



Rising to the Challenge

By Joe Agron

Colleges are spending more per student—and allocating a larger percentage of their total budgets—on M&O this school year.

An aging inventory of buildings, a backlog of deferred maintenance and a rapid escalation of new space as a result of the higher-education construction boom continue to put added pressure on maintenance and operations (M&O) budgets. But colleges are rising to the M&O challenge, committing a larger percentage of their total budget to M&O in the 2000-01 school year.

M&O spending as a percentage of total budget grew to 10.5 percent compared with 10 percent a year ago, according to *American School & University's* seventh annual College Maintenance and Operations Cost Study. Although spending on M&O per square foot dipped from last year, spending per student increased 11 percent.

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TABLE 1
M&O spending per FTE student

Category	All Colleges (\$ per student)	%	Two-Year (\$ per student)	%	Four-Year (\$ per student)	%
Salaries	327.71	40.64	260.40	44.44	533.52	39.96
Benefits	88.45	10.97	59.89	10.22	128.06	9.59
Energy	232.14	28.79	162.15	27.67	379.62	28.43
Other utilities	37.82	4.69	29.42	5.02	81.32	6.09
Maint. Equip./Supp.	40.00	4.96	21.48	3.67	77.64	5.81
Grnds. Equip./Supp.	16.67	2.07	11.25	1.92	28.97	2.17
Other	63.50	7.88	41.36	7.06	106.12	7.95
Total M&O	806.29		585.95		1,335.25	
% M&O of Total College Budget		10.5		10.8		10.2



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In November, an in-depth questionnaire was mailed to 1,500 physical plant directors at 2-year colleges and 4-year institutions with no significant graduate programs. Recipients were asked to document

cent were public institutions.

A CLOSER LOOK

Data is compiled in a variety of tables and charts detailing M&O costs at 2-year, 4-year and all colleges. **Table 1** (page 50b) reviews M&O spending per full-time-equivalent (FTE) student for such categories as salaries, benefits, energy, other utilities, maintenance and grounds equipment and supplies, other costs and total M&O, and identifies the percentage of the total budget colleges allocated to M&O.

The most obvious finding is that 4-year colleges spend considerably more per student for M&O than 2-year institutions. For the 2000-01 school year, 4-year colleges allocated \$1,335 per student while 2-year colleges spent \$586.

A number of factors contribute to the wide discrepancy in

spending per student—the most obvious being 4-year colleges differ significantly in their educational mission and offerings to students. In addition, 4-year colleges typically have older physical plants; more specialized facilities and courses; housing; large-scale health and laboratory build-

expenditures for various M&O categories for the 2000-01 school year, including salaries, benefits, energy, equipment and supplies.

No universities were included in this research. The survey specifically targets 2-year colleges and 4-year institutions with no significant graduate programs in order to provide useful comparative information. Larger 4-year universities with significant graduate programs are not surveyed because their operations are so varied that results would be less useful.

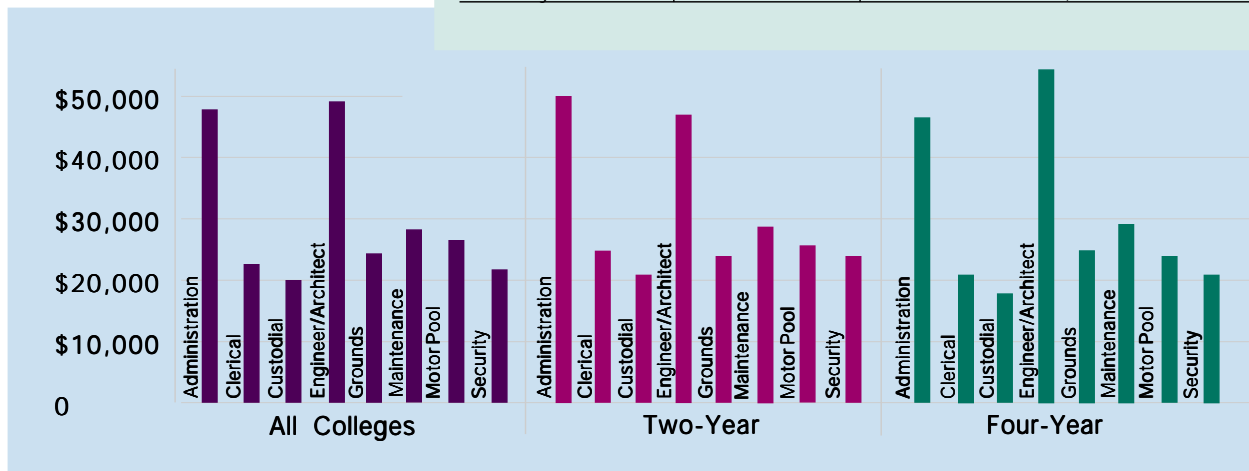
Of survey respondents, 86 percent of 2-year colleges were public, while 92 percent of 4-year colleges were private. When both types of respondents are combined, 58 per-

