Cover Story
A Look at Some Procurement-Led and Student-Led Green Initiatives

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Arizona State University
University of Memphis
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Letter from the CEO

4 Associations Build America
Doreen Murner, CEO, NAEP
NAEP has thrived for 90 years and is still going strong. You—our Members and partners—are the lifeblood of our Association and community in higher education. Because of you, we are able to provide a place for you to express ideas, confront challenges, and ask questions. You’ve given NAEP and the procurement profession a soul, which will allow us to continue to thrive and serve you.

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ACUI’s Women’s Leadership Institute
November 29–December 2, 2011
Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel, California
December 4–7, 2011
Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island, Florida
These sessions have been co-produced by members of the Council for Higher Education Management Associations. For more information or to register, please visit www.acui.org/wli.

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  Presented by the following Boston College professionals: William Corcoran, Carolyn Donoghue, Paul McGowan and Laurie Simard, C.P.M.
- Best Practices for Contract Administration
  Presented by: Faye Orick, EnergX, LLC
- An Introduction to Spend Analysis and Spend Management
  Presented by: Jonathan White, Spikes Carell Analytic, Inc.
- My Green Cube: Engaging Students, Faculty and Staff in Campus Sustainability
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- Strategic Value of Procurement: Part 2 of “How To Do It” (sequel to “They Told Us Where to Go”)
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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Celebrating 90 Years of Community

“Whatever you want us to be, whatever you want us to do, NAEP, you have the stewardship to make your community grow innovation and growth possible.”

More than just watering holes for like-minded people, communities are where ideas can be safely expressed, where challenges can honestly be confronted, and questions asked freely. Emboldened by shared, specific interests and goals, and the safety of knowing we are understood, communities are the nurseries that make growth and innovation possible.

Communities create associations in order to provide that nursery, the home where the official canon of a profession is stored. In addition to providing the tools of community—face-to-face meetings, listservs, libraries, research, and the like—associations like NAEP are the keepers of the community’s soul, its history. History gives continuity and context to our interactions and engagements. Without a shared history, relationships are reduced to a series of on-off interactions, bereft of vitality and the investment of one’s self to the good of the whole.

One of the most interesting things about NAEP, or really any community, is that the more you give the more you get back. NAEP has many volunteers who make our community flourish. Some of you take the time from your busy day to answer a colleague’s listserv question or share an RFP. Others, like our Academy Faculty, dedicate many hours to refining curricula to be timely and valuable. And others, like our volunteer Board, give up many weekends and evenings to make sure that we are the community you want us to be.

Whew. Lofty thinking.

In addition to providing the home for educational procurement professionals, NAEP supports its Membership by redirecting some of our energy and ideas to the groups that support our campus customers. I attend NACUBO, CHEMA, HEASC, NCPPC, NIGP and several other events each year. Fostering relationships with these groups ensure procurement and its contributions are top of mind across campus. Unified by the shared goal of doing the best possible job for our institutions, these relationships give us a bird’s-eye view on issues your campus customers are losing sleep over. Understanding the challenges of your facilities manager and your business officer, for instance, enables us to look within our own community for support and answers. What better way to position procurement as strategic, in touch and ready to contribute?

In this time of incredible change and movement, it is the cohesiveness of our community that enabled us to thrive for 90 years. It is very clear that our NAEP community has a soul because you’ve given it one, and that soul gives our profession real strength. So let’s raise a glass in honor of the strength of our community and as we said in Memphis: “May The Force Be With You. Always.”

Doreen Murner
CEO, NAEP
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Drexel University: Achieving Breakthrough Sustainability Results Through Relationships and Strategic Procurement

by Joe Campbell, Ed.D.
Drexel University

Drexel University—a private, comprehensive research university located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with 24,000 students and 10 colleges—signed the American College and University President’s Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in 2010. The University has the largest private medical college in the United States, a law school, and the second largest cooperative educational program in the country.

Drexel Green (www.drexel.edu/green/), created in 2008 by students, faculty, and staff, is an initiative dedicated to transforming Drexel’s campus into a sustainability leader by establishing a university-wide commitment that incorporates all aspects of the University.

