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Exploring Facilities Management - towards Future Campuses

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Traditional facilities management practices do not totally support the needs of learning landscape today. As universities are competing with each other, the environment in which they function is laid more and more importance on but at the same time costs are cut because of change in university fundings. Facilities managers of universities have to rethink the ways of making the existing space use more efficient, more meaningful and less costly. They have to focus on supporting the core functions.

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The core of university consist on researching, teaching and learning. Learning is the main function inside each of the areas mentioned and therefore it can be said to be the very core business. Learning can be identified to take place in various settings and forms. Facilities of a University should support the myriad of purposes. Three key development directions supporting each other have been identified as: [1] New ways of learning, [2] increasement of virtuality and embedded learning environments and [3] need for multi-functional spaces.

Facilities management can be considered as a service provided by the university for a customer. Therefore, it should respond to the needs of the whole learning landscape by providing [1] new space types, [2] holistic virtual and physical systems in various social contexts and [3] appealing spaces that are flexible in terms of spatial layout and services.

To find out the problems between facilities management practices and the development in learning landscapes, Aalto University is taken as a case example to be analysed in this paper from functional and strategic aspects. Aalto University is an interesting example because it merged in 2010 from three traditional Finnish universities representing fields of art, science and technology and economics with the aim of creating synergies through interdisciplinary collaboration resulting in innovations in a longer perspective. Combining all the functions, creating a cross-disciplinary atmosphere, encouraging people to collaborate and creating consistent facilities management practices to support those actions will be a huge task for the young, ambitious organisation but also a possibility of creating something totally unique.

As a result, a proposal of how to make the FM more efficient and meaningful is provided. The methodology of the study is based on an analysis of Aalto's space resources from functional and strategic aspects. The main findings include: [1] the space types are too divergent by nature [2] physical environment management is not enough but the practices should be widened to take into account the wider perspective of virtuality and community and [3] managing the spaces has become a disconnected entity and customer value has not been the driver as it should be. ■