



DISPATCH

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F&S Rolls Out Strategy for Service

Morgan White, interim associate vice chancellor of Facilities & Services, and Angela Cravens, director of Human Resources, Culture & Strategy, recently completed a series of talks with F&S team members, in which they shared the new F&S Strategic Plan that will help guide the division until 2030. White and Cravens’ presentation included a PowerPoint and time for discussion or questions. The five-year plan (2025–2030) is a high-level overview of F&S’ themes and goals.

One big change is that F&S will no longer have its own Mission or Vision Statements; instead, it will align with and follow the university’s. As White and Cravens pointed out, F&S is part of the university, so this change makes sense, as F&S’ work supports campus’ efforts to “enhance the lives of people in Illinois, across the nation and around the world through our leadership in learning, discovery, engagement and economic development.” F&S’ new Purpose Statement reaffirms and echoes this mission:

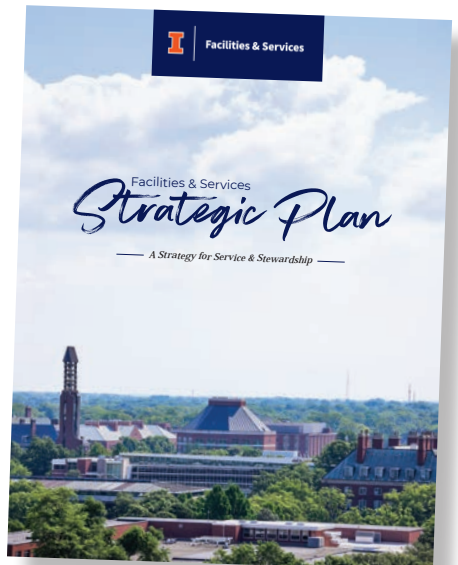
Facilities & Services provides and maintains an environment that supports learning, discovery, engagement, and economic development.

White and Cravens then delved into the core of the plan, which includes five themes, with two or three goals for each:

- 1. Team Members**
 - a. Strengthen the Onboarding Experience
 - b. Expand Professional Development Pathways
 - c. Improve Career Advancement Opportunities
- 2. Stakeholder and Customer Engagement**
 - a. Consistently Engage with Customers and Stakeholders
 - b. Use Data-Driven Decision Making
- 3. Access & Belonging**
 - a. Ensure Equitable Policies and Programs
 - b. Streamline the Hiring Process
 - c. Enhance Team Members’ Engagement in Inclusive Practices
- 4. Stewardship & Sustainable Resource Management**
 - a. Reach and Maintain Environmental Sustainability
 - b. Align Service Delivery Standards with Campus Expectations
 - c. Audit Processes to Improve Efficiencies
- 5. Innovative Collaboration**
 - a. Streamline and Enhance Internal Safety Processes
 - b. Advocate for Policy Changes Supporting F&S Operations
 - c. Collaborate with University and Community Experts

Theme 1, for example, is at the heart of F&S, as team members drive everything that happens here. The goals are meant to make it easier to find, hire, support, and retain people. One program explicitly mentioned as a goal is the Great Resource Opportunity Within (G.R.O.W.) Program. G.R.O.W. is meant to identify people who have worked at F&S for at least three years and whose performance, drive, and work ethic make them good candidates for this unique apprenticeship opportunity for advancement. Cravens explained, “This year we had two postings available, for carpenter and mill worker. . . . Those are partnering with the local unions to go through the union apprenticeship program as a current employee. . . . This is an opportunity we hope to be able to expand in the future.”

In another example, Theme 3 explains that F&S is “committed to fostering an environment where all individuals feel respected, accepted, and valued. By promoting equity, cultural competency, and inclusive representation, we eliminate barriers to participation and strengthen connections to the diverse communities we serve.” A goal here outlines the plan to implement quarterly workshops, embed access and belonging in daily operations, and strengthen the Access and Belonging Committee. Cravens gave an example of how F&S is already meeting some of these goals: “In the weekly E-Update [the F&S email newsletter that comes out on Fridays], there is an option at the top to click on a summarized [PDF] version that is easier to print.” This option allows supervisors to print out and post the information for those without regular access to a computer or email.