University Procurement contributes to sustainability in a number of ways:

• Vendors are asked to make green alternatives easily identifiable and accessible;
• Marketed products and programs are offered by preferred suppliers in support of sustainable goals;
• Repurposed items are made available through the Drexel Surplus Exchange; and
• Partnerships with vendors are established to provide refurbishing and repurposing solutions for furniture, fixtures and equipment in storage across all campuses.

One of Drexel’s major green accomplishments was achieved by the partnering of procurement with facilities to purchase electricity. Driving down prices through competition and incorporating Green Power options resulted in the purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates equal to 100 percent of Drexel’s electricity usage. The 84,268 megawatt hours are matched annually with wind energy entering the U.S. grid. This strategic purchase, coupled with effective energy management, has Drexel’s campus now operating within a carbon footprint that is 81 percent lower than it was in 2010. As a result, Drexel has achieved—39 years ahead of schedule—its ACUPCC goal to reduce its carbon footprint 80 percent by 2050. Drexel is now listed on the EPA’s National Top 50 list of the largest green-power purchasers, is ranked third among colleges and universities, and is ranked first among the institutions in the Colonial Athletic Conference.

Drexel is now listed on the EPA’s National Top 50 list of the largest green-power purchasers, is ranked third among colleges and universities, and is ranked first among the institutions in the Colonial Athletic Conference.

• The Papadakis Integrated Science Building’s 140,000-square-foot, multi-story living bio wall is operated in harmony with the building’s mechanical system, using the natural respiratory properties of plants to cool the indoor air in summer and function as a humidifier in the winter;
• Biodiesel fuel (20 percent soy blend) is used to operate its fleet of 11 shuttle buses;
• Since 2007, water consumption has been reduced over 42 percent by the installation of restricted-flow shower heads and aerators, zoned irrigation systems that measure moisture in the soil to activate only as needed, and by the treatment and reuse of rainwater.

The effectiveness of macro-level green approaches is limited when responsibility falls entirely on the shoulders of the University. Drexel blends its macro initiatives with micro-level participation, sharing responsibility with all members of the University community and maximizing results that produce lasting cultural changes. Its Green Cube Engagement Program is Penn Future’s award-winning model. It facilitates the building of relationships as it aligns the University’s sustainability strategies with the social responsibility goals of individuals, other educational institutions, corporations, and community organizations. It accelerates results (mygreencube.org/about/) and provides a unifying structure to engage all stakeholders in the development of integrated plans to maximize energy and greenhouse gas performance. It encourages the creation of new innovative partnerships. The cube provides five major focus areas, each having three easy tasks:

1. Efficiency: Lights off, save water, re-think transportation;
2. Recycle: Cans and bottles, paper, printer cartridges;
3. Reduction: Energy, pollution, waste;
4. Re-use: Bags, buy recycled, mugs; and
5. Education: Learn and apply, investigate solutions, teach others.

By 2015, Drexel’s Greening Together Partnership with the City of Philadelphia’s Parks and Recreation Department will plant 300,000 new trees in the surrounding community; it will help make going beyond neutral possible.

Colleges and universities are catalysts for change. In that vein, Drexel operates a pledge program with more than $25,000 in individual grants and gift cards awarded annually to students, employees, and alumni. Combined, all of these initiatives will enable Drexel to continue to improve the health of the planet and, one day, become carbon neutral. Breakthrough results are often achieved when green responsibilities shift from “yours” to “ours.”

Mark Your 2012 Calendars!

NAEP’s 91st Annual Meeting
April 1-4, 2012
Anaheim, California

Call-For-Programs will close in September. Please submit your session proposals today!
It seems simple enough: you have the buildings and space, and you want a contractor to install solar arrays on them, and in return, you agree to buy the power produced. So, Arizona State University issued an RFP in January 2008. Our original intention was to identify firms for master contracts, under which we would use these firms for specific solar projects. We took this approach because we did not have detailed structural information on all of our roofs, and wanted to rely on these master contractors to do their due diligence in determining the feasibility of a solar installation on a specific building. We did have specific structural information for four buildings and, therefore, required prospective contractors to propose solar installations for these four buildings, so that we could identify which of these prospective contractors would be suitable for a master contract.

