

# FMJ



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# SMART WORKPLACE 2040

## THE RISE OF THE WORKSPACE CONSUMER **18**



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# Closing Achievement Gaps in High Schools and Community Colleges

IFMA  
FOUNDATION  
GLOBAL  
WORKFORCE  
INITIATIVE

BY NANCY JOHNSON SANQUIST

The wonderful thing about the IFMA Foundation's Global Workforce Initiative (GWI) is that you never know from day to day when you are going to hear about a new program that is making more young people aware of the lucrative opportunities of a career in facility management.

## GWI defined

For a long time, the IFMA Foundation has been focused on expanding recognition of its Accredited Degree Programs (ADPs) at colleges and universities around the world, as well as on continuing to grow the US\$1.3 million in scholarships that the foundation has awarded to more than 450 students. Students in colleges and universities offering FM programs accredited by the IFMA Foundation's Facility Management Accreditation Commission (FMAC) have the unusual privilege of enjoying a nearly 100 percent graduation rate, excellent salaries and multiple job offers.

These programs now number 30 globally and more are on the way, so it is time, now more than ever, to ensure there is a healthy stream of new prospects entering and getting jobs through the ADPs. In 2014, the IFMA Foundation Board of Trustees decided it was time to focus on "making FM a career of choice" for high school and community college students. This meant providing FM courses to fuel the pipeline to ADP educational institutions and provide a clear pathway for future careers.

One of the exciting new focuses is called the Global Workforce Initiative (GWI). With the GWI, the IFMA Foundation is acting as a connector between business, government, high schools, colleges, universities, economic development and IFMA chapters/councils to grow the future FM workforce and fill the sizeable gap in FM jobs coming available as the baby boomers retire. Even though some students may not follow the traditional path of higher education, they may want at some time to obtain an FM certificate or degree later in life after they are able to see what FM is all about.

With three GWI pilot programs operating in the U.S. in the last year, 750 high school students in approximately 30 high schools have heard the word of FM with 12 IFMA chapters involved in related activities. In addition to the GWI, a trade-based high school in West Warwick, Rhode Island and JM Wright Technical High School in Stamford, Connecticut both currently teach FM. With programs like these, we are hoping that student demand will push higher education



John Carillo presents the GWI concept at IFMA's House of Delegates at the World Workplace 2014 Conference and Expo.

to develop more FM ADP programs, as well as sustain the existing ones.

**Beginnings of the GWI conversation in Florida**

The following was recently reported by a new project called Community Conversations, led by Roscoe Hightower, who is professor of marketing/facility management in the School of Business and Industry at Florida A&M University (FAMU) and academic advisor to the foundation.

An invitation went out to parents and students in the community of Tallahassee, Florida, USA this spring to learn about the Global Workforce Initiative which is designed to make facility management a career of choice, beginning with awareness at the high school level. This was the second of two meetings, each of which attracted about 50 participants from the local community to hear about this new area of opportunity. The idea of these meetings was to involve the entire community, including parents, teachers, students, local business owners,

and local and regional government officials, in this introduction to FM discussion.

The National Education Association provided partial funding through its NEA Community Conversation Project which Dr. Hightower became aware of through his association with the United Faculty of Florida FAMU Chapter. The NEA grant is designed to assist schools in gaining community support to "close the achievement gaps through community conversations that lead to collective action." In addition, the Tallahassee Omega Lamp Lighters, a group of high-school-aged young men who meet on a regular basis to improve their academic and social skills, provided aid in encouraging the community to attend these FM events.

Participants gathered at the Florida A&M University Developmental Research School (FAMU DRS), an institution founded in 1887 as a teacher training school for FAMU which added an elementary school in 1932, and later, a high school. By 1991, Florida legislation mandated

that FAMU DRS become a public school district, but one where “the mission shall be the provision of a vehicle for the conduct of research, demonstration and evaluation regarding management, teaching and learning.” It was fitting that Dr. Hightower’s undergraduate and graduate facility management students facilitated the GWI conversation at this innovative school to introduce the community to the FM profession.

The action plan after this initial conversation is to follow this dialogue with other county public school districts in this Big Bend area of Florida, while at the same time improving the IFMA local student chapter’s participation with the school’s knowledge acquisition programs. The goal is to finally create, implement and leverage an FM curriculum in area high schools within five years.

### Three GWI California initiatives

There are currently three California initiatives related to the GWI: one in San Bernardino County, one in Silicon Valley and one in two locations of the California Community Colleges system.

#### SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY ALLIANCE FOR EDUCATION

San Bernardino County (SBC) Alliance for Education is a critical initiative since SBC has the U.S.’ poorest education system. The alliance was created to engage educators, encourage businesses to invest in their future workforces’ education to produce students who have the right environment to achieve success from pre-kindergarten through elementary, high school, college and career opportunities. The foundation was fortunate to link up with Mary Jane Olhasso, the assistant executive officer of the county, who paved the way for GWI representatives to meet with the right educators to prepare a program for high school and community college students on the FM career path.

The local IFMA chapter is the connecting link between GWI and the county stakeholders. Steve Lockwood, the IFMA Foundation director of accreditation and academic affairs, along with several San Bernardino High School teachers, is developing a model high school curriculum that has modular components of the 11 IFMA core competencies that could be used anywhere in the U.S.

Meanwhile, Michael Cook, director of facilities for Kaiser Permanente Southern California, a large employer of FMs in SBC, is helping to develop an internship program and “Day in the Life of an FM” program with the Alliance for Education. In addition, there is ongoing development work for a strong connection to local community colleges that will be a pathway for these students to continue their facility management academic interests. In time we will look at developing the same modular components to be used outside of the U.S.

