



Columbia College Chicago

An Accruent Case Study

SOLUTION SUMMARY

FAMIS Maintenance Management

- Enabled facilities team to quickly delegate requests to appropriate technicians
- Reduced reactionary requests by 80 percent
- Extended lifespan of the college's capital assets and equipment through preventive maintenance
- Improved staff tracking, allowing management to better understand staff needs
- Backed investment in additional staff with data
- Freed resources originally tied to infrastructure support

THE COMPANY

Founded in 1890, Columbia College Chicago has over 9,500 students enrolled in 120 undergraduate and graduate degrees. As a higher education institution specializing in arts and media disciplines, the school is located in the South Loop district of Chicago. Recently, the college has forged associations with the Dublin Institute of Technology, the University of East London, and the Lorenzo de' Medici Italian International Institute.

The university's facilities team of 40 employees is tasked with maintaining over 1.5 million square feet. The campus is spread over several blocks and includes 17 buildings, including academic buildings, office buildings, one residence hall, and various other facilities – most of which were built in the early parts of the 20th century.

THE CHALLENGE

Before the implementation of FAMIS, the Facilities team faced a number of challenges that can be categorized into these three areas:

- The inability to track service request rates and completed work
- The operational focus on reactive maintenance
- The lack of a central system of record for facilities data

REQUEST TRACKING AND EXECUTION

The greatest challenge the university facilities team faced was the inability to track service requests or completed work. Faculty and staff members had to either ask a maintenance worker directly in person or on the phone when an issue occurred. This lack of visibility into the request process would, in turn, lead to more problems, such as forgotten and untracked requests. Ultimately, the lack of request tracking meant that the university's policies were not enforced by the technicians throughout the campus.

"With our current system, there was just no way to know how much time was required for various types of requests," said Sarah McGing, Facilities and Operations Manager, Columbia College Chicago.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE TRACKING

Additionally, preventive maintenance occurred infrequently, resulting in regular equipment failure and forcing the facilities team to work strictly as a reactive organization. This focus on reactive or purely corrective maintenance resulted in allocating crucial funding and resource hours to potentially avoidable repairs and replacements.

DISPARATE AND REDUNDANT FACILITIES SYSTEMS

Adding to this, there was no way to quantify their technicians' time. With an engineer in each building, one engineer could be swamped with 3 emergencies while another would have nothing to do. Without a central system of record for facilities data, a technician would know the issues faced in their building but not in any of the other buildings, requiring that technician to do all of their own preventive maintenance and reactionary work. No one was held accountable, be it the requestor or the facilities department.

THE SOLUTION

FAMIS MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT

Columbia College purchased Accruent's FAMIS cloud solution to track work order requests from start to finish. FAMIS enabled the facilities team to filter requests to the appropriate technician while enforcing the policies of central facilities administrative staff.

"Since implementing Accruent's FAMIS software, for the first time in the university's history, no facilities request is forgotten or goes unaddressed."

— Sarah McGing, Facilities and Operations Manager

Columbia College also now has a more efficient workforce. For example, by allowing to have a certain number of technicians do all of the preventive maintenance work for a particular building while the other technicians spend the day taking reactionary calls, the team is able to free up time and split the work in a more manageable fashion than ever before. Preventive maintenance is now performed regularly and the team can justify deferred or capital project costs for upgrades, greatly improving the lifespan of the college's capital assets and equipment.

THE RESULTS

"We've not only been able to achieve our goals, but set new standards," McGing said. "Our goals before FAMIS were simply to repair or replace. Now, we've been able to achieve our target of reducing unanticipated requests by 80%."

FAMIS has improved the facilities team's ability to track the hours of each staff member, which allows management to better understand where technicians are spending their time. The team can also easily identify areas in which their staff may need training, and determine if additional or improved equipment is needed.

"Most importantly, we have been able to use the data from FAMIS to justify the investment in additional staff," McGing added.

Finally, the team has gained significant benefits from having a cloud solution. They no longer have to support the infrastructure that is required with traditional on-premise solutions, and they are able to get the enterprise-class features their team needs to run an efficient and cost-effective facilities management department.



About FAMIS Maintenance Management

FAMIS Maintenance Management is a true cloud facility management system that streamlines work order management and provides visibility into essential financial data. Since 1982, FAMIS has been serving the facilities management needs of Higher Education professionals to control costs, enhance resource productivity, optimize funding, and ensure compliance for reporting, auditing and sustainability requirements.