Remember, we are buying only the power. The contractor has to design, build, operate, maintain, and upgrade the solar installations. As you might suspect, the resulting contract is a Power-Purchase Agreement. Because of the initial investment involved, the resulting Power-Purchase Agreement for any specific installation would be for 20 years.

Arizona State University actually uses a Qualified Management Agreement instead of a Power-Purchase Agreement. In a Power-Purchase Agreement, we pay the contractor the monthly total of the kilowatt hours of solar power delivered times the agreed-upon rate per kilowatt hour. However, we were concerned that the addition of a for-profit, solar power station onto the roofs of those of our buildings that were financed with tax-exempt municipal bonds might jeopardize the tax-exempt status of our financing. Accordingly, we use a Qualified Management Agreement, under which we calculate the expected annual kilowatt hours delivered times the agreed-upon rate per kilowatt hour, and then divide this annual cost by 12 to get a monthly payment. This process is adjusted for each subsequent year by the actual experience of the previous year.

Our initial solicitation asked the following questions:

- Have you ever done this before?
- Do you have the financing to do solar installations?
- What is our cost per kilowatt hour for the four buildings?
- What is the expected output for these buildings?
- Will you use local solar contractors?
- What is your technical approach?
Who is on your project team and how is it organized?

Do you have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Clinton Foundation to access their pricing?

Will you accept our contract format?

It turned out that the concept of forming a Master Agreement for a new, rapidly evolving industry wasn’t such a good idea. We put three firms under a Master Agreement. One never submitted a specific project proposal; one reneged on their initial project agreement; and only one completed three projects for 1.9 megawatts. So, we abandoned the master contract concept and did separate solicitations for specific bundles of projects. We constructed the bundles of projects, as we wanted to avoid cherry picking, or a firm wanting to do only the easier, higher-profit projects.

It also turns out that there was more moaning by the losing bidders than in our usual solicitations. The losers asserted that purchasing must be nuts because they did not pick my firm, or subcontractors asserted that they should be prime contractors, and the like. It all comes with the territory these days.

We are now up through Phase IV of our solar projects. The only real limitation we see is the amount of potential incentives available from our local power company.

We also have adventures in assigning risk. The concept is simple: you make the power; we buy the power. All the risk associated with making power should be owned by the contractor. But the contractor has to borrow money to do the installation, and the financing people are always trying to shift the risk to us—normally by trying to get us to guarantee some part of this.

It is all worth it, though. We now have more than 10 megawatts installed and will have more than another 9 megawatts by December 2011, or thereabouts.

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University of Memphis
Student Sustainability Projects

by Ed Antoniak, CPPO
University of Memphis

When asked to participate in the NAEP Green Purchasing Session at NAEP’s Annual Meeting last April, I thought student involvement would be interesting to present, as students at the University of Memphis (UOM) are the body and soul of the University. So I contacted several UOM faculty and staff members for examples relating to the green purchasing aspects connected with UOM student participation. Several interesting projects were chosen.

Our students’ definition of sustainability is: “The continuing effort to make things as good as they used to be.” Each fall and spring semester, all full-time students pay a $10 Sustainable Campus Fee, commonly known as the Green Fee. This fee was initiated by students in 2007. Its purpose is to support projects and practices that make our campus more energy efficient, environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Each spring, the Sustainable Campus (Green) Fee Committee—with representation from students, faculty, and administration—invites proposals for using the related revenue. The Committee then forwards its recommendations to the president for approval. The Committee invites all students, faculty, and staff to submit ideas for how the fee can be used to make the campus more sustainable. In 2010, approximately 70 members of the campus community submitted ideas. Many of the proposals were funded. Five prominent examples are described below.

TIGUrS Urban Sustainability Garden

This initiative involves labor and supplies for the continuation and expansion of the campus’ edible garden. The effort involves faculty, staff, and students from several University departments. For the construction of our raised (plant) beds, we chose Block USA’s Eco-Blocks, made of reclaimed, post-consumer concrete. The raised beds are filled with cotton-burr compost, a reclaimed agricultural byproduct. The bottom of the raised beds is lined with shredded paper collected throughout the campus.

Echles Field Lighting Replacement—Campus Recreation

This project will install new field lighting, which will result in energy savings from improved technology. It will improve lighting conditions for Echles Field, which is used for intramural and club sport activities, as well as for varsity soccer practices and games. Light escaping into the night sky and surrounding neighborhoods will be reduced.