#### IFMA SILICON VALLEY CHAPTER AND THE NETWORK FOR TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In addition, the IFMA Silicon Valley Chapter is working on the GWI with the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. NFTE was created in New York City 30 years ago to provide programs that inspire young people from low-income communities to stay in school, recognize business opportunities and plan for successful futures. More than 600,000 young people have been involved with this program, and the IFMA Silicon Valley Chapter and the foundation have become involved with most of the 19 NFTE programs in the Bay Area of Northern California. They have been presenting FM as a career of choice and coaching, mentoring and volunteering as judges in local and regional competitions. Two of the schools’ winners will compete at the national finalist level in October.

In a particularly successful presentation to high school students in the Bay Area, IFMA Foundation Chair John Carrillo gave a heartfelt story of his incredibly successful FM career. He shared his beginnings in a Mexican-American neighborhood near East Los Angeles and his use of the community college system to study architecture. Through superior athletic skills he was able to obtain a bachelor of science through a partial scholarship at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Upon graduation he started learning facility management, project management and strategic long-range planning at General Dynamics.

At that time, the aerospace industry was one of the leading market segments through which to understand the value of the emerging field of FM. Carrillo later joined Northrop Grumman Corporation and an IFMA chapter and sent some of his key staff to the first IFMA seminar ever taught (note: the author of this article was the creator and instructor of that course). He has spent the last 24 years at AT&T where today he is director of corporate real estate for the western region and is responsible for 40 million square feet and a US\$250 million budget, in addition to serving as chair of the IFMA Foundation.

One student, Karla Iraheta, emailed Carrillo after the event: “It was a pleasure having you as a guest speaker at Hayward High School. It was an honor meeting you, sir. I must say that I was quite shocked by all your achievements, starting from the low and rising up to the top. From the things that you said in your speech, I was inspired. Inspired to fight for what I believe and that we have to start from the bottom and work our way up in order to achieve our goals. Once again, thank you very much for giving us your time and presenting to us.”

#### CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM

The foundation is working with Catherine Ayers, the deputy sector navigator of the Doing What MATTERS™ for jobs and

the economy framework in the Bay Area and is responsible for energy efficiency and utilities. She is finding ways to help high schoolers transition to community college programs related to FM, construction, maintenance and energy efficiency. This partnership is also working to introduce an FM certificate program and provide internships for Bay Area community college students. If this program is successful, it could be rolled out to many other of the 112 community colleges in the state which collectively serve 2.1 million students.

### The critical role of chapters in GWI

There are currently great examples of IFMA chapters in North America that are working with high school students and partnering with local groups to introduce FM as a great career choice. They include:

- The New York City Chapter of IFMA has partnered with “Futures and Options” which empowers the city’s underserved high school students to explore careers like FM and create paid internship opportunities to help them understand the work they would be doing in that job.
- The Minneapolis, Madison and Denver chapters of IFMA are partnering with Skills USA, a group that brings together high school students, teachers and industry to ensure there is the right workforce for American jobs. The chapters are concentrating on competitions in which FM is the main theme.

The Toronto Chapter of IFMA became an associate member of the Ontario School Counsellors Association in order to educate school counsellors, and in turn high school students, of post-secondary facility management education, as well as the career progression opportunities and success rates and achievement of FM professionals. They are able to refer interested students to Conestoga College, which has an IFMA Accredited Degree Program in architecture/project and facility management.

IFMA chapters and councils will play a critical role in the GWI, and the foundation is developing resources and training materials for local volunteer efforts to alert students, teachers, guidance counselors and parents to an exciting profession with high graduate placements and excellent starting salaries. In support of these efforts, the foundation is providing:

- GWI program prospectus (available now)
- FM internships board online (available now)
- Training for FM practitioners and students on FM internships (fall 2015)
- Introduction to FM presentation (fall 2015)
- FM educational career path (fall 2015)
- Student- and parent-focused introductory Web pages

- (Phase 1) and introduction to FM brochure (fall, 2015)
- “Day in the Life of an FM” site visit training and guidelines (winter/spring 2016)
- “What is FM?” student and parent video(s) (winter/spring 2016)
- Interactive website designed to introduce students to FM using gamification (2016)
- Full suite of FM training and introduction resources and guides for chapters and councils (2016-17)

### Conclusion

Little did the foundation’s volunteers and staff think that writing an update so full of GWI activities around North America would be possible when we came up with the concept only a year and a half ago. There was a need for an initiative like this and the IFMA Foundation, board of trustees and volunteers are all excited about the work being accomplished as well as the possibilities for the future. The GWI will be rolling out globally but, like in North America, it will be very location-dependent and the state of FM education in each country will have to be considered along with how best to build the constituency according to regional and local conditions.

So stay tuned — the GWI may be coming to your chapter soon. Meanwhile, we hope that the FM bug has been planted in high schoolers’ minds in places like Tallahassee, Minneapolis and Oakland. We boomers will sleep better knowing that there is a whole new workforce about to be trained in our incredible profession. And don’t worry, Karla Iraheta — we are watching you in your FM career path and hope to support you for whatever you need in order to follow in John Carrillo’s long footprints. **FMJ**



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She has contributed substantially to the research and development of CRE and FM through her many written works, including the award-winning IFMA Foundation publication “Work on the Move.” Additionally, she currently serves on the foundation’s board of trustees.

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