle

In the middle of this COVID-19 crisis, other crises may also occur. To date, we have seen a very active hurricane season and there are several new resources to assist in planning for hurricane response and sheltering during COVID-19.

The traditional approach of squeezing cots into large gymnasium-like spaces is not consistent with COVID-imposed social distancing restrictions. “Non-congregate sheltering” is now the focus. In September, FEMA published [COVID-19 Supplement for Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place](#). It contains several checklists to point out some COVID-19 complications for planners.

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Respirators in Times of COVID - Barbara Boyle

Please remember if you have employees who are wearing filtering facepiece respirators (FFR), including N95s and KN95s, you will need to comply with the OSHA regulation on respiratory protection found at [29 CFR 1910.134](#).

If the employer mandates or requires the use of FFR, then full compliance with the standard is required. This is the case even if exposures do not exceed an occupational exposure limit or where occupational exposure limits do not yet exist. Full compliance will include a trained administrator, written program, training, medical clearances, and fit testing.



If the employer allows voluntary use of a FFR, i.e., the employee is allowed to wear the respirator, then compliance is streamlined. The employer must determine the respirator itself does not present a hazard and then provide the employee with [Appendix D](#) of the standard. It is suggested campuses establish a way to document the decision and provision of Appendix D. Under voluntary use provisions, the FFR can be provided by the employer or the employee.



The OSHA standard does not apply to disposable surgical type masks or other face coverings. N95 supplies are still tight, so preference should continue to be given to healthcare workers and first responders. The CDC continues to post methods to support [optimizing supplies of PPE and other equipment during shortages](#). Some campuses have reported very mixed results when trying to use KN95s; caution in their use is advised.

Attorney General Review - Jessica Miller

In February, the requirement for SUNY to submit construction contracts to the Attorney General (AG) and the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) for pre-award audit took effect. Construction contracts of \$250,000 or more now require review and approval by the AG and OSC. This requirement also applies to commodities, computer equipment (inclusive of software and hardware), printing and non-construction related services. The pre-award audit requirement does not apply to construction-related services, including contracts for studies, design, and engineering services.

Approval by the AG is required prior to submittal to OSC. While the AG does not require the full procurement record, the agreement with all associated contract documents is required. Contract documents are listed in the agreement as “the Agreement, Exhibits A and A-1, Bidding Documents (inclusive of the Notice to Bidders, Information for Bidders and Proposals), Bonds, Specifications, Project Manual, Drawings, Addenda issued prior to the opening of bids and Change Orders issued after award of the Contract.”

Currently, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, contracts must be submitted electronically to the following e-mail address: contractapproval@ag.ny.gov.

Please note all contracts submitted electronically must be scans that are exact replicas of the fully executed contract, including any and all attachments. The standard agency cover letter must be submitted with all contracts. The AG asks campuses to place the contract number, along with the Contractor’s name, in the email subject line.

If your campus requires support in developing responses to questions or a rejection by the AG, please contact your campus counsel, or reach out to Jessica Miller at Jessica.miller@suny.edu. In recent months, the Campus Let Contracts Program has released updates to the template construction documents including changes to the Invitation for Bidders, the General Requirements, and the Agreement.

As campuses develop bid documents for new projects, it is important the most recent documents be used.



Residence Hall Debt Restructuring to Provide Cash Flow Relief - Don Smith

As the financial challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic were evolving in March, the SUNY Executive Leadership Team (ELT) met with DASNY senior leadership to formulate a plan for addressing financial concerns for the 25 state-operated DASNY residence hall programs. Confronted with \$133M in room rent refunds for the spring of 2020, and the uncertainty of revenues for the fall semester, campuses faced a daunting financial challenge. After reviewing several options, SUNY approved a debt restructuring plan, refinancing two years' worth of debt service to provide immediate cash flow relief.

The 2020 residence hall bond sale debt restructuring was finalized in July and was viewed by the banking community and DASNY as an overwhelming success considering the numerous challenges the higher education sector is facing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This restructuring will provide \$307.5M in cash flow relief to the campus residence hall programs in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscal years by deferring the debt service payments originally due.

SUNY's restructuring plan was viewed very positively by the rating agencies (Moody's and Fitch), and classified as a prudent move by SUNY to help navigate the challenges of the next couple of years. Both Moody's (Aa3) and Fitch (A+) affirmed the program ratings and assigned a stable outlook, resulting in lower financing costs for this restructuring.

