ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF F&S, QUARTERLY PUBLICATION | FALL 2025

Toward Sustainable, Inclusive & Inspiring

FACILITIES

Facilities & Services

Welcome to Campus

F&S welcomes students, faculty, staff, and the larger community; we offer services that benefit everybody who comes to the Urbana campus. More students than ever—the current freshman class is the largest in U. of I. history—have more ways to recognize their time and place. One way to properly grow and foster common identity and communicate our values is rather simple: signage. In the past few years, F&S has led the process of completely re-doing all exterior building signage, and more recently, adding Block I street banners, or vexilla, throughout campustown, as well as other parts of Champaign and Urbana. The iconic Block I is also visible at an interstate overpass south of C-U.

F&S is a leader in the university's Brand Ambassadorship, which aims to get every college, unit, and research unit aligned. Specifically, the F&S laborers are the very hands adding signage, branding, logos, and other identifying marks and information. F&S team members make up the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), which is the decision-making entity responsible for the physical manifestation of the look and feel of campus.

We welcome you to campus.
We are all ***Illini.***

What's Inside?

CAN YOU BE-LEAF IT?

The Urbana campus is home to more than 18,000 trees.

For years, F&S has helped maintain a publicly-available online database of all trees on campus through "Tree-Keeper," seen here: https://go.fs.illinois.edu/trees.

Now, imagine ALL THOSE LEAVES...

An afternoon with a rake, a few bags, and a rewarding warm apple cider won't be enough to clear all those leaves.

No, F&S grounds workers use different, stronger tactics.

When leaves first come, 14 mowers are fitted with a new blade system that cuts up the leaves into even finer bits than you'd traditionally get, so that there's no big pieces of leaf debris left in the grass. The much finer material settles back into the lawn, becoming a beneficial amendment to the soil and grass. Too much of that, though, can damage the ground, so when larger leaf deposits come later in the year, leaves get removed in another way.

Four large vacuums that sit on the back of tractors are deployed, as well as personal, backpack-style vacuum units hit the grounds, as well.

The tractor-led machinery gets the job done for the largest piles. Leaves are sucked up and shipped off site from the main campus over to a field near the Pollinatarium where giant leaf piles are left in rows in the open and treated as compost.

"We regularly rotate the materials, just like a little composter for your yard", said grounds foreperson Isaac Williams. "It will break down over time. When we use it again, it'll be mostly lawn restoration, versus plant beds. It's good organic matter that we recycle just like our trees. It's all re-used."

Williams noted that the most difficult weather condition related to leaves is wind, noting that even wet leaves are easy to manage, as they won't fly around as easily. Tracking the hours is key, too, to avoid using loud blowers early in the morning near Housing facilities.

"We just try to be as quick as possible. We've been asked to shut down by professors if we're close to a classroom, for instance. All operators are wearing hearing protection for eight hours, so it can be loud."

Check it out

or Go To:

https://go.fs.illinois.edu/leaf-removal

HOW WE PRESERVE ART

The Kinkead Pavillion at the Krannert Art Museum (KAM) is an important venue, one that hosts a permanent exhibition of Andean art, among other paintings, sculptures, and found objects that give life to shared history.

Thanks to some capital improvements, the space is now more capable of holding ancient artifacts, including textiles, ceramics, and gold, silver, wood, and shell from cultures of Peru from as far back as 1500 BCE.

F&S project manager Mark Roessler helped lead the improvements and recognized the importance of the physical space for art. “Significant improvements were made in the building and its systems to help ensure the right environment for the art collections,” said Roessler. “Prior to the renovations, the space had a hard time keeping a proper and consistent humidity level for the art, but after the new windows and upgrades to the HVAC system, the staff noticed a much more consistent humidity level. Additionally, the lighting was improved so that they can be more flexible in working with the various exhibits.”

