# Transcript for the City of Ohio State Podcast Season 4 Episode 6: Campus Operations with Peter Calamari

The City of Ohio State podcast takes a deep dive into the support services that keep OSU's Columbus campus running 24/7. Hear from industry experts in facilities, construction, real estate, public safety, transportation and more. The City of Ohio State podcast is brought to you by the Office of Administration and Planning. Go bucks.

Hello, and welcome to the City of Ohio State podcast. I'm your host, Brooke Bartholomew. Last month, we got a construction update on the Wexner Medical Center inpatient hospital. This month, we're joined by Peter Calamari, the associate vice president for operations with facilities, Operations and Development, or FOD, for short. FOD operations oversees building and roadway maintenance along with snow removal and landscaping. They also manage campus custodial and sustainability initiatives for campus operations. Their streamlined, integrated service model ensures 24 over seven support and a single point of contact for customers. Peter, thanks for being with us. Oh my pleasure. Thank you for having me. Of course. So to start, can you give us some background on the most common ways your team supports the university. Yeah. So I think we're we're most staff and most students would see us as really kind of in those forward facing roles, whether that's, you know, day to day maintenance or landscaping or custodial operations. But our organization is broad. We do a lot of different things. We do everything from sustainability to fire and life safety systems to building automation networks. So we play a pretty broad role in terms of campus operations. And there's a lot of things like recycling and trash removal that really kind of happen very much behind the scenes and after hours. So most people don't really see that part of our operation. But it's really critical to the campus. And summer might be quieter for some students, but honestly, it's the opposite for your team. So what kind of behind the scenes work takes place while campus is less crowded? And how does that work? Prepare campus for a smooth start in the fall. And then also, are there any big projects that are going on currently? Yeah. So there's, you know, if you just walk campus right, in a month from now, there'll be a crush of students and tremendous activity. But it doesn't appear that way now. But really, our teams are super active. So we use the summer and what we call a refresh window, particularly for the academic campus. Right. The Med Center campus is always humming. It's always busy, and it's always, always full. But what we really focus on is really a lot of the forward facing changes. We could make everything from painting walls to modifying HVAC systems to fixing roads, planting flowers. So there's a tremendous effort that goes on this time of the year to really get campus, to be welcoming when everybody comes back. And, you know, the students are here and the energy is back and football kicks off. So it's a wonderful window of time. But tremendous work goes into getting everybody ready for that. In terms of projects, there's hundreds if not thousands of projects that are going on on campus. They range from massive construction projects just to simple, you know, building maintenance, operational things, upgrading restrooms, you name it. So so it's a tremendously busy season and really just with a diversity of activity and with teams working across academic spaces and the medical center like you mentioned. How does the team manage incoming maintenance or custodial requests? What does that process look like and what's expected turnaround time wise? Yeah. So so the groups operate somewhat differently, but they have a common backbone backbone. So we have a service center. We have a common work order system. So work comes through from a number of different kind of entities. You can go to our website. You can you can use the app. You can call that in. So on the average between the med center and the university group, we'll do probably for this year, probably close to 300,000 total work requests. I thought you were going to stop at 300. I was like, okay, no, 300,000. Yeah, yeah. So about two thirds of that really comes through, like the preventive maintenance system and the corrective maintenance system. So that's where we really want to focus the bulk of our time and energy. And about a third of that comes directly from the staff. So in terms of turnaround time in the med center campus, you know, our target is about 85% of those issues are resolved the first day. And we really don't want them to happen. But inevitably you're going to have those issues. So on the academic campus, about half those issues are resolved, revised the same day. And then really by the third day, about 90% of those issues have been addressed. So pretty quick turnaround, different kind of structure between the groups, but really, really very much focused on customer service. Yeah, that's an impressive turnaround time. Your team is on the front line when major issues pop up. Something like a water line break. So how do you mobilize your team so quickly? And how do you prepare for instances like that to ensure a swift response? Yeah. So we're really fortunate to have long term, committed, knowledgeable people. Um, and that's just really where they're they're used to living. So water main breaks, building floods, all those kind of