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A MESSAGE

From the Executive Director  Rich Robben

“To be an organization where all staff are empowered and encouraged to reach their full potential.”

I opened my May/June Plant Exchange message with this statement from our strategic business plan. Hopefully, most of you recognized it as one of our vision statements. In this earlier edition of the Plant Exchange you read about various team members who have taken the above vision very seriously and have built their careers here at the University by pursuing management positions.

There are, however, numerous ways to build a career. Some seek a management vocation but many more choose a career built around technical expertise. This issue of the Exchange features individuals who have chosen the technical proficiency route and are graduates of the “school of hard knocks.” They are representatives of the majority of our team in Plant Operations. The central point of these featured testimonies is that we all have a place in our organization. We all have a role to play regardless of our individual motivations and aspirations.

It is rewarding to note that the University encourages and supports the individual aspirations of its employees, and I believe that Plant exemplifies this support better than any other department.

To this end I urge all members of Plant to read the following stories, in the form of answers, from six team members who have taken the pathway of technical proficiency. I thank each of the six individuals for participating. I know that you will want to approach them on a more personal basis to ask more details. I also want to encourage each member of Plant to take advantage of a wide variety of training opportunities that are available. I hope you feel free to contact me or any other member of the Plant Lead Team or Plant Academy to seek advice or make suggestions regarding how we can help to focus the University of Michigan’s training and career opportunities to meet your needs and goals.

Rich Robben, Director
Jeremy McCoy

Please give a general description of relevant jobs and/or levels of education prior to employment with the university.

During my junior and senior years in high school I studied electrical construction. And as a U-M student I worked as a skilled trades helper during the summers (1999-2002)

What month/year were you employed with the university? Which department? What was the name/title of the position?

I became a full time employee July 19, 2004, in the department of Medical School Administration. I served as a customer service representative associate.

Were you enrolled in any type of educational or career advancement program when you first began with the university?

No

Please list the departments, positions, and years (months) that you held each position
Please give a general description of relevant jobs and/or levels of education prior to employment with the university.

CDL license, high school graduate, clerk at a supply company

What month / year were you employed with the university? Which department? What was the name/title of the position?

1982  Fresh Air Camp – Caretaker – LSA Dept

Were you enrolled in any type of educational or career advancement program when you first began with the university?

No

Please list the departments, positions, and years (months) that you held each position ending with your current position and the year (month) that you began this position.

Fresh Air Camp, LSA became permanent (1982 – 1999)

What positive attributes or work attitudes did you demonstrate in each former position – in order to move up to the next position?

I always attempt to create a positive relationship with customers and coworkers. I made sure to sign-up for additional training or instruction offered by the University. Most importantly, I stay optimistic when things don’t go my way.

Was there ever a time that you felt like you had reached a plateau in your career at the university? Did you ever have periods of frustration? Disappointments? What did you do to move forward and/or what advice would you give another who is experiencing these same feelings?

Initially there was a lot of disappointment. I bid on over 20 employment postings before I was hired here, but the fact that I stayed motivated and didn’t stray from my ultimate goal paid off. I would like to move on to the next level in my field. I’ll be eligible to take the State of Michigan Master Electrician License test in September of 2012. I’ve also met with an academic advisor at U-M Dearborn to discuss completion of a degree in Electrical Engineering.

What advice would you give to an employee who would like to move to higher pay grades and new responsibilities?

Set a goal and don’t let lack of effort be the reason it is not completed.

Maintenance Mechanic I – South Campus Zone Maintenance (2004-2006)

Maintenance Mechanic II – LSI Zone Maintenance (2006-2011)

Maintenance Mechanic III – South Campus Zone Maintenance (2011-present)

**Please list the education or career programs that you completed while being employed at the university.**


**Was there ever a time that you felt like you had reached a plateau in your career at the university? Did you ever have periods of frustration? Disappointments? What did you do to move forward and/or what advice would you give another who is experiencing these same feelings?**

Yes, at the Fresh Air Camp. I felt I was passed over regarding becoming a full time employee, and no advancement opportunities for me to broaden my career. I was frustrated that I had worked 17 years doing a good job but I felt that it was not recognized or rewarded. The U-M needed me but could not justify a permanent position. I took my job very seriously and was very proud of the property that I was in charge of.