Diane Gutenkauf, senior assistant director of operations and strategy with KAM, expressed the same: “Art and the things art are made of can respond negatively to those changes in temperature and humidity. Fibers to shrink or expand, wood to swell or dry out. Paint on a canvas reacts differently. It’s a long term challenge for the museum.”

At a public re-opening event on August 28, Dean of FAA, Jake Pinholster focused the purpose of the museum as a whole: “I want to keep in mind the physical space, as much as that’s what we’re here to celebrate. But also, museums are about transformation of community, around

"We see them every day. There's a 'Hey, good morning!' and collegiality when there's a collaboration like this. It's a nice thing like this experience for future collaborations."

ideas and creativity and art and the social conversations we have on a day to day basis. KAM is one of the critical anchor cultural proponents of these cities and we want to continue to honor that."

Like what?

Small details involved a lot of folks from F&S and were wide-ranging.

Safety and fire code review, architectural review, public safety refinements, plus F&S electricians, mill shop workers, elevator mechanics, laborers, and painters all helped throughout the process.

"They become like coworkers," said Evelyn Shapiro, KAM Assistant Director for Marketing and Communications. "We see them every day. There's a 'hey, good morning' and collegiality when there's a collaboration like this. It's a nice thing like this experience for future collaborations."

One portion of the work is regarding the building envelope, or the very most exterior edge of the building—the walls, windows, and doors. The goal was to project a calm, welcoming facility, while really wanting to keep everything out. Including even birds.

"We replaced all exterior windows," said Gutenkauf. "There had been a lot of air leakage and there was no vapor barrier, which prevents humidity from entering through the walls. We opted for a vapor barrier paint on interior walls, which will help stabilize the environment. We didn't want to rip out too many walls or façade. We also opted for windows with built-in dot pattern, which prevents bird strikes, and a UV filter to prevent light from damaging the art.

Photo credit: Fred Zwicky

BIKE MONTH 2025

LIGHT THE NIGHT

Light the Night is an annual free bicycle light give-away, funded by the Campus Area Transportation Study (CATS) agencies: the U. of I., C-U MTD, the City of Urbana, and the City of Champaign. The Bike Project has been a partner group organizing the event, and in 2016, helped fund it as well. Since 2008, volunteers have helped to install over 800 sets of bicycle lights each year.

This year's event was September 16, at Alma Mater Plaza, Hallene Gateway, the Ikenberry Commons Quad, and at the intersection of Green Street and Lincoln Avenue.

In addition to providing the lights, the goal of the event is to help educate the public that state law in Illinois requires bicycles to have a front light and rear reflector, at minimum, when riding at night.

BIKE TO WORK DAY

The annual event since 2010 now features close to 800 members of the community committing to ride their bicycle to work on the day, as a way to acknowledge and thank regular bicycle commuters and encourage and invite first-time riders. The university is proud to be a partner organization for this event, in encouraging students, faculty, and staff to give bicycling a try as their regular method of commuting to work or school.

Riders hit eight locations on campus on, September 10 where they could ask questions, pick up promotional materials, and enjoy coffee and snacks.

Campus Welcome Stations

- Alma Mater Plaza
- Campus Bike Center
- Campus Recreation Center East
- College of Veterinary Medicine – Lot F27
- Disabilities Resources and Educational Services
- I Hotel and Illinois Conference Center – Intersection of First Street and St. Mary's Road
- Orchard Downs
- Siebel Center for Computer Science – Intersection of Main Street and Mathews Avenue

DRIVING FORWARD

The Transportation division of F&S is one of the most commonly-used services on campus, by users of all kinds and for any reason to hit the road.

Got some field research to do in a nearby community or state? You may need to rent a car from the Car Pool.

Did you happen to have a little fender-bender while on the road? For that, the body shop might be able to piece that car back together.

Or, if you need a larger vehicle, like a 15-passenger 'turtle top' van, you can take an orientation class to get comfortable behind the wheel.

Neil Franzen, transportation manager, and Shawn Patterson, assistant director of fleet services, watch over these processes, and more.