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White and Cravens went over each theme and goal, explaining the reasoning behind them and how F&S plans to implement them. They also described the positive impacts that the items will have for the organization. After they gave an overview of the plan, they discussed the plan process itself. The committee used internal and external data, from focus groups, surveys, interviews, and more, to serve as a base for the plan. The plan is now “final,” Cravens said, but it allows for “that space to be adaptable and be flexible based on the needs of F&S.”

If you’d like to learn more about the F&S Strategic Plan, you can visit the web page for it on ERIN (<https://fs.illinois.edu/Employee/fs-strategic-plan-a-strategy-for-service-stewardship-2025-2030/>). There you can download the full strategic plan or the PowerPoint

used by White and Cravens in their rollout meetings. If you weren’t able to attend a meeting, or if you want to review one, you can watch the recorded webinar. There is also a link to the university’s strategic plan, Boldly Illinois 2030, which F&S’ plan aligns with and supports.

Upcoming Calendar Dates

April 21
Bike for Earth Day

April 24
Arbor Day

April 22
Earth Day

April 29
Noontime Knowledge
with Bridgette Moen

Spotlight on Safety

Emergency Preparedness: Tornadoes

Between 2020 and 2025, Illinois was second only to Texas as the state with the most tornadoes; each state had over 600 tornadoes in that period. The increase in Illinois has likely occurred because the area known as Tornado Alley has shifted to the east over the last four decades. CBS News Chicago explained, “As the climate warms, the traditional Tornado Alley in the Great Plains is expected to become drier and more desert-like. That shifts the ingredients which form tornadoes farther east and leads to more tornadoes. . . .”



While meteorologists can predict severe weather conditions for a general area, such as Champaign County, they can’t always predict the exact path a tornado will take if one spins up in a severe storm. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS) therefore recommends that everyone create a general plan for an emergency before the next storm hits.

Know Where to Go

At work, take note of storm refuge areas in campus buildings, and plan to go to one if Illini Alerts; outdoor sirens, which Utilities & Energy Services maintain on campus; weather apps on your phone; or weather radio alarms indicate the need. These areas have been evaluated as safer places to shelter in severe weather. If there is no storm refuge area in the building, go to an interior room or hallway on the lowest level. Access campus building floor plans at <https://facilityaccessmaps.fs.illinois.edu/archibus/schema/ab-products/essential/workplace/index.html>. An interior room or hallway on the lowest floor is also safest at home. To learn more about choosing a spot to shelter at home, visit <https://www.ready.gov/tornadoes>. Create a Spot for Important Items at Home

IEMA-OHS also suggests everyone gather these crucial items in an accessible waterproof container:

- Copies of records and documents, such as insurance policies (home, medical, auto), identification (passports, birth certificates), financial records (account numbers, etc.), medical prescriptions, wills, emergency contact list, and similar items for yourself, family members, and pets
- An inventory list, photos, and videos of your household possessions so you have documentation if you need to submit an insurance claim.
- Flashlights and batteries, as well as charged backup batteries for cell phones.

Additional Advice from IEMA-OHS

Learn where the shut-off valves are for your utilities (e.g., electricity, gas, water) and know how to turn them off. (If you don’t know, you can do a web search or call the utility for help.) If your home loses power, and you have a generator, remember to run it outside in a well-ventilated area. It is also a best practice to have enough water and supplies on hand for each family member to last three days. Visit <https://www.ready.gov/kit> for ideas about what to include. Taking the time to plan ahead can make the difference during and after a severe storm.