**What advice would you give to an employee who would like to move to higher pay grades and new responsibilities?**

Be ready to respond to the work at hand. Listen to what the customer really needs. Care about each job you do since each task is an important cog in the wheel. Even the smallest detail or job you do contributes to the big picture as a complete project. Listen to others with more experience and take their advice with you. Apply what you have learned either by mistake or success.

Kevin Bordine

**Please give a general description of relevant jobs and/or levels of education prior to employment with the university.**

I worked in retail before coming to the University.

**What month / year were you employed with the university? Which department? What was the name/title of the position?**

I was hired in June of 1986 as a Custodian II in Plant Building Services.

**Were you enrolled in any type of educational or career advancement program when you first began with the university?**

I was a part of the EWOC program working summers in the Maintenance Department through the Plant Department.

**Please list the departments, positions, and years (months) that you held each position ending with your current position and the year (month) that you began this position.**
Plant Building Services, Custodian II, 1986-1996
Plant Operations, Zone Maintenance, Maintenance Mechanic I, II, and III, 1996-2005
Plant Operations, Steamfitters Shop, Apprentice Steamfitter, 2005-2010
Plant Operations, Steamfitters Shop/ North Campus Regional Facility, Journeyman Steamfitter, 2010-Present

Please list the education or career programs that you completed while being employed at the university.

EWOC program
BOMI Program
Apprenticeship Program through Local 190/U of M

What positive attributes or work attitudes did you demonstrate in each former position – in order to move up to the next position?

I was willing to learn new things and I was easy to get along with.

Was there ever a time that you felt like you had reached a plateau in your career at the university? Did you ever have periods of frustration? Disappointments? What did you do to move forward and/or what advice would you give another who is experiencing these same feelings?

I think everyone runs into those periods in their careers when you feel stalled a bit but you just keep plugging away and sooner or later things have a way of working out.

What advice would you give to an employee who would like to move to higher pay grades and new responsibilities?

Keep pushing on. As they say “good things come to those who wait.”

Please give a general description of relevant jobs and/or levels of education prior to employment with the university.

Truck Driver for an independent company from 1985-2000
Education: General Education and HVAC classes at Washtenaw Community College

What month/year were you employed with the university? Which department? What was the name/title of the position?

University of Michigan Stores - Truck Driver/Room Delivery (October 6, 2000)

Were you enrolled in any type of educational or career advancement program when you first began with the university?

General Education and HVAC classes at Washtenaw Community College

Continued on Page 8
Please list the departments, positions, and
years (months) that you held each position
ending with your current position and the
year (month) that you began this position.

- Maintenance Mechanic III/December 2010
- Maintenance Mechanic II/July 2008
- Maintenance Mechanic I/July 2006
- Truck Driver/Room Delivery/ October 2000

Please list the education or career programs
that you completed while being employed at
the university.

- BOMI Electrical Systems and Illumination
- BOMI Air Handling, Water Treatment and Plumbing Systems
- BOMI Energy Management and Controls
- BOMI Refrigeration Systems and Accessories
- Commercial Building Maintenance I
- Commercial Building Maintenance II
- Commercial Building Maintenance Certificate

What positive attributes or work attitudes did
you demonstrate in each former position – in
order to move up to the next position?

I took the right classes required to advance my career and studied very hard to pass the classes in order to move up to the next level. I also took initiative to learn new items at work and I volunteer to try new things.

Was there ever a time that you felt like you
had reached a plateau in your career at the
university? Did you ever have periods of
frustration? Disappointments? What did you
do to move forward and/ or what advice would
you give another who is experiencing these
same feelings?

Yes, I felt like I had advanced as much as I could while working at Stores. However, I was a RIF candidate and was given the opportunity to work as a Maintenance Mechanic in Zone Maintenance, which gave me a new outlook on my job career. As long as you take the classes that are offered and do your best at work, you will be able to advance quickly and see more opportunity for growth.

What advice would you give to an employee
who would like to move to higher pay grades
and new responsibilities?

Ask for advice from others who have completed the same programs you are interested in. Always do your best and remain positive.

Please give a general description of relevant
jobs and/or levels of education prior to
employment with the university:

Before working in Plant I was an auto mechanic and a service station attendant. My education outside of high school was the required automotive mechanic courses to become a State Certified Auto Mechanic.