Power Down

This project is designed to automatically power down any lab or smart classroom PCs that are not being used. The power down of a computer could save an estimated $35 to $45 per computer per year in energy costs. Even with the pilot program focusing on just labs and smart classrooms, it is estimated that the energy savings will equate to $70,000 annually.

Sustainable Technology Day, School of Public Health

This will be the third year of the event to promote awareness of sustainable technologies. Tiger Blue Goes Green encourages environmental sensitivity, inquiry, and involvement among students, faculty, and staff.

TERRA HOUSE (Technologically + Environmentally Responsive Residential Architecture)

TERRA was designed entirely by architecture and interior design students under faculty supervision. It involves students in a series of special electives and honors courses. Student-generated proposals inspired more than 55 businesses and organizations to donate materials, time, expertise, and discounts towards the TERRA House’s completion. The project benefits from partnerships between the University of Memphis, American Institute of Architects, Memphis Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, Uptown Partnership of Henry Turley Company, Belz Enterprises, and City of Memphis. TERRA serves as a teaching and research tool for sustainable design in the region. Using knowledge gained from the TERRA project, the University’s Department of Architecture plans to continue student-centered sustainable design and research for affordable and sustainable residences throughout the Memphis area.

The 3 Rs of UOM are reduce, reuse, and recycle. As a result of the Sustainable Campus Fee Program, we expect to develop new partnerships, and enhance current ones, with local businesses and organizations, in order to identify and carry out these student-developed projects.
Green Purchasing—Do Good Versus Feel Good

by Cory Harms, M.S.
Iowa State University

If you have attended a purchasing conference in the last few years, you have probably attended a session on green purchasing or sustainability. You have probably also seen articles and papers on green purchasing, been invited to webinars and seminars about sustainability, or been involved in meetings to figure out your institution’s direction on green purchasing, been invited to webinars and meetings to figure out your institution’s direction on green purchasing.

This is such a complex area that we likely find it difficult to get a grip on how purchasing best fits within the campus’ overall sustainability strategy. We do not generally initiate the green building project, the car-sharing initiative, or the recycling program. We may assist and add value to the bid and contracting process for those efforts, but is that something we can report to our president, regent, or chancellor as a direct purchasing impact?

The same could be said of the information we gather in the bid process. We may require the completion of questionnaires that ask about a company’s certifications, Energy Star labels, and sustainability/green initiatives, but what do we do with that information? If a company buys wind credits or carbon offsets, does that transfer to us the right to claim that we are green?

I would say no. Even if, for example, the vendor buys the credits in our name, I don’t see that as impacting the sustainability of our own campus. I think it is easy to take general approaches to green purchasing when we make it a policy, add sustainability questionnaires to bids, or require vendors to document their sustainability efforts. I believe we should take a more active bid-by-bid, contract-by-contract approach.

There are things we can do in the bid and contract process that can directly impact the sustainability of our institution without necessarily adding cost. Every time we put out a bid, write a contract, or negotiate an agreement with a vendor, we should be asking ourselves, “What can we do to create a sustainability opportunity?”

The answer could include requiring a vendor to comply with specific goals for packaging reduction or use recycled (or recyclable) packaging materials. It could include detailed energy reduction initiatives, bulk shipments, or paperless payment. It could incorporate evaluating the energy efficiency and consumables used in the testing.

Concessions and other food service contract operations are great opportunities to work with a vendor to use sustainable packaging, to compost food waste, or to rely on local sources to lessen the impact of delivery vehicles.

To reduce or eliminate invoices and the creation of paper checks, purchasing can actively solicit vendors who are able to take ghost card, p-card, or other electronic payments. This will save paper, toner, envelopes, and postage. It could allow the associated labor costs to be reduced or to be redirected to more productive or strategic activities.

Purchasing can work with food and beverage vending companies to create energy savings by adding contract terms that require planned upgrades to machines, incorporating devices that turn off lights and non-cooling power during non-peak hours.

Some types of lab equipment used for testing and analysis can incur varying costs relative to energy and the consumables used in the testing. Incorporating into bids questions that assist in measuring and evaluating these factors can help reduce the total cost of ownership and the environmental impact.