Send your stories and photos to
fscustomerrelations@illinois.edu

Lunar New Year

Celebrating the Year of the Horse



You may have seen the colorful dragons displayed across campus in honor of Lunar New Year this past February. The campus tour of half a dozen such dragons, some large (Ruby) and some small (mini) brought attention to the Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) and the many events celebrating the change to the Year of the Horse that the AACC sponsored. F&S' Diversity & Inclusion

Committee invited AACC's associate director, Amy Kyung-Eun Breslin, to speak about the holiday at the February Noontime Knowledge. Breslin, who was born in South Korea and raised in Ohio, gave an interesting talk, "Lunar New Year Soup and Stories," from the Korean perspective of the holiday.

Breslin noted that *Asian* covers many cultures, and different people celebrate Lunar New Year in different ways in China, South Korea, or Vietnam. She asked people to say or text the answer to "What holidays or festivals do you celebrate within your community or family?" and received a variety of replies, including Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Year's, Fourth of July, and St. Patrick's Day. Each family, of course, celebrates a little differently, Breslin said, even if they are ostensibly celebrating the same holiday. And so it is with Lunar New Year.



The celebration began over 3,500 years ago, during the Shang Dynasty in China. It recognizes the first new moon of the lunisolar calendar, which typically falls in late January or early February. The Year of the Horse began on February 17, 2026, and will end on February 5, 2027. The central themes of the Korean version of Lunar New Year (*Seollal* 설날) are "honoring ancestors, blessings and gifts from elders, sharing foods with special meaning together, celebrating cultural heritage and arts, and coming together as a community with a shared purpose or shared values."

Charye 차례 is an expression of gratitude and a memorial for one's ancestors. Many families, including Breslin's, have table offerings with foods that have special meanings, arranged in a certain pattern. They also express gratitude for good fortune in the past year and hope that it continues into the new year. Breslin explained that some families wear traditional clothing, such as the *hanbok* 한복, at this time, and some wear more modern Western clothing, but either way, this is a time to dress up.

Sebae 세배 is a formal bowing ritual in which younger people show respect for their elders; this may also take place on other special occasions, such as a wedding. The elders then bless the younger ones and often gift them with an envelope of money. Breslin noted people may be familiar with a similar tradition in Chinese culture, where a red envelope with money is gifted for luck, happiness, and prosperity during the coming year.

One of Breslin's favorite traditions is serving rice cake soup for the first meal of the day on Lunar New Year. The soup, called *Tteokguk* 떡국 in Korean, has a clear broth and rice cakes cut into slices to represent coins. The broth symbolizes clarity in the new year, and the rice coins symbolize prosperity. Korean people try to finish a full bowl because doing so signifies the hope to not experience hunger in the coming year.



One way to celebrate family togetherness is to play games together. Breslin's family likes to play a traditional game, *Yutnori* 윷놀이, that uses wooden sticks and tokens. It originated as a form of fortune telling used to predict the next year's harvest. Now, Breslin explained, the game is just considered to be fun, like any other family board game. Other celebrations of Seollal may include music performances, such as *samul nori* 사물놀이, which is traditional percussion music. Breslin said that the university has a student samul nori group that sometimes performs on campus.

Different Asian cultures may celebrate in different ways, with varying foods, music, or arts. (Breslin, for example, contrasted the Chinese dragons mentioned at the top of this story with the lions often found in Korean communities.) But, across Asian cultures, the purpose of Lunar New Year is to bring people together to celebrate, and she invited everyone to participate. Next year, join a campus celebration, share a meal with friends or loved ones, wear bright colors to "welcome luck and positivity," and reflect on the past year, while welcoming the possibilities of the new one.

To learn more about Lunar New Year, you can watch Breslin's talk on F&S' YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@UofIFS>. You can also visit AACC's website (<https://aacc.illinois.edu>) to discover more about campus outreach and find upcoming events.

ZAP Safety Success at Abbott Power Plant

Earlier this year, the team at Abbott Power Plant reached a remarkable milestone: multiple consecutive years with zero accident performance (ZAP)! Mike Larson, associate director of Utilities Production, admitted he had his doubts when the ZAP program was suggested to improve safety culture and performance.