What month / year were you employed with
the university? Which department? What
was the name/title of the position?

I was hired as a Custodian II with Plant’s Building Services Department in March of 1995.

Were you enrolled in any type of educational
or career advancement program when you
first began with the university?

No, I was not. But soon after my employment began I started to take classes.
Please list the departments, positions, and years (months) that you held each position ending with your current position and the year (month) that you began this position.

Custodian II – Building Services
March of 1995 to Feb 2005

Maintenance Mechanic II – Plant Hospital
Maintenance Feb 2005 to May 2010

Maintenance Mechanic III – Plant Hospital
Maintenance May 2010 to present

Please list the education or career programs that you completed while being employed at the university.

BOMI classes at WCC, Plant Academy and MECH Test

What positive attributes or work attitudes did you demonstrate in each former position – in order to move up to the next position?

I always maintained good attendance. I was willing to learn new skills that enabled me to further my career opportunities here at the University.

Was there ever a time that you felt like you had reached a plateau in your career at the university? Did you ever have periods of frustration? Disappointments? What did you do to move forward and/or what advice would you give another who is experiencing these same feelings?

When I was trying to move into maintenance I often felt that I would not be able to move from one department to another. To get past that point, I started to take different classes to give me the education and experience needed to move into one of the open maintenance positions. My advice to others in similar positions would be to never stop trying, and take the time to invest in “you” through training and education.

What advice would you give to an employee who would like to move to higher pay grades and new responsibilities?

Decide how much effort you would like to invest towards moving up. Ultimately you are in charge of your future here and you must be the one to take the first steps in advancing you career.

Please give a general description of relevant jobs and/or levels of education prior to employment with the university.

I helped with a home repair business from 1992-2001. For the most part I did basic electrical work and assisted a licensed electrician. This helped me gain specific, and practical, knowledge in the electrical field, as well as a wide range of general knowledge in the other areas of skilled trades related work.

For the five years prior to coming to U of M, I was a Project Manager for a high end home remodeling company that specialized in kitchens.

I have also taken various courses at Schoolcraft CC.

What month/year were you employed with the university? Which department? What was the name/title of the position?

I started on 9/11/2006 as a temporary employee, and was hired in as an FTE on 12/5/2006 as a Maintenance Mechanic I with Plant Operations on North Campus.

Continued on Page 10
Were you enrolled in any type of educational or career advancement program when you first began with the university?

No

Please list the departments, positions, and years (months) that you held each position ending with your current position and the year (month) that you began this position.

Plant Operations, MMI (9/06-9/08)
MMII (9/08-1/11)
MMIII (1/11-PRESENT)

Please list the education or career programs that you completed while being employed at the university.

While at U of M, I completed the CBM (Commercial Building Maintenance) Course through U of M and Washtenaw CC. I am currently in the last stages of my Associates Degree in Business from Schoolcraft CC.

What positive attributes or work attitudes did you demonstrate in each former position – in order to move up to the next position?

Regardless of my job/position, or employer, I have always tried to maintain a positive attitude towards work and my job in particular. I think that it truly promotes teamwork and makes any organization stronger as a whole. The positive attitudes I try to demonstrate are teamwork, a willingness to learn, and communication. I do not necessarily do these things in an attempt to gain recognition or for advancement. I simply do it because I think that we all need to try to utilize our skills as best as we can for the sustainability of our, or any, workplace. Otherwise, there is a complacency or negativity that can develop and things can eventually fall apart from an organizational standpoint. This can ultimately lead to the downfall of a workplace.

Was there ever a time that you felt like you had reached a plateau in your career at the university? Did you ever have periods of frustration? Disappointments? What did you do to move forward and/or what advice would you give another who is experiencing these same feelings?

Yes, I felt that I had reached a plateau in my career at the University and I did start to get a little frustrated. But it was then that I took time to reflect and tried to think about what I could do to change that. I reached out to those that had been in my position in the past, and asked what they did to improve themselves personally and professionally. I was given wonderful advice from some very good people, from many levels, so I took the advice that was given and began to act on it and improve myself, both personally and professionally.

