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63

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Reflecting on facility management during a pandemic - by Phil Hammond

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Ok it is tough living, working, and thinking during the pandemic! Running meetings in your bedroom with a fake backdrop filled with books, dealing with no daycare and bored teenagers, job insecurity, and muddling through Zoom (you are muted!). Faced with fleeting moments of serenity, few people experience the luxury of reflecting on their lives, the world in crisis, and their future career plans.

What is next after COVID? Reflecting on my personal contingency plan as Wentworth's IFMA Boston member, I think about my friends/colleagues in the facility management (FM) profession. Boy, could I use an Annual IFMA Boston Booze Cruise right now! I reflect on FM graduate students coping, I think about innovative and attractive education/programs post-crisis, and I wonder where people are turning to for usable FM skill sets to help their personal plans and career advancement.

Reflecting on the many architecture/engineering/construction (AEC) industry pandemic webinars/virtual meetings I have attended, yes, the content is enlightening. Yet I believe people

need more than virtual snippets of anecdotal information to keep current.

Anticipating a return to “normal” requires structured education beyond limited virtual interactions on Skype. Academic online education is a viable option to keep your AEC career current, expand professional credentials, and prepare for reentry. FM professionals does my premise strike a chord? Is your FM career on mute?

Wentworth's Department of Construction Management is offering a new FM course that is a great learning experience, Resiliency Best Practices for Business Continuity and Facility Operations. An online graduate level course, students will gain an understanding of the concepts necessary for an organization to address in preparing for a natural or man-made catastrophic emergency event (pandemic, fire, terrorist act, hazardous material spill, internal sabotage, etc.).

No matter your experience or career pathway, anyone can “Test Drive” the Resiliency Best Practices course, or another FM or graduate construction management course at Wentworth. Design your own education pathway. For information on the Construction Management/Facility Management - Test Drive Course Program go to gradadmissions@wit.edu or register at <https://ceadmissions.wit.edu/register/MSCMtestdrive>

Another career option is Wentworth's Master of Science in Facility Management (MSFM) program <https://wit.edu/continuing-ed/programs/masters/master-science-facility-management>. Students learn about operations and maintenance, risk management, leadership and strategy, real estate, and finance. IFMA Boston members are eligible for a tuition discount to the university's online MSFM program too, an incentive to attract new and retain IFMA Boston members by discounting FM education at Wentworth. Join IFMA Boston <https://membershipinfo.ifma.org/> and get the discount. Rules and restrictions apply.

Lastly, I offer my perspective. Smart people make smart decisions, informed employees and educated people become trusted leaders. Advanced FM education, while people have the time, elevates the value of FM professionals as leaders. Educated FM professionals become better decision makers, they become more informed about resiliency and business continuity, educated FM professionals communicate effectively to stakeholders and superiors, and FM professionals become trusted leaders in a crisis.

Get ready and get smarter. The built environment needs FM professionals to keep us safe! Create an education contingency plan now. Join IFMA Boston, study FM at Wentworth online and become a leader!

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