You may already be doing all or some of these things. My point is that we should only take credit for what we initiate. To do that, we need to be creative and diligent in our assessment of opportunities.

I wish you luck in generating your next green purchase!
You Can Achieve Your Goals Through T.E.A.M.–Work

by Bob Ashby, C.P.M., CPCM
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (retired)

I recently attended the San Diego Marathon as a cheerleader and mentor. My duties were simply to give encouragement to the runners who appeared to be struggling or who just needed a little push to get them to the end.

The first place runner finished in two hours, 11 minutes, 18 seconds. Of course, most of the people on the team I cheered for were not the elite runners; their finishing times were between four and six hours. But the last person to finish, one of my teammates, needed more than eight hours. Since the race’s finish line was in the parking lot of Sea World, one of San Diego’s favorite attractions, no cars were allowed in until that last runner crossed the line. Cars were, in fact, lined up seemingly forever behind her as she struggled to go the last two miles.

Since those final miles hug the shore of a lake that abuts the parking lot, she could see the finish line and we could see her. And we could see her struggling. Then, spontaneously, as if on signal, about 50 runners ran out to meet her, greet her, and encourage her. We all ran with her those last two miles, calling out encouragement the entire way. We ignored the line of cars behind her and, bless their hearts, the drivers did not honk or yell but rather called out encouragement along with us. No one would let her quit. And she did not.

She succeeded through T.E.A.M. (Together Each can Achieve More) work.

This is the same concept we see from NAEP in general and the Mentor of the Year Award in particular. In 2009, Tom Fogarty, Executive Director for Procurement and Business Services at HACC–Central Pennsylvania’s Community College, received the award. Per his nomination, he has been a big contributing factor in helping and mentoring the officers, especially the new President, of his NAEP region. Also, he has added his professional knowledge to the NAEP listserv and has given presentations and been a mentor to many Members of NAEP. Yes, Tom understands T.E.A.M. work and that people can reach hard-to-achieve goals, even if it means that Tom must run with them those last couple of miles.

Another of our T.E.A.M. players is a 2010 co-recipient of the Mentor of the Year Award, Nancy Fulcher, Manager, Strategic Sourcing at Notre Dame University. She was nominated because she “sees value in her staff and provides guidance and encouragement which allows them to be successful anytime she takes a chance on them.” Additionally, the nomination said, “She pushes those who report to her to be more aggressive in their pursuit of increased savings. She shares projects with others so that they might learn and is there every step of the way. She understands that leading projects not only gives experience, but also gives her staff confidence in their abilities.” It is obvious that T.E.A.M. member Nancy will not let her staff collapse prior to crossing their individual finish lines.

A third T.E.A.M. member and the other co-recipient of the 2010 Mentor of the Year Award is Ted Nasser, Assistant Director of Procurement and Contracting Services at the University of Arizona. Ted’s nomination also reflected his understanding of the T.E.A.M. concept. It said that he “provided many individuals with a solid role-model. He is part of our faculty for the Tier I Foundation Academy and has shared his enthusiasm and experience with many young professionals. Attendee evaluations attest to the previously mentioned role-model status. His dedication to the profession and Foundation Academy encourages many to continue to pursue greater accomplishments within the profession.”

Ted, as do the others, runs alongside his teammates and encourages them until they can see their tasks have been completed and their goals have been accomplished. He understands the T.E.A.M. concept.

Peers encouraging peers to accomplish their goals, even when the finish line might seem so very far away—that is the T.E.A.M. concept. Are you a mentor who sees a staff member not climbing the ladder of success due to a lack of education and/or a professional certification? Or are you one who needs mentoring in order to improve your educational level and prepare yourself for promotional opportunities when they present themselves? If you have the talent and ability to mentor but just have not yet acted, look around and see who could use your help. If you need mentoring but have not yet been approached, assert yourself and ask someone who appears knowledgeable, personable and experienced at “crossing finish lines.”