My advice to anyone experiencing a similar situation is to not get frustrated or upset. That is generally when things can go bad. So, instead, take that time and energy to develop and enhance your skills to make yourself a more valuable employee. In the long run, patience and persistence will pay off.

What advice would you give to an employee who would like to move to higher pay grades and new responsibilities?

Begin to utilize all the tools that are available to you. Between Plant Academy, the CBM courses, and the tuition assistance program, to name a few, there are many resources at the University. With the right amount of perseverance, and desire, the opportunities are limitless. It is up to you utilize your available resources.

Other comments:

Finally, I know that there are a lot of changes with the reorganization. Many of us are feeling uncertain and anxious about the different culture that has been introduced regarding the way we go about doing our job. But, one thing has not changed. The same work that we have been doing for decades still needs to be completed. We can choose to be resistant and complain about the new system, or we can choose a positive and productive attitude. If we find that something is not working smoothly, we can use our energy to try to come up with possible solutions or alternatives instead of being negative. By trying to work on this together in a positive manner, we give ourselves the best opportunity for success.
Former, current, and future members of both the C.A.R.E. Team and Plant Operations Diversity Community were invited to a Committee Service Recognition Reception on August 9, 2011. The purpose of the event was to honor the commitment and contributions of members who are rotating off of the team. Rich Robben and several Associate Directors were in attendance to show their support. Committee chairs updated the group on the successes and challenges each team had faced in the past year, and laid out the groundwork for their future endeavors. Departing members were able to share memories and sentiments that reflected their deep appreciation for being a part of something meaningful and impactful for not only themselves, but also for all of the Plant community.

Working on the behalf of all Plant employees, team members dedicate two years of service to Plant Committees. New member recruitment has a goal to replace rotating members with a balanced representation from every department. Current and new members who will continue:

**C.A.R.E.**
- Randy Baker
- George Benson
- Vickie Livingston
- Eric Touchberry

**P.O.D.C.**
- Steve Brunger
- Mary Diskin
- Alysia Kolascz
- Kevin Morgan
- Chris Nedrow
- Jorge Palacio
- Doug Schoener
- Steve Snyder

Departing members who were recognized for their service (pictured left to right): Lynette Wright (P.O.D.C.), Tim Kennedy (C.A.R.E.), Sandi Herrst (C.A.R.E.), Mary Nix (C.A.R.E.), Rick Simmons (C.A.R.E.), Howard Portis (P.O.D.C.). Not pictured: Curt Gomulinski (C.A.R.E.) and Anuja Mudali (P.O.D.C.).
Like most everything during these trying times, the Plant Operations Diversity Committee (PODC) is going through changes... Taking direction from the Plant Operations Lead Team (POLT), and the University of Michigan’s President and Executive Committee’s goal for a respectful workplace, the team is working diligently to align these goals strategically with both the University’s and Plant Operations’ goals and objectives.

The committee ended last year with a joint strategic planning session with POLT and has welcomed several new members. With the new members and a new focus came a new name: the Respect & Inclusion Resource Team! This new name is more identifiable with the team’s strategic direction.

Regrettably, the team had to say a fond farewell to some members that had served for two or more years. However, the team is hopeful they will continue to collaborate and give feedback to the current members.

The team’s focus for 2011-2012 is on integrating training, and working closely with the units to develop topics of discussion relating to diversity. Some think diversity awareness addresses only race, religion, or culture but that is only part of the puzzle. For example, Plant Operations has nearly 1,500 employees in a variety of occupations. The vast menagerie of job skills and occupations within Plant Operations are tremendously diverse. Over the next few months, the committee hopes you will join the journey of discovery to learn more about Plant Operations and the wonderful people that “Make Blue Go!”

In addition to the above training, the Respect & Inclusion Resource Team is updating and redesigning their website to improve communication and to provide links to diversity and inclusion resources. The team is also supporting Anthony Walesby’s Campus Commitment training, and the Plant Operations Realizing Common Ground class. Both are now mandatory training sessions for all Plant Operations Supervisors.

The team wants to thank the committee members that are leaving the team this year for their hard work and dedication over the last few years. Anuja Mudali, Communication Specialist, Planet Blue; Howard Portis, Foreman, Facilities Maintenance; and Lynette Wright, Manager, Plant Materials & Moving Services. Lynette served as the co-chair of the committee for the past several years and teaches the Realizing Common Ground class with Mary Diskin. Lynette was asked to be a member of the Business and Finance, Diversity Committee Executive Board. Congratulations Lynette! Lynette will continue to serve as a member resource and sponsor to the committee. Thank you Lynette for all your contributions!