TABLE 2
M&O spending per square foot of building maintained

Category	All Colleges (\$ per sq. ft.)	Two-Year (\$ per sq. ft.)	Four-Year (\$ per sq. ft.)
Salaries	\$1.81	\$1.85	\$1.57
Benefits	\$0.40	\$0.43	\$0.34
Energy	\$1.06	\$1.18	\$0.95
Other Utilities	\$0.18	\$0.18	\$0.23
Maint. Equip./Supplies	\$0.17	\$0.18	\$0.16
Grounds Equip./Supplies	\$0.07	\$0.08	\$0.07
Other	\$0.24	\$0.24	\$0.34
Total M&O	\$3.93	\$4.14	\$3.66
Sq. ft. of bldg. per FTE student	219 sq. ft.	150 sq. ft.	486 sq. ft.

TABLE 3
Median M&O salaries

Function	All Colleges	Two-Year	Four-Year
Administration	\$47,500	\$50,000	\$45,000
Clerical	\$23,818	\$24,480	\$21,700
Custodial	\$20,000	\$20,134	\$18,964
Engineer/Architect	\$49,522	\$45,320	\$52,644
Grounds	\$24,306	\$23,841	\$24,917
Maintenance	\$28,595	\$28,400	\$29,082
Motor Pool	\$25,084	\$25,300	\$24,834
Security	\$22,986	\$23,590	\$21,896





ings; and 24-hour, year-round usage.

Both 2-year and 4-year colleges have increased over last year the percentage of total budget earmarked for M&O. Two-year colleges allocated 10.8 percent and 4-year institutions 10.2 percent of their total budget to M&O for the 2000-01 school year (9.9 percent and 10 percent, respectively, last year). Combined, colleges allocated 10.5 percent of their total budget to M&O.

Salaries and benefits represent the largest portion of M&O costs at colleges: 52 percent. Two-year colleges apportion 55 percent of their M&O budgets on salaries and benefits while 4-year colleges spend roughly 50 percent.

Energy accounted for the second largest expenditure in M&O budgets: about 29 percent at all levels. Although a spike in energy prices is affecting most

TABLE 4

M&O personnel

(Median number of full- and part-time staff by function)

Function	All Colleges	Two-Year	Four-Year
Administration	2	2	2
Clerical	1	1	1
Custodial	12	12	14
Engineer/Architect	1	1	2
Grounds	4	3	5
Maintenance	6	5	6
Motor Pool	1	1	1
Security	5	4	6
Other	3	2	4
Total	35	31	41
M&O personnel per 100 FTE students	2.27	1.63	3.03

because data collected for this survey were received prior to the rapid run-up in prices.

FURTHER BREAKOUTS

Table 2 (page 50d) breaks down M&O expenditures per square foot of building maintained. While M&O costs per square foot for 2-year and 4-year colleges are fairly close across most of the categories surveyed, square feet of building maintained per FTE student varies significantly. Four-year colleges maintain more than three times the amount of building space than 2-year colleges (486 square feet per student compared with 150 square feet per student at 2-year colleges). The median college maintains 219 square feet per student.

Salary data for a variety of M&O job functions at 2-year, 4-year and all colleges can be found in

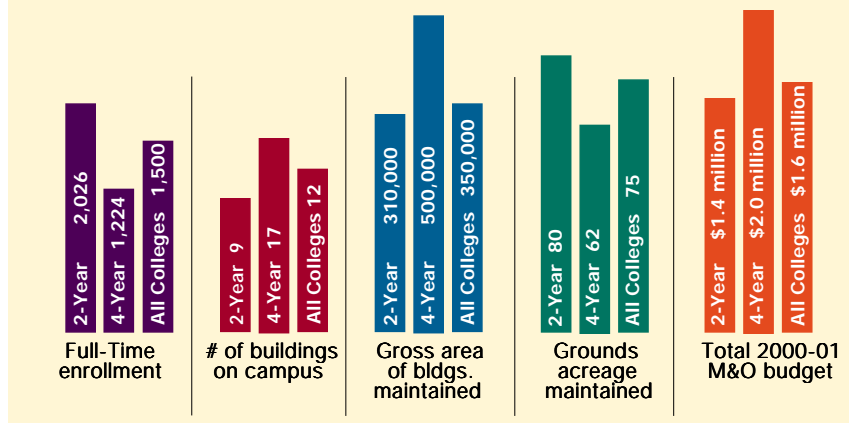
Table 3 (page 50d). Among the titles surveyed include:

“Four-year colleges spend considerably more per student for M&O than 2-year institutions.”