This was as a huge success given the recent downgrade in the outlook for the higher education sector (Moody's – negative outlook – March 2020). The demand for the DASNY revenue bonds was very strong, allowing the underwriters to negotiate lower bond yields, leading to lower interest payments for the campuses.

EnergyCAP - Melinda Race

SUNY uses EnergyCAP software to track costs and usage of campus utilities. The software assists campuses in budgeting and usage tracking for energy efficiency goals and greenhouse gas monitoring. With the release of Version 7 last year, users may have noticed new functionalities within the application. EnergyCAP continues to develop and release more new and exciting features such as automatic report distribution management and budget worksheet to forecast use and cost.

Version 7 New Functionalities:

- Modernized logo and newly designed graphics
- Customizable Dashboards
- New Advanced Reports, with the ability to email reports directly from EnergyCAP
- Automatic Bill Flags to alert users to possible errors
- *Integrated Bill Format Definition into the Bill Entry Process*
This feature Streamlines the bill entry process. Energy Office will be releasing a Webinar to users shortly, sharing Best Practices for the SUNY database.
- Version 3 of EnergyCAP has sunset, users now exclusively use Version 7



Online EnergyCAP Academy

The annual catalyst training conference could not take place this year. In response, EnergyCAP Academy was created, and includes a collection of online training courses and lessons EnergyCAP users can complete at their own pace. The EnergyCAP Academy courses are an easy and convenient way for users to develop Version 7 skills and earn Professional Development Hours. Visit the [Energy Cap Academy](#) to learn more about the courses and certification offered.

Clean Energy—Technical Grant Writing Services Available - Alex Lykins



SUNY's Clean Energy Specialist is available to assist campuses in identifying and applying for clean energy grants and incentives. For a small fee of 3% of the overall grant award, contingent on successful approval, the Clean Energy Specialist will provide a consultation to help identify which available incentives best meet campus needs, prepare and submit the application on behalf of the campus, and assist with any post-award reporting requirements associated with the grant. Some current opportunities available to campuses include:

- **NYSERDA On-site Energy Manager Grant (Deadline: 12/30/22)** – Provides funding between \$100,000-\$200,000 at up to a 75% match for campuses to engage the services of a full time or part time energy manager on their campus.
- **NYSERDA Flexible Technology Technical Assistance Program (Deadline: 12/31/25)** – A long standing program that provides funding between \$100,000-\$500,000 with cost shares between 50%-75% for energy studies, energy master plans, renewables & storage feasibility studies, installation of submeters (up to \$10,000) and GHG inventories. Until 12/31/2020 campuses can receive up to 100% of a cost share for any project, if they follow the recommendations for energy/GHG reduction that are uncovered.
- **NYSERDA Charge Ready NY (Deadline: continuous)** Provides funding for campuses to install electric vehicle charging equipment at a rebate of \$4,000 per port up to a total of \$80,000. National Grid territory has additional funding that will cover 100% of electric vehicle charging infrastructure costs and allow campuses to install EV charging stations at virtually no cost to the campus.
- **Custom utility electric and gas reduction incentives (Deadline: continuous)** – Each utility offers a custom incentive program for electrical & gas consumption reduction ranging from 25% to 70% of the total cost of the installed project.
- **Con Edison non-pipeline alternatives funding (Deadline: continuous)** – Available to campuses in Con Edison gas territory is funding to reduce gas consumption to all interruptible gas customers. There are prescriptive and custom pathways with generous incentive amounts.

Recent applications include SUNY Upstate Medical University, Morrisville, Geneseo, Empire State College, and System Administration applying to various programs including those listed above. To schedule a consultation or for more information on services reach out to Alexander Lykins at Alexander.Lykins@suny.edu or 518-320-1848.

Fire Safety - Barbara Boyle

Even though COVID –19 is changing many things, it does not change some core life safety considerations. Fire drills must still be conducted; inspections will continue to occur; fire system testing (ITMs) must be completed. All faculty, student, and staff must be directed to immediately evacuate upon activation of the fire alarm. COVID-19 practices may suggest people space out at the muster points, it does NOT suggest people ignore alarms!

An additional consideration is most campuses are now using and storing far more alcohol-based hand sanitizers than in the past. These mixtures are flammable and need to be considered carefully, both in terms of placement of materials for user access and general storage.

Fact sheets concerning fire code requirements for hand sanitizers, and fire alarms and drills, prepared by the Office for Capital Facilities, can be found at the EHS section of the [website](#).