The Respect and Inclusion Resource Team wants to welcome our newest members: Doug Schoener, Foreman, representing the Moving & Trucking Department. Doug is charged with scheduling jobs, getting new work, quoting jobs, and meeting with current and potential customers to promote Moving & Trucking. Kevin Morgan, Team Leader, representing Planet Blue. Kevin leads a team of engineers, zone maintenance personnel, facility managers, and building occupants to assist in reducing energy consumption in campus buildings. Steve Brunger, Supervisor II, representing Construction Services. Steve’s responsibilities include construction management, and project/budget management and he is a supervisor of skilled trades. Steve has joined the team this year and is committed to helping the team make a difference in Plant Operations.

The committee wants to welcome back the returning members: Alysia Kolascz, Accounting Clerk Senior, representing Business Services within Utilities and Plant Engineering. Alysia is part of the Energy Billing Systems team responsible for processing all utilities for the UM community. This includes purchasing, invoice auditing, processing vendor payments,
metering, monthly recharging to our customers for their direct purchased utilities and/or generated utilities through the Service Unit Billing, reconciling accounts, and record keeping. **Chris Nedrow**, Administrative Assistant Intermediate, representing Facilities Maintenance. Chris, like many others in Plant Operations, wears many hats, some of which include ITS Project Coordinator, Project Manager for the 800MHz Radio Rebanding Project, Travel Coordinator, Procurement Support, Work Coordinator for Mechanical Systems, Training Support, Administrator Backup Support, and so much more. **Jorge Palacio**, Project Engineer Lead, representing Plant Operations’ Information Technology. Along with his many IT responsibilities, Jorge will replace Lynette as the next co-chair and he has volunteered to update and redesign the committee’s website. Jorge is excited about his new role with the team. **Mary Diskin**, Business Administrator, representing the Plant Operations’ Executive Director’s Office. Mary has been a member of the committee since 2005 when she started working for Rich Robben. Mary handles the management of the day-to-day operations of the Executive Director’s Office, including Human Resources, and special projects for Rich Robben. Mary is a co-chair of the Diversity Committee and teaches the Realizing Common Ground class with Lynette Wright.

In addition to the committee members, several members of POLT and F&O HR have volunteered to be committee sponsors. Stacy Johnson, F&O HR; Sarah Ely, Plant Academy; Bill Verge, Utilities, and Plant Engineering; Kevin Fraley, Work Management; and Rich Robben, Plant Operations Executive Director and lead sponsor of the Diversity Committee.

The new team asks for your assistance to enhance the Plant Operations Community in such a way that every employee feels included and respected.

**Take Action!**

There are many ways to “Demonstrate Your Commitment to Diversity,” below is but one. Watch future e-mails, articles and the website for more!

*Tell your own story, not someone else’s. Speak for yourself and take responsibility for your opinions, values, and experiences.*  

(Brown, Tracy; 71 Ways to Demonstrate Diversity; Brown Bridges Press, Dallas, TX pg. 35)

Do you have a story you would like to share? Send it to **PO-RIRT@umich.edu**

**Sign up!**

- **Realizing Common Ground** - January 24, 2012  
  from 12:30 pm-4:30 pm  
  • **Campus Commitment** - April 17, 2012 1:30-3:30

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**Fall MHealthy Fitness Specials End Oct. 31**

Plan ahead for the holidays! Give yourself or someone you love a fitness present to keep off the extra pounds this holiday season. You still have time to take advantage of these limited-time special offers from the MFit Fitness Center and MHealthy Personal Training.

- **One FREE month MFit Fitness Center membership with purchase of 3-, 6-, or 12-month membership.**
- **One FREE personal training session with purchase of a package of six or more personal training sessions. Sessions may be scheduled at the MFit Fitness Center at the Ice Cube or any RecSports location. Does not apply to doubles sessions.**

Save even more money and have fun together! MHealthy now offers group personal training for up to four people. Available at any RecSports location and the MFit Fitness Center at the Ann Arbor Ice Cube. This is a present you both can enjoy!