"We'll be purchasing more electric vehicles, going forward," said Franzen. "So many trips go further out than what a current EV can manage, and there may not be places between here and there. But there's a transition to get to the point where more vehicles are EV."

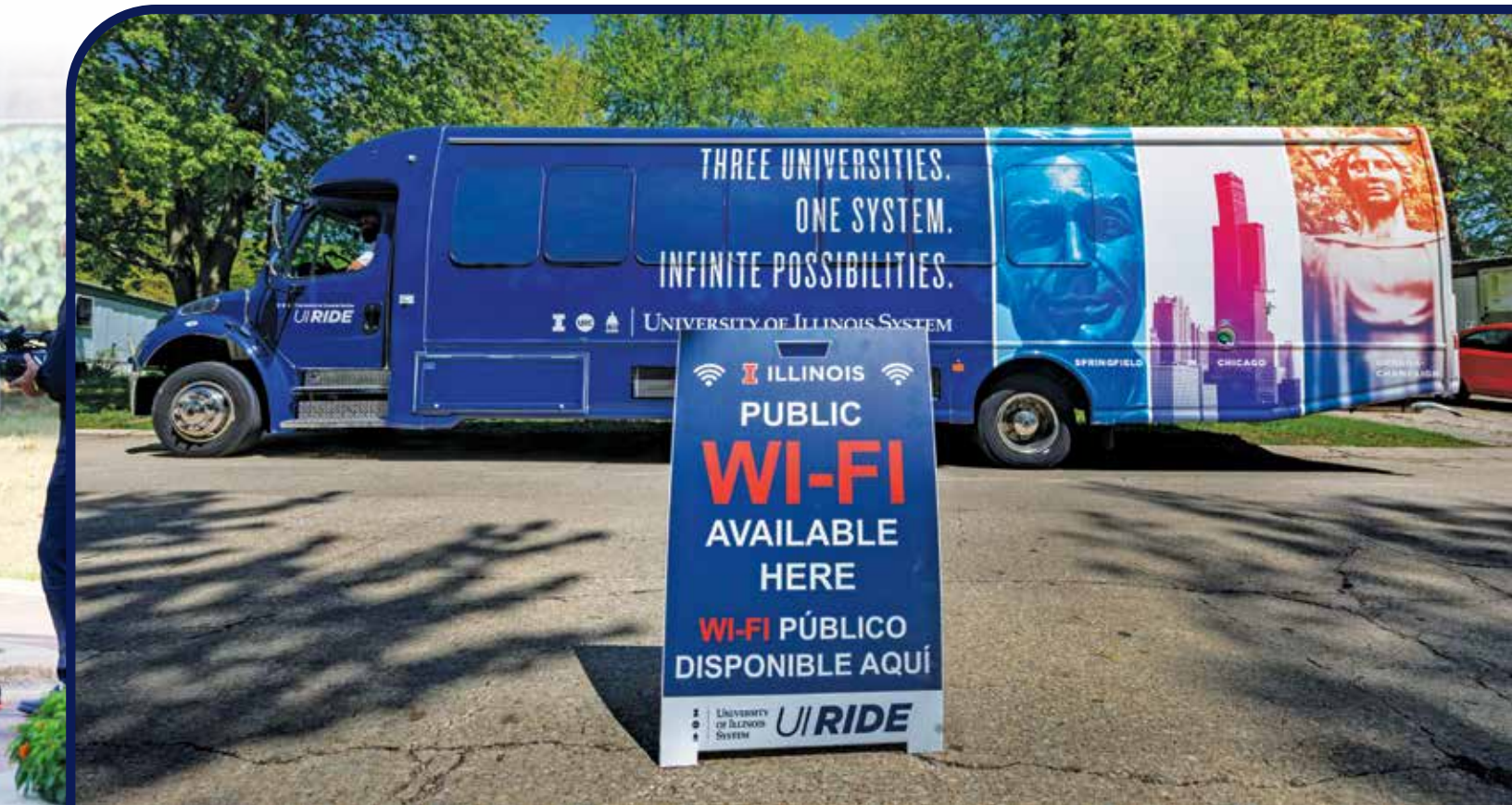
In the Car Pool, Franzen and Patterson both noted the popularity and availability of vehicle types are in contrast: small sedans, for up to four passengers, and larger SUVs, which can hold seven or eight, are the most readily in-demand. But "in between" sizes, like large or mid-size sedans, are more difficult to acquire.

