



Name: **Joe Gaither**

Years at Penn: 8
Years at FRES: 5

Job title (and brief description of job duties):

Housekeeping Operations Manager – I assist in contract oversight and quality control for the housekeeping operations on campus. I work closely with Director Wendy Sparks to provide a healthy and clean academic environment for the entire Penn community.

Have you taken any classes, received a degree, or attended any lectures at Penn? If so, please describe...

I have attended classes at the Wharton School during the summer term as part of our tuition benefit and will look to do the same this summer. Also, I was fortunate enough to attend the FRES Retreat conducted by the Wharton Executive Education Program. This course was broken into three parts including Strategic Persuasion, Enterprise Thinking and Leading Change. It was an excellent opportunity to hear and participate in a high level exchange of practices and ideas.

Have any family members attended Penn (i.e. children, spouse)?

I have a teenage son named Cole that has applied to Penn and Several area schools. My wife and I are very proud of him and his efforts to continue his academic pursuits.

What is your proudest achievement, personal or while working at Penn?

I don't think I have had my proudest achievement yet while working at Penn. I am very proud of the work I have done with the Solid Waste Working Group, Urban Park and my housekeeping team but I think there is still more to accomplish and a lot of work yet to do!!

What is your favorite Penn tradition, event, or memory?

Penn Relays, I love the tradition and spirit of the competition. When I worked in Urban Park I was fortunate enough to assist with the event and had a first hand account of the amount of preparation and work that goes into the event. There is a level of pride and tradition from the FRES staff working the event that is truly amazing, I was proud to be apart of it!

What are your favorite things to do in your free time, outside of work?

I like to read, I really enjoy some quite time with a good book. My favorite book is *Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse. It is very short but also very meaningful, I have read this book at different stages in my life and learned something different each time. I turned forty over the summer so I am probably overdue for another reading.

What is the best lesson you ever learned?

The best lesson I have ever learned was from my Grandfather on my mother's side, George Bauer. He was from the depression era and served in World War II, he taught me many things but the two that always stick with me are the importance of family, and that you can accomplish anything with hard work.

What characteristic or trait do you most value in your colleagues?

There are some incredibly gifted, talented and intelligent people that work here. I am always impressed by the amount of knowledge on campus and also the willingness to help out when the situation arises. I can honestly say that during my time at Penn anytime I have needed help, it has been there. I have never had a better collaborative experience in my entire career than what I experience at Penn.

What is your motto, words to live by, or best advice?

"Time makes more converts than reason" - Thomas Paine This is a quote from found in his article Common Sense. In my career I have always thought that if you know the right course of action but are having a difficult time changing the climate, it is best to work hard and show progress. Eventually people will see the result and have a better understanding.