

# Office of the University Building Official

2020-2021 Annual Report



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# Mission & Impact

**Mission:** OUBO promotes a high quality, healthy, safe, and accessible built environment for the University community by way of our technical expertise and our professional, customer-focused, and timely service.

**Vision:** We strive to be a valued and creative partner in the ongoing physical development of the University.



# Unique Value

The Office of the University Building Official (OUBO) was created as part of the 2006 Higher Education Restructuring Act. We are charged with administering the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) for all construction activities on the University's Central Grounds and at UVA Health in Charlottesville as well as the College at Wise, Blandly Farm, and other UVA properties around the Commonwealth. In addition to ensuring compliance with national and state building codes, our team supports the mission of the University in ways that are uniquely enabled by our presence on Grounds.

## Historic buildings & Accessibility

Ensuring accessibility for new buildings is a relatively straightforward exercise in following the 2010 ADA Standards. Historic buildings, generally speaking, are not accessible in the way that modern codes and standards require. This past year we partnered with UVA Facilities Management to achieve ADA compliance in several 200-year-old Lawn rooms. This entailed re-laying the brick sidewalks leading to the rooms - thereby reducing the thresholds at the doors - as well as adjusting interior plumbing, electrical lighting controls, and shelves to elevations specified by ADA Standards (see photographs here and on the report cover).

## Facility Design Guidelines

The University of Virginia is a unique place. For nearly four decades, UVA has maintained its own Facility Design Guidelines (FDG) in addition to national and state Codes as a way of directing architects and engineers as to the University's standards and preferences for building materials and equipment. Ensuring central utility requirements, consistency of sidewalk colors, building automation systems, and the Green Building Standards are examples of some of the many guidelines contained within the document.





Every three years our office issues a "call for edits" to the FDG. This year we received several hundred separate suggestions from individual project managers, zone maintenance teams, trade plumbers and electricians, and the Offices of the Provost and Architect for the University. We consider each suggestion with a team of stakeholders over the course of many months. Currently, we are targeting publication of the 13th Edition of the FDG in Fall 2021.

### **Response to COVID-19**

When COVID first struck UVA in spring of 2020, our team pivoted to remote work for much of our day-to-day business. We also began responding to numerous COVID-specific code inquiries, including helping permit 'negative air' rooms in the hospital and evaluating alternate care sites with the US Army Corps in the event of a major outbreak.

After those first few months, we collaborated with other teams across the University to welcome students back. We helped locate and permit tents around Grounds to allow students to enjoy distanced gathering spaces outside (complete with heaters in the winter!). We consulted with the team charged with finding the best spaces for quarantine and isolation for students. And as the University developed saliva testing for COVID-19, we assisted in the rapid permitting of several Be SAFE saliva testing sites.

# Year in Review

Our core business involves the review and permitting of design documents, the inspection of construction sites, and the evaluation of requests for public occupancy when phases of construction are complete. Throughout the pandemic, building design and construction has remained active across the University. The next few pages illustrate core business and highlight our collaboration across UVA.

**Between July 2020 and June 2021, we:**

## Reviewed

*850 design submittals*

## Issued

*184 building permits*

## Performed

*809 construction inspections*

## and Evaluated

*154 occupancy requests*

**for ongoing design and construction of**

***\$2+ billion\****

*\*from Facilities Management annual report*



# Highlights

Beyond the numbers, the Office of the University Building Official supports the goals and initiatives in the University's 2030 Strategic Plan.

For FY21 this included hiring and developing new staff, participating in the development of the Senior Vice President for Operations *Inclusive Excellence Plan*, collaborating with teams to maintain project schedules, and sharing technical knowledge across the University.



**Supported project schedules by completing**

***100% of reviews on time***

**Embodied fiscal stewardship by preserving**

***labor rates for the 5<sup>th</sup> year***

**Supported UVA Environmental Resources by**

***collaborating on reviews***

**Participated in the development of the SVPO**

***Inclusive Excellence Plan***

**Shared and developed technical knowledge through**

***teaching, training, and certifications***

# Reviewing Design Submittals

We collaborate with design architects and engineers, Facilities' project managers, and University schools and units to ensure complex designs meet the equally complex requirements of building codes. This inherently iterative process allows us to share our technical expertise and institutional knowledge throughout the design process. This year's review work included detailed review of the design documents for the School of Data Science and the Hotel and Conference Center, both on the Emmet-Ivy Corridor.



# Issuing Permits

While most building permits we issue are for new construction or renovation work, we frequently permit early-site or structural packages to help streamline the design and construction processes. Shortly after the start of 2021 we issued a demolition and early site permit for the Inn at Darden. A few months later we issued a civil and structural permit. The rest of the building is expected to be permitted by early fall.



# Inspecting Construction

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Most of our inspectors, architects, and engineers are cross trained to enable us to efficiently staff the wide variety of construction inspections requested by projects in any given week. In response to COVID-19, we began performing many re-inspections by photograph and/or video. For larger projects, we also offer recurring inspections to help set and maintain expectations and streamline the process.



# Evaluating Occupancy

When working on renovations in existing buildings like the Hospital or Gilmer-Chemistry (shown below), we often have to evaluate occupancy requests for portions of the building while other parts remain in construction. While these types of requests are inherently more complex because they involve interim life safety measures, partial occupancies allow teaching and patient care to continue in a more streamlined fashion. As fall 2021 approaches, we are working with the project teams at Student Health and the Ivy Mountain Musculoskeletal Center on occupancy requests following several years of construction.