Hurry! Offers expire October 31, 2011. Payroll deduction and discounts are available for U-M employees. For more information, call: 734-998-8700 or click on the current specials icon at:  

**http://hr.umich.edu/mhealthy/programs/activity/icecube.html**

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The Utilities and Plant Engineering Department is engaged in a fast-track utility project on North Campus in the vicinity of Beal Avenue between Hayward Avenue and Bonisteel Blvd. The work includes replacement of a 12-inch water main along Beal Avenue which is being replaced due to its age and break history. The project also includes the installation of a new storm relief sewer along Beal Avenue, around the Wave Field, Aerospace Research, and a few other locations. The storm water upgrades are based on a recently completed study conducted by the engineering firm CDM which looked at addressing building flooding issues in the area. The existing system has a number of deficiencies that prevent it from adequately conveying water through the storm sewer system and out to the existing detention pond south of Bonisteel and east of the Art and Architecture building. This upgraded system will add additional capacity to the existing system, address future growth needs, and should eliminate pipe surcharging during heavy rain events which has been especially problematic in the area of GG brown. These storm sewer improvements are designed to manage a 100-year, 24-hour (4.75 inches) rainfall event.

The design for this project was managed by Dharmesh Joshi of AEC. Construction is being managed by Tom Walterhouse of AEC in partnership with Alan Abend of UPE, who is the owner representative. Merlyn Contractors Inc. is performing the construction work. Road paving, facility water service connections, and site restoration will be substantially completed by October 2011, and site restoration will be finished in spring 2012.
On August 3, Plant Operations had the privilege of honoring four retirees with a combined total of 127 years of service to the University. Participating in the Celebration and being honored were: Donald Aikins from Plant Hospital Maintenance with 40 years of service; Tom Hart from Plant Building and Grounds Services Heavy Equipment Garage with 32 years of service; Rich Little from Utilities and Plant Engineering with 31 years of service; and Mark Paola from Utilities and Plant Engineering with 24 years of service.

Rich Robben, Executive Director, opened the celebration with welcoming words for visitors, guests, and employees as well as congratulations for the retirees. Following the welcome, each retiree was honored with a few words by members of their department. Throughout the celebration, the guests enjoyed refreshments and had the opportunity to chat with and congratulate their retiring co-workers.

For the first time, the new Plant Operations Retirement Plaques were awarded to retirees at this celebration. These new plaques were designed and created by our own Kevin John of the Sign Shop. The signature boards that were distributed in the past will no longer be used.

The next Retirement Celebration is scheduled for January 31, 2012. The committee is exploring other locations for the celebration due to the increasing number of retirees participating. Watch for more details as this time grows near. If you are planning to retire, we would like to encourage you to participate in the next Plant Operations Retirement Celebration. Please contact the committee member for your area (please see the committee list below) and allow Plant Operations and your co-workers to celebrate your accomplishment!

Retirement Celebration Committee by department: Plant Building & Grounds Services- Amber Morton; Construction Services-Jeanette Craft; Facilities Maintenance-Gina Flowers; Plant Administration-Betty Alberts; Utilities & Plant Engineering-Lisa Sheldon; and Work Management-Von Hardesty.
While everyone marveled at how wonderful the new auditoriums looked, the custodians faced the challenge of maintaining the “new” look. Prior to the renovation the best way to clean under the seats was to use a leaf blower and then pick up the papers and debris. With so much invested in the new seating this method was no longer an option. The new seating was built low to the floor and this created another challenge. Trash and other debris began to accumulate under and behind the seats and the available tools for cleaning were simply not effective.

The auditoriums are home to the Physics Department, and whenever Warren Smith and his staff in the Physics DemoLab would walk through the auditoriums, they would see the dirt accumulating, and this became a major issue as time went on. They decided to see what they could create that would enable the custodians to clean under the seats in a quick, efficient manner. We appreciated partnering with his staff and the time and effort they contributed to assist us with our challenges. Their first prototype was simple and resembled a hockey stick with felt attached that would grab everything and pull it out. The second attempt was much more ergonomic and sturdy. The new tool was made out of piping and included a handle and a scrub pad. Now, thanks to Warren and his staff, the custodians are able to clean the auditoriums better and quicker.