

## CASE STUDY



# Establishing an Efficient and Effective Facilities Capital Planning Program at James Madison University

## The Client

James Madison University (JMU) is a public university within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The University was founded in 1908 and has almost 19,000 students enrolled. There are 175 buildings on the campus, spread across 712 acres of land, and over six million square feet of facilities.

## The Challenge

JMU's Facilities Management Mission Statement is to excel in customer service and to provide quality facilities-related support to the university community. The University wanted to involve their entire campus community in a well-defined, consistently used and commonly understood process for planning and decision-making. This process would emphasize accountability and tie resource allocation to institutional effectiveness, with the ultimate goal of providing a safe, attractive, service-oriented campus. Campus safety and attractiveness are major selling points to potential students for institutions of higher learning in an increasingly competitive landscape.

The University needed to plan for sufficient resources to achieve their goals. They needed to develop a process for decision-making and planning that emphasized accountability, as well as a set of tools to execute that process.

A related challenge came to the fore in 2005, when the Commonwealth of Virginia instituted a mandate (Item C-194.10 of Chapter 951 of the 2005 Acts of Assembly) that states, "Institutions of higher education and other agencies shall perform facility condition assessments (FCA) of their facilities as quickly and as comprehensively as feasibly possible."

## The Solution

In 2005, state agencies and institutions within the Commonwealth of Virginia began implementation of FICAS (Facilities Inventory Condition Assessment System). As a result, JMU deployed VFA.facility® facilities capital planning and management software to meet the government's FICAS requirements and to be eligible to obtain funding from the Commonwealth.

In 2008, JMU selected VFA's facility condition self-assessment software, VFA.auditor®, to take advantage of its survey template-driven process and native integration with VFA.facility. Prior to using VFA.auditor, JMU's in-house inspectors collected facility condition data manually and then returned to the office to import the data into VFA.facility. With the deployment of VFA.auditor,

*Using VFA.auditor Mobile™, JMU inspectors are able to assess four times more square feet in a fiscal year using the same resources.*

*Time spent in the office went from two weeks to two days. This means considerably less time uploading data and more time in the field acting on the information.*

JMU can divide facility condition surveys and assign them to three inspectors, get real-time information that allows them to address questions on the spot, and update data instantly rather than spending time in the office importing data.

## The Results

The 2005 deployment of VFA.facility provided the Facilities team with an overall snapshot of all of the facilities belonging to JMU in a reliable, centralized database. This allowed them to extract and dissect data across an entire portfolio, for particular buildings, and even for specific systems or types of problems.

Since the adoption of VFA.auditor Mobile™, JMU inspectors are able to assess four times more square feet in a fiscal year using the same resources (see Figure 1). In addition, time spent in the office went from two weeks to two days because of the direct data feed into VFA.facility. For the JMU facilities team, this means considerably less time uploading data and more time in the field acting on the information.

The use of VFA.auditor lets JMU keep up with a growing facility portfolio and better comply with state mandates. In fact, JMU expects to move from a five-year to a three-year cycle to update facility condition information. The increased frequency of assessments will provide more accurate data for potentially costly investment decisions.

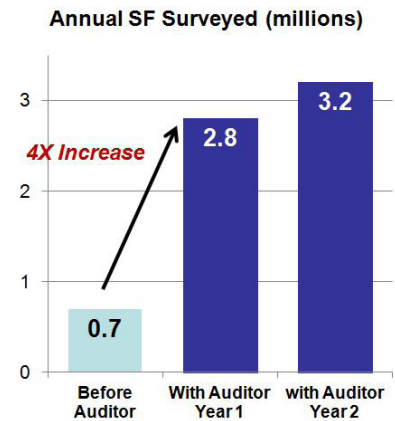


Figure 1: Annual SF Surveyed by JMU

### About VFA, Inc.

VFA helps organizations strategically manage their facility portfolios with Capital Planning and Management Solutions (CPMS™) that combine software, assessment services and business process consulting. Organizations in corporate, education, government, and healthcare markets employ VFA solutions to manage almost four billion square feet of real estate.

Contact us to learn how VFA can help your organization to optimize its facilities investment.

**In the U.S.:** (800) 693-3132

**In Canada:** (888) 685-3757

**In the UK:** +44 (0) 118 900 1695

*On the Web:* [www.vfa.com](http://www.vfa.com)

*Email:* [info@vfa.com](mailto:info@vfa.com)

Using VFA.facility, the Facilities team created a reduced time frame for creating budgets, improved forecasting, and provided readily available, comprehensive reports that enabled the Facilities team to get “buy-in” from the University leadership as well as building occupants. It also made it possible for JMU to maintain or reduce the Facility Condition Index (FCI) across the portfolio. The FCI is the ratio of deferred maintenance dollars to replacement dollars, calculated in VFA.facility, and provides a straightforward comparison of an organization’s key estate assets. The lower the FCI, the lower the need for remedial or renewal funding relative to the facility’s value.

Current facility condition data, gathered using VFA.auditor for self-assessments and stored for decision-making in VFA.facility, continues to help the University understand the magnitude of deferred maintenance costs. Today, the Facilities Management department is much more involved with the process of capital planning. JMU is now able to create sophisticated budget scenarios and reports which feed strategic analysis, making it possible for the facilities capital planning process to be integrated with the University’s strategic planning efforts.