

CEE CASE STUDY: UW

Quotes

“Specification writing is the most important aspect of government procurement. We’ve taken spec writing to an art form, and so are exceeding the energy code in lighting and HVAC. The customized lighting solutions we developed with our vendor resulted in permanent changes in the efficient lighting market place.”
DON RAINEY, Sr. Facilities Engineer, UW Engineering Services

“We’re customer driven. Our students have an environmental ethic, so we’re interested in buying and using energy efficient products.”
CARRIE MacNEIL, Project Coordinator, Student Housing and Food Services

“We purchase Energy Star computers, but we don’t routinely enable the functions. Hundreds of computers are left running all night in empty rooms. We need information about how to use the function without creating interference with the networked system.”
PAUL REED-SMITH, Sr. Consultant, Computers and Communications

“Vendors are far and away my greatest source of product specific information. I visit vendor web pages and consult with vendors during the specification writing process. A well-informed vendor can influence my decision.”
DON RAINEY, Sr. Facilities Engineer, UW Engineering Services

Facts

- Over 7,000 computers and 2,300 copiers are in use at the University of Washington.
- A campus wide lighting and HVAC retrofit project is expected to save over 38 million kWh/year and put UW beyond the Seattle Energy Code for lighting.
- UW Housing and Food Services recently purchased 180 horizontal axis clothes washers and expects to buy another 200 in 1999.

Overview

The University of Washington (UW – “U-dub”) is the state’s largest university and research center with a student body of 35,000 and faculty and staff of 25,000. It operates a central campus in Seattle, WA and branch campuses in Bothell, WA and Tacoma, WA. Central campus facilities include administrative offices, classrooms, auditoriums, undergraduate and graduate libraries, student housing, food service facilities, sports facilities, gymnasium and football field, two medical centers), science laboratories, a performing arts center, and two museums. The university houses 22,500 students.

The UW’s most recent biennium budget was in the range of \$900 million, with an estimated \$150 million/year dedicated to new construction projects, and \$46 million/year for operations and maintenance. Four new buildings under construction adding 530,000 square feet to a 13 million square foot campus.

The story of how this institution makes its purchasing decisions is one of both achievement and opportunity.

Findings

UW has three guiding regulations governing the procurement function. Foremost, is a public bid process with selection criteria based on “best value” – a combination of factors including low bid, vendor responsiveness, product reliability and maintenance, and in

some cases, a vendor's WMBE status. The second regulation, an energy life-cycle cost analysis (ELCCA), is required in major renovation and new construction projects of public facilities. Enacted into law in 1975, the ELCCA is a potentially powerful tool for encouraging energy efficient purchases. It is most actively used in K-12 and state agency construction projects. The third regulation is the Facility Design Instructions (FDI), a multi-volume tome containing standards and procedures for selection and installation of products and equipment in university facilities. It contains excellent guidelines for energy efficient lighting, HVAC and ASD purchases.

UW is already exceeding the energy code in the areas of lighting and HVAC systems. Recent retrofits are expected to save 38 million kWh annually. Major new construction projects adding 500,000 sq. ft. to campus are expected to meet or exceed energy codes.

The greatest opportunities for efficiency gains are in the areas of office equipment and food services. The 7,000 computers and 2,300 copiers in use campus wide are largely compliant with Energy Star specifications, however the savings functions are not routinely enabled. Food Services procurement officials are expecting major renovations to kitchen areas in the next five years. They're very interested in efficient lighting and kitchen equipment such as refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, and cooking appliances.

Recommendations

UW procurement staff agreed they could benefit from the following opportunities:

- Joining the Department of Energy's Rebuild America program to take advantage of the resources available through the DOE, the National Labs, through other Rebuild partnership, and other resources.
- Participating in educational forums and workshops with vendors. Vendors were consistently identified as a primary and important source of product information for specifiers. Well informed vendors are an influential force in selling the value of efficiency to their customers.
- Meeting with computer and copier procurement staff to identify concerns associated with use of the feature and recommending solutions. Holding educational workshop at UW Computer Fair events.
- Working with local chapters of professional associations of procurement officials (such as National Association of Purchasing Managers) to raise awareness of Energy Star products in all categories.
- Providing more detailed product-specific information in the Energy Star Purchasing Tool Kit and setting up a web-based subscription service and email listserv as part of Tool Kit subscription. A training component was also recommended.