Have questions? Need help being or finding a mentor? Write me at ashbybob@embarqmail.com and let me help you find a T.E.A.M.-mate.
A Challenge and Suggestion

by Brian K. Yeoman
NAEP

As previously postulated in this column, corporate social responsibility may be one of the most difficult challenges to be faced by the purchasing profession. The last time we touched on this issue, a number of readers were stimulated to seriously look at what was happening on their campuses and to reach out to find solutions to their difficulties. These efforts caused me to think about what the core issue is and how it has become so perplexing to so many of us, and consequently to suggest an approach for resolution.

As with the sustainability movement and green purchasing, the transformation from business-as-usual to a model that includes far more socially responsible acts, the transition will not be without growing pains.

After listening to readers’ concerns and—quite frankly—excuses, it became increasingly apparent that the notion of social equity is one that people can and do understand. Further, they can get behind the notion, but as a value that is held individually, not collectively. People want to try to address this issue one-on-one, head-to-head. In their personal lives, this has worked quite well, according to their words, but in the workplace, it just doesn’t work out.

The difficulty, it seems, arrives when the government shows up with this social justice expectation and attempts to arrive at the desired result: a more just and equitable society in which basic human needs are, by regulation, met for all. There is something about externally imposed regulation that strikes a negative chord. There is a conflict between American fatalistic individualism and collective socialism by which the government plays the key role in achieving a social end. The latter does not reconcile well with the underlying American culture. The commonly held belief that we should all be able to bootstrap it up, work harder, longer and smarter has been predominant since our nation’s creation. This is supported by those societal experiences in which people know people who have needed help, training, a job, and/or financial assistance. When these people got that help from the individual they became productive members of their local community. In some instances there may have been an overtone of jealousy with a little anger thrown in: “Look, I made it, and if I can make it why can’t the next person?”

This simply reinforced my belief that all sustainability is local. By that I mean that no broad-sweeping, national or international attempt to move people to action can ever really succeed unless the local condition is consistent with the desired result and unless members of the local community see and value the same, or similar, objectives. When those conditions of local sustainability are in place, amazing things happen—just like the stories reflected.
So, at the institutional level, the conflict that makes this so difficult might first be overcoming our individual bias towards fatalistic individualism, and secondly, a recognition that corporate social responsibility starts at home in our local communities. In essence, we must unlearn what we have adopted and integrated into our lives, based on what our parents learned from their parents. This is not to say that anyone is evil or wicked. It is to say that, in the rural, agrarian society of times past, those fatalistic individual behaviors made a whole lot of sense for survival of the family unit and the local community. Yet, even then, a sense of equity existed about community—and it was exercised. The question today is: In a nation of 320 million people with more than half living in dense urban centers, do these behaviors make sense any longer? Do we need to evolve to a different model?

As with the sustainability movement and green purchasing, the transformation from business-as-usual to a model that includes far more socially responsible acts, the transition will not be without growing pains. Also, it likely will not come quickly. The aforementioned transformations are not yet complete and the country has been at this now for 20 years. There was, and there continues to be, debate in some quarters over the nature and the breadth of sustainability on campus. I suspect this will be the case for some years to come. The debate has not changed the fact that sustainability on campus is here to stay. There are still issues to be addressed—community by community—and both sustainability and green purchasing are being constantly refined and redefined to adapt to the local condition. This is a healthy, systematic response by citizens, academics, students, politicians, policymakers and practitioners across the country.

The fact that corporate social responsibility is lagging behind in its uptake and its market penetration is a normative response to large-scale system change. The fact that there are some within higher education procurement who are frustrated, anxious, disappointed, and fearful is also quite healthy. We will figure multiple ways out of the condition we find ourselves in. NAEP has a great website featuring case studies on green purchasing and sustainability (www.naepnet.org/sustainability). We need more examples of what institutions are trying to do, what the experience demonstrates, and what the data communicates. As this information is compiled, other institutions will be generating new approaches and new techniques. Still others will take some of the shared extant examples and modify them to meet the conditions they have on campus. There will be more successes than failures but, rest assured, there will be failures.

We might take a page from our experience with the sustainability and green purchasing initiatives and apply some of that experience to social responsibility. The core of the higher education experience with both sustainability and green purchasing comes not from regulation but from brave institutional leaders thinking holistically, strategically. They are implementing what baby steps they think might make sense in their communities. They adopt the notions because they make sense and reflect a commitment to do the right thing. No government or international treaty is forcing them to implement anything. Through these leaders, the higher education marketplace has been changed forever. I submit that the same...
can be and will be true in the social responsibility arena. We all know how difficult it has been to comply with P.L. 95-507 making federal procurement contracting more readily accessible to all small businesses. We have struggled mightily and still have difficulty. It has cost a great deal of money to get to where we are but we have largely complied.