In his announcement to Abbott team members, Larson noted, "You all have achieved what others (me included) once considered improbable and many impossible. When we embarked on this journey, I considered going one or perhaps two years without a lost time accident a huge success. Today you all sit with **seven** consecutive years!" Excellent work! Congratulations to the entire team.



F&S at Work

McKinley Health Center Groundbreaking



McKinley Health Center (MHC) staff are excited for the new MHC satellite center in the lowest level of the Illini Union and the potential it has to greatly impact the health and well-being of students on campus. The renovated area will allow for much-needed additional student health clinic space in central campus. The area will also offer a Reflection-Meditation Room. Groundbreaking took place just before spring break.

English Brothers will be the contractor for the MHC work. Trent Beane, the F&S project manager assigned to the initiative, credited F&S shops: “Our shops always support Capital Programs project managers while planning the project. They provide expert advice, investigative services of systems, etc. We cannot do a project without them!”

Illini Union Roof Video

If you’ve always wanted a bird’s eye view of the Illini Union roof, you’re in luck! F&S’ Steve Breitwieser, manager of communications & external relations, with the help of project team members, created a video that offers a close-up look at the work being done to replace the 85-year-old roof and 78 dormer windows. The video includes drone footage and interviews with Mark Roessler, F&S project manager, as well as representatives from the Union and the contractor. View the video here: <https://go.fs.illinois.edu/IlliniUnion>.

Snyder Hall Flood

Just after spring break began, a 6-inch water main in the basement of Snyder Hall burst overnight. Leak seems like an understatement, since the space was literally filled with water (approximately 8 feet!) by the time it was halted the morning of March 15. The deluge drowned all the electrical equipment housed there to run the building—thus, proving the adage that water and electricity don’t mix!

On the plus side, no student possessions were harmed, since the dorm rooms are all above ground, but it quickly became clear that all 450 residents were going to have to move to other spaces on campus for the remainder of the semester, starting with the handful who had remained on campus for break. Emergency management planning kicked into high gear that same day. F&S team members contributed greatly to both those early and ongoing efforts.

Critical building systems, including electricity, elevators, water heaters, and card access systems were affected, among others. F&S shops and departments provided expertise from those who work on many of these systems, as well as transportation, laborers, movers, high voltage electricians, plumbers, water station, steam operators, Utilities & Energy Services, Safety & Compliance, Code Compliance & Fire Safety, and more. F&S Project Delivery is also coordinating with University Housing to ensure a full assessment of the facility, so that Snyder Hall is fully repaired and livable for residents this fall.

Thank you to everyone who has helped mitigate this water-logged mishap. At some point, this will be a distant memory—a spring break to remember—but F&S and the university are, and will remain, proud of the team’s response.

Cork Flooring Refurbishment

Cork flooring is popular as an eco-friendly option that absorbs sound and is soft underfoot. The Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology has such a floor, and F&S BSWs recently refurbished it, making it sparkle. Here are before (left) and after pictures of the work. See also the [Pat on the Back](#) for this project from March 20.



Big Breakfast Folds in the Fun

The Big Breakfast and the Big Breakfast for Dinner serve as a small token of appreciation for the dedication of F&S team members. This year, approximately 250 attended the morning event and 40 attended the evening one. Special thanks to everyone who helped ensure its success from organizing to cooking, dishing up, and cleaning up.

Committee Members

Katie Balch
Adrian Flowers
Andrew Graumlich
Quentin Lusby

Joe Meeker
Rose Paul
Colleen Ruther
Doni Walker

Volunteers

Steve Bainbridge
Cheryl Bicknell
Kody Egolf
LaRisha Exum
Jon Hasselbring
Todd Hawkins
Joshua Murphy

Jeremy Neighbors
Macie Sinn
Jim Sims
Katie Sperl
Pete Varney
Jenny Watkins

