



APPA's Codes Work Group Process Works!

Codes Work Group Evaluates Proposed Cleaning Standards

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The APPA Standards and Codes Council (ASCC) launched its work group concept in late 2013, which is expanding participation in its standards and codes activities. Council work groups bring assurance that the actions of the ASCC reflect the diverse needs and desires of APPA member institutions, and embrace the societal value and purpose of education and the institutional mission. Work Groups are commissioned by majority vote of the ASCC, and are chaired by its members. There are two types of work groups: those established to work on a particular question with a defined completion date, and those managing many related questions on a continuing basis. The former disbands when their assigned work assignment is completed, and the latter exists until the circumstances giving rise to their work change.

THE LAUNCH

Within the last four months, I had the good fortune and opportunity to chair the first ASCC Work Group. The experience provides a sound basis to answer whether the work group model functions well and supports the goals of APPA. It does.

The Cleaning Standards Work Group was launched in January of this year and successfully completed its assigned scope of work in April. In that time John Bernhards, associate vice president of APPA, and I arranged a convener's

meeting, scheduled multiple meetings with the group, preserved chat conversations made during Web-based meetings, collected e-mail and oral comments, and presented multiple drafts of the Work Group's report and findings for review, comment, and ultimate approval by the Work Group members. The inaugural convener's meeting of the Work Group attracted more than 90 registrants from more than 80 APPA member institutions, thus ensuring diverse input and representation from the membership. The Work Group's final report was presented at the annual meeting of the ASCC in early April, where it was unanimously approved.

The question with which the work group grappled was:

Whether the efforts of the Simon Institute, through a series of steps to have a cleaning system (OS1®) become an American National Standard suitable for adoption into public law, are in the best interest of APPA members?

OS1® is a custodial team cleaning method that is trademarked and owned by ManageMen Inc., a privately held corporation in Utah. The Simon Institute, which organizes the Simon Institute Symposium (a gathering of OS1 users) applied for and received approval in late 2013 from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to become an ANSI Standards developer.

The Work Group comprised managers and experts in OS1 and those not, as well as both supporters and critics of OS1 among those familiar with the proprietary system. There was overwhelming agreement among Work Group members that the decision of whether to use OS1 or similar "team cleaning" systems or processes on a college or university campus should be made by the institution's management team, and not imposed by government regulation or public law, as proposed by the Simon Institute and endorsed by owners and management of ManageMen Inc. A copy of the Work Group's report and conclusions are available on the APPA web site at www.appa.org.

A JOINT APPEAL

Immediately following publication and approval of the Work Group's report, APPA and the International Sanitary Supply Association (ISSA) filed a joint appeal with ANSI, requesting that it rescind its decision allowing the Simon Institute to develop ANSI standards. A key argument in the joint appeal is that the Simon Institute made seemingly minor but significant word changes to its standards development operating procedures during the accreditation approval process, without benefit of review and comment by APPA, ISSA, their respective members, and the public at large. In short, the Simon Institute removed

references to “OS1” in its operating procedures. By doing so, however, it broadened the scope of its proposed activities in a manner that significantly expands the number of materially affected stakeholders. Those stakeholders now include not only “OS1” interested parties but now *all* “non-OS1” users; equipment manufacturers and suppliers whose products are not approved for use in OS1; custodial cleaning consultants who provide team cleaning systems and related products that compete with OS1; and developers of non-OS1 custodial cleaning standards and guidelines.

Another core component of the joint appeal is concern with the Simon Institute’s management and control at the time ANSI approved its application to become an ANSI standards developer. In preparing the appeal, the state of Utah’s public tax-exempt records division was contacted and asked to confirm, in writing, the identities of the Simon Institute’s officers and governing representatives. This inquiry was made only after repeated requests were issued to the Simon Institute—which has publicly stated that it is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization—requesting that it divulge the identities of its governing officers or directors. The Simon Institute refused those requests. The public record released in April from the State of Utah reveals that there are five authorized directors, two of whom are owners or officers of ManageMen, Inc. This recent finding substantiates a key conflict of interest concern identified in the Work Group report, which pertains to the control and operation of the Simon Institute.

A SUCCESSFUL ENDEAVOR

While the outcome of the joint APPA/ISSA appeal to ANSI will not be known until September 2014, it is without question that the Cleaning Standard Work Group activity was a complete success. Some factors that contributed to this outcome are:

- Wide and diverse participation of APPA institutional members from

throughout the United States and Canada, along with several equipment industry representatives.

- All Work Group participants disclosed in writing any potential conflicts of interest, to include representatives who self-reported that they received prior compensation from the Simon Institute.
- Members were articulate and knowledgeable. When in disagreement, contrary views were expressed within appropriate bounds of civility and decorum.
- The efforts of John Bernhards in supporting the group were instrumental and necessary for the success of the group.
- The process included many democratic traditions, including polled voting among institutional members.

The success of future work groups and the Council’s work group concept will continue to depend on the determination of work group chairs to continually and informally check their processes for fairness; listening and being open to new ideas; presenting drafts and performing tasks that reflect the input of the work group well; displaying and maintaining professionalism in their work and communications; and discouraging divisive comments generally and especially when those comments are not on point with the mission of the work group. ☺

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