Why not take what we have learned in the sustainability and green purchasing effort to voluntarily apply subcontracting plans in areas where it might make sense? What is to be lost? Yes, there may be vendor complaints about why this is being done absent a mandate, but what we know is that when we use our purchasing authority, we can and do transform markets. This is a perfect opportunity for green purchasing policy to help lead the institution in its sustainability goals.

Our professional community is one that celebrates innovation and creativity. Be resilient and strong of heart and mind. Answers are forthcoming, and as always, you can be a critical part of the solution. Remember that you, too, can do great things!
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A career in procurement is a series of unusual twists and turns. I remember the opening scene in a movie. A man was rapidly answering a bank of ringing telephones in succession telling each caller, “It’s not my fault! It’s not my fault!” We have all felt overwhelmed at times.

Fortunately, every single responsibility given to me during the span of my career, or added when no one else volunteered, was clearly listed on the job description when I applied. Or should have been. Or was listed elsewhere for reference, such as my ever-growing “Do Once, Never Do Again” list. Or was included in something akin to Ripley’s Believe It or Not—Purchasing Edition.

Have you ever noticed how your job evolves from day to day? Someone calls and explains they need 30 portable restrooms placed in a desolate area for a character-building trek. A receptionist quickly reviews the commodity list looking for “Porta-Potty,” “Porta Loo,” etc. Not finding the listing, the search deteriorates to high school slang—“Roadrunner Haciendas” and other synonyms unsuitable for print. In desperation, the receptionist yells out, “Hey! Who buys __________?” I used to be dumb enough to answer, not understanding that once I agree to take the call, I may as well reprint my business cards to read:

Craig Passey, PhD in PDQ
Porta-Potty Buyer

Because, from then on, I’m saddled with the designation as though it were a life-long goal.

“Yup. I’m living the dream. That’s why I went to college: to become a degreed Porta-Potty Buyer!”

I actually had a dozen pens imprinted once with “Craig Passey—Rat Buyer” thanks to the sick humor of a textile salesman who insisted on asking for me by that title. One time, at full-lung capacity, he hailed me from about 80 yards near the F concourse at Chicago O-Hare: “Hey, Rat Buyer!” He abruptly commanded the rapt attention of me and about 500 fellow United Airline passengers.

One of those unintentional watershed moments when you question, “Is this what I wanted to be when I grew up?” is being assigned to dispose of items no longer needed by your institution. That is, surplus. Take it from me. If you are assigned to dispose of university surplus, you may as well begin right now learning post-employment survival methods such as playing solitaire with food stamp cards or seeing how long you can go without eating. Faculty and staff seem to think that their daily use of university-purchased equipment—from laptops to handguns—somehow translates to those items becoming their personal property, and should either be given to them or offered (ahead of everyone else) at a fraction of the value. And, if they don’t want the items, chances are no one else does either. During the span of my career, some of the hot items that my colleagues and I were asked to sell included:

- An iron lung (metal ventilator chamber which envelopes the patient and uses negative pressure to assist in breathing; it’s heavy and looks like something from a medieval torture chamber);
- A ceramic pottery kiln that reportedly weighed about 1,800 pounds;
- An entire building used as an annex for the Egyptian Ramses II Exhibit. We received a great offer for it until the buyer realized he couldn’t obtain a permit to move it across one section of state highway to its final destination;
- A stainless steel sigmoidoscope, well-polished and housed in a blue velvet-lined wooden case. I didn’t have the guts to tell the potential buyer who was handling it that it had been used in hundreds of colonoscopies (yuck!);
- A glass mercury thermometer which in the course of the sale was dropped, creating a minor hazmat incident; and
- In yard sale lingo, other items too numerous to mention.

I keep reminding myself that if the day seems boring, I’ve probably suffered a stroke.

(If you have interesting items/anecdotes for possible inclusion in the next issue, email to me, please.)
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