Use of UI Ride, a transportation service to stops in Chicago made on a regular schedule, increased recently, including over 100 for the last week of August 2025. Modifications have been made to the bus to enhance rider comfort and new stops may be added to each trip, including more in Chicago and maybe to Springfield, as well.

Find out more...

https://go.fs.illinois.edu/CarpoolFS

https://go.fs.illinois.edu/15Bus-Training



THE LIT PATH AND THE DARK SKY

You see it every time you walk at night: pathway, bike lane, and street lighting is a trusted, safe way to journey campus. Big evening events for new students hit each fall, leading into sporting events, music acts and every outdoor activity... but at night.

And with lighting installed in recent years, including at Illini Grove, along Kirby west of Memorial Stadium, and in multi-story parking lots, pedestrians are seeing clearer than ever. All while the campus grows toward full adoption of "Dark Sky" standards, which is a "recognized worldwide authority combatting light pollution."

Essentially, you don't want light leaking up toward the sky, or simply being turned on unnecessarily or placed in inefficient locations. Lights like spherical globes or other, more ornamental shapes, may spill light up more than more modern designs that take light pollution seriously.

But Why?

"Second to an overall reduction of outdoor lighting, using 'Dark Sky Approved' light fixtures is the best method for reducing light pollution," said Bridgette Moen, F&S landscape architect. "Light pollution is detrimental to both wildlife and human health. Many animals rely on day-night cycles, which are disrupted from light pollution. According to the National Audubon Society, artificial light can disorient migrating birds and result in collisions with buildings. Researchers at the University of York found that moths attracted to night lights resulted in reduced plant pollination."

"In the human environment, light pollution can actually decrease safe movement at night. Traditional streetlights are often non-shielded and light the landscape at the vehicle scale; this can cause glare and make it harder to see pedestrians or cyclists. Too much artificial light in the evening can also disrupt sleep patterns, leading to higher risks of chronic conditions. Perhaps the most obvious result, light pollution makes it much harder to view the night sky. Light pollution has become so ubiquitous that starwatchers flock

to regions with low light pollution to enjoy the night sky. One of which is in the backyard of the university at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve, the only Dark Sky Park in Illinois."

Eva Sweeney, F&S capital projects, is glad to note how trends are increasing: "'Dark Sky' lighting prevents light pollution not just to the sky, but also glare and spillover beyond property lines. F&S facility standards call for 'Dark Sky' approval on all outdoor lighting, including streets, sidewalks and parking lots. Virtually all new installations for the past 15-20 years have adhered to this policy."

"It takes planning to meet all the safety needs of our busy campus while maintaining 'Dark Sky' standards. Newer LED technology and fixtures make it much easier to control the output, directing nearly all the light to where people can use it. Less than half as much energy is needed to safely light our streets and sidewalks compared to the old fashioned fixtures. Apart from 'Dark Sky,' sometimes even more can be saved with motion-activated lighting such as at Lot E-14. That technology is most suitable for parking lots, where late-night usage is very low. Lights on the busiest pedestrian sidewalks are not generally motion activated for safety reasons."

Little Light

Space that truly requires darkness is the Observatory.

"Astronomers can't view the stars if they are being blinded by streetlights, so for many years the nearby lights were painted black on the side facing the Observatory," Sweeney said. "These days we use 'Dark Sky' fixtures instead."

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The nearby historic farming land, the Morrow Plots, doesn't want too much electric light, either. Famously, buildings nearby were planned in a manner as to not "throw shade on the corn," per an old song about the campus feature.