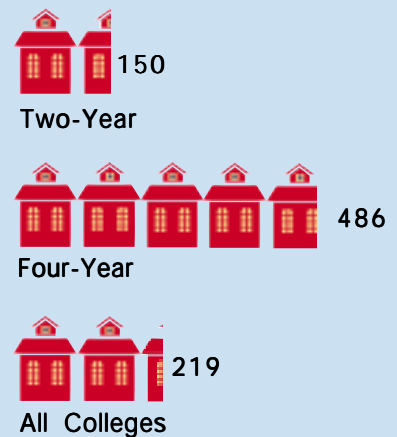
areas of the nation, the increased costs incurred by colleges this year most likely are not represented in the results

A look at the numbers

Below are national medians by institution type of survey respondents:



Square feet of building maintained per FTE student



•**Administration:** Those individuals who have managerial or supervisory duties (does not include the overall director of physical plant).

•**Clerical:** Those individuals who perform secretarial duties.

•**Custodial:** Those individuals responsible for building upkeep and cleaning.

•**Engineer/Architect:** Those in-house positions responsible for planning, design and specialized facilities duties.

•**Grounds:** Those individuals responsible for landscape maintenance and upkeep.

•**Maintenance:** Those individuals who perform skilled jobs, such as plumbing, electrical or HVAC repair.

•**Motor Pool:** Those individuals involved with transportation operations.

•**Security:** Those individuals responsible for safety of buildings and equipment. Does not include professional security or law-enforcement officials, if employed by the college.

A matter of space

The square feet of building maintained per full-time-equivalent student at colleges has stabilized after some wide fluctuations in the mid- and late-1990s. Results over the past seven years:

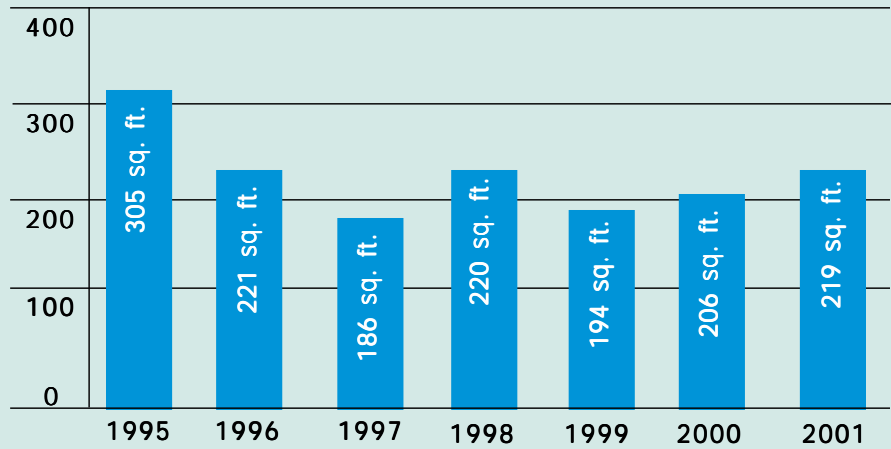
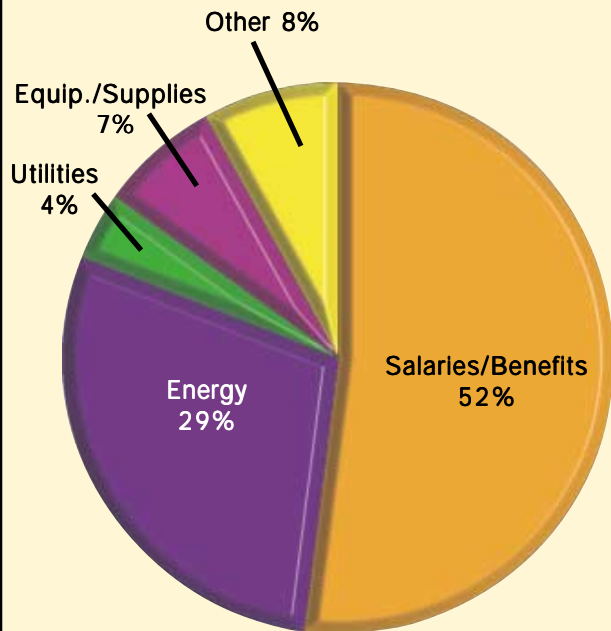


Table 4 (page 50f) details the median number of full- and part-time M&O personnel by function at colleges, as well as the median number of M&O personnel per 100 FTE

How the M&O budget is split



Energy accounted for the second largest expenditure in M&O budgets: approximately 29 percent at all levels.

students. For the 2000-01 school year, the median 2-year college employed 31 M&O personnel; the median 4-year institution 41; and the median college 35 M&O personnel.

Almost twice as many M&O staff per 100 FTE students are employed at 4-year colleges than 2-year colleges (3.03 compared to 1.63). The median college employs 2.27 M&O staff per 100 FTE students.

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