things are really kind of well documented and well trained for. So really, you know, we're really reliant on those groups and just a handful of really qualified, uh, embedded vendors that are here on campus on a regular basis to help us with those. So that's really the backbone of our response. And then the key thing is really trying to communicate out what's going on, because everybody wants information in a very short window of time. So that's an area of focus for us where I think we've gotten better, but really it's the quality of our people and their commitment to their work. And can you give us some examples of the most common types of service calls the team gets, or even talk about the massive volume of calls, alarms or other types of reporting? Yeah. So really the most common issues are really kind of forward facing things. People are too hot or too cold and then things like, you know, plumbing issues, restroom issues, lighting issues. So again, that's that focus on trying to get, you know, somewhere between 50% to 85% of those resolved kind of the same day. So really that's our primary focus. And then there's a lot of work that's going on. Like behind the scenes we're really hoping to do is identify the light being out before the customer sees it. So we do a lot of work around rounding, trying to direct our staff to really try and address as much of this, you know, without really the, the average visitor really getting involved. And are there any areas of campus that present any unique challenges just because of maybe their age or architecture types? Yeah. So I think when I've been here, it'll be 20 years this December, which seems like a really long period of time I've been here, but it's gone by, you know, seemingly very quickly. So when I got here, um, you know, I had really worked in more traditional facilities, types of arrangements where you're very focused on HVAC work, mechanical systems and the university has such a broad range of issues to deal with and the architecture going back into the 1800s. So if you look at Hays Hall or Orton Library, those buildings were constructed a certain way. It's just even hard to find people who know how to do that kind of work. Right? Different types of paint and mortar and plaster. And then you go to some of the buildings we've built in the last couple of years, which are state of the art research and healthcare facilities. So it provides such a range of issues that initially like it really took some time to kind of get a handle on all the different things we were asked to do. And like you mentioned, you've been here since 2005. Is that right? Yes. So, so much has changed since you started here. What do you enjoy most about serving the campus community through operations? So I think there's there's two things like for me personally, um, the range of challenges. Right. So when I got here, like I said, I had more of a traditional facilities background. I didn't think about things like, um, how does how to, uh, waste removal routes work and all these kind of different issues, how, you know, how to fix a building that's 85 years old and has all these different, uh, envelope issues. And that's always been interesting to me because there's always been a place to go. There's a new challenge. There's a new group to work with. A number of years ago, I started working more directly with the Med Center. That's been incredibly challenging, but also incredibly rewarding. So from that sense, you know, my time here has always been a new challenge. And it's really kind of made the work so interesting. And I think the other thing in the broader sense is I've always believed in the mission of the university. Prior to coming here, I worked for different businesses and different types of companies. If you simplify what we're trying to do here, healthcare, education, research, those create wide social value. And I'm not directly involved in any of that, but I feel like it's been a great job to support all that and really be part of the larger effort of the university. And finally, how do you see the role of campus operations evolving over the next 5 to 10 years as the Buckeye community continues to grow? Yeah. So I think there's a couple things there that are happening. I think we continue to build more and more complex buildings, how to develop people to maintain those buildings for the long haul, stay with us and be part of our family is really critical. I think the other thing, the growth of Columbus puts a lot of pressure on the Columbus market to really, you know, hold on to staff. So we're really very focused on trying to develop our own people, trying to create promotional opportunities within the organization. And then really, just how do you maintain all those things that are still here? Hays Hall isn't going any place. Orton Hall isn't going any place. But the next, you know, med center we build or research facility will have very different needs. So trying to plan for all of that and commit to the the correct level of service and support for all that is is really a big issue. Yeah, really interesting insight. Peter, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with us today and shedding some light on all the work your team does to keep the Buckeye community running smooth year round. Oh, thank you. Thank you for having me. The Ohio State Podcast is brought to you by the Office of Administration and Planning. Until next time, be kind and go Bucks.