"Not many people will remember that the nighttime effects were also considered, and lights were placed to avoid shining on the Morrow Plots. Believe it or not, corn needs to sleep too!"

Photo credit: Fred Zwicky

Hall of Fame

F&S provides all physical plant, operational, and essential services for sustaining an environment that fosters the research, teaching, and public engagement activities of the university. This includes a wide variety of efforts and services vital to all on campus and in the community. Welcome to our Hall of Fame.

SOLAR FARM 2.0

Solar Farm 2.0 is a 12.32-megawatt (MWdc) utility-scale array on 54 acres located on campus, north of Curtis Road, between First Street and Dunlap Avenue (U.S. 45), near the Village of Savoy. The installation incorporates bi-facial solar panels and uses a tracking system (the panels move each day to follow the sun from east to west).

https://go.fs.illinois.edu/SF2

CAMPUS CODE COMPLIANCE & FIRE SAFETY

Campus Code Compliance participates in the plan review process of a project to assist with scoping and code compliance for building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, fire and safety codes, and ADA/Illinois accessibility code.

https://go.fs.illinois.edu/CodeCompFireSafety

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Capital Projects manages the project programming phase, site selection process, and procurement of all professional service consultants for design. All projects with costs of $250,000 or more, must receive appropriate campus approval before proceeding with project development or execution.

https://go.fs.illinois.edu/CapitalProjects

SHOP SPOTLIGHT: LABORER-ELECTRICIANS KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

The F&S laborer-electricians shop has one primary job: keep the lights on.

That's everywhere on the Urbana campus—in classrooms, offices, laboratories, exterior lights, and even the Ice Arena.

Bulbs of all sorts, shapes, and sizes can be found all over campus, and the laborer-electricians are quick to respond when a light goes out. Every year, laborer-electricians visit the Ice Arena and install new fluorescent tube lights to illuminate the home to Kinesiology classes, Fighting Illini club hockey, recreation activities, and public skate time.

Laborer-electrician foreperson Greg Moen estimates about 35,000 lamps are replaced each year.

"The primary lamps are still fluorescent," said Moen. "Buildings are transitioning to LED fixtures and lamps, but it's a conversion that takes time. Lamps and ballasts are recycled, per EPA guidelines, to the level that virtually all the materials are repurposed. For example, the gas and phosphorus powders in the fluorescent lamps are processed to the level that rare earth metals in the lamps are recovered and repurposed."

And Moen emphasizes light replacements are needed everywhere: "It is important to have adequate lighting levels to support research, learning, and emergency egress."

An 18-year veteran with F&S, Paul Weisman, has done all sorts of lighting replacements, including many times at the Ice Arena. The lights shine from well above the ice, so far in fact, that he doesn't feel cold until he comes back down to ground level. Up there at the ceiling, it's actually a little warm. This difference in temperature, particularly due to the transition period when ice may be melted in the spring and also when added before students come back in the fall, can cause condensation all over the rink, especially high above the ice.

"They drip. All the lamps I have had to work on had water dripping off them. It's a very harsh environment," Weisman said. He approximated 180 tube lights will be changed this year there.

PAUL'S DRIP

The drip doesn't stop there for Weisman, who also changes the lights in the pool at Activities & Recreation Center and Campus Recreation Center—East. And he isn't using scuba gear to get it done—just what he can do on his own.

"I have to dive under the water and pull them out," Weisman said. "Hold your breath! I dive under, take a screw out and take the fixture out, which has a long cable. I bring that up to the surface and take it apart with it still connected."

It's the kind of work many don't realize goes on, especially new students, faculty, and staff. Laborer-electricians are, as much as any other shop at F&S, all over campus, including on night runs, which enhance campus safety by keeping lots, lanes, and paths lit at night.

"Our work goes from steam tunnels all the way to the chandeliers in the President's House. We just change light bulbs. We keep the lights on for the whole entire university."

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