



## **Sightlines Study Finds \$8.4 Billion in Deferred Maintenance at Schools of Agriculture in U.S.**

### ***Comprehensive survey for Association of Public and Land-grant Universities finds startling backlog in repairs on campus facilities***

Guilford, Conn. – October 15, 2015 – Sightlines and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) today released a comprehensive study that found there is a collective total of \$8.4 billion in deferred maintenance at the buildings and supporting facilities at schools of agriculture authorized to receive U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding. Perhaps even more alarming, the study found that 29 percent of the asset value of these campus buildings has deteriorated as a result of deferred maintenance.

The study was conducted for APLU by Sightlines, a leader in helping academic institutions better manage their facilities and capital investment strategies.

Deferred maintenance refers to the postponement of maintenance activities and capital investments -- such as repairs on property, facilities and machinery -- in order to match limited budgets or realign available resources.

“These study results confirm the suspected magnitude of a problem that must be addressed if our institutions are going to continue to be able to conduct the high-quality research that is at the cutting edges of the science and education enterprises,” said Ian L. Maw, Vice President of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources at APLU. “While specific strategies to address this issue are suggested in this report, it is also clear that the responsibility to ameliorate it resides with no single entity, but rather a coalition of federal and state governments, as well as campus leadership.”

Founded in 1887, APLU is a research, policy and advocacy organization of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems and higher education organizations. Sightlines studied deferred maintenance in buildings on campuses that house agriculture, forestry, veterinary sciences, food sciences and human sciences academic programs, and agriculture extension sites. These buildings are used to conduct major research funded by the USDA, as well as other public and private entities.

The Sightlines/APLU study assessed more than 15,000 buildings that have a combined current replacement value of \$29 billion. Sightlines used a methodology that included a survey of 101 colleges and universities, accompanied by a comprehensive building-by-building inventory of agriculture and agriculture-related space, and detailed reports on deferred maintenance in those buildings. The survey received a 90 percent participation rate (91 responding institutions).

“The scope and breadth of this study makes it the largest and most comprehensive study of U.S. schools of agriculture research, academic and support facilities ever completed,” said James Kadamus, vice

president at Sightlines and the principal executive for the study. “There are a number of warning signs that we identified for the APLU member institutions, one of which is the discovery that they are facing an average of \$95 per gross square feet in deferred maintenance. The Sightlines benchmark for critical level when system failures become more likely is \$100 per gross square feet, so this is also a major operational concern.”

The Sightlines report warns that, without substantial additional investment, the schools of agriculture can be expected to experience buildings with: roofs that leak, foundations that crack and doors and windows that don’t keep the heat in or cold out; HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems that fail; laboratories that cannot function; animal care that is compromised; and health and safety problems for building occupants.

According to Kadamus, more than half (57 percent) of the space in the buildings surveyed is dedicated to teaching and research, the core academic missions of colleges and universities.

For more information about the report and to review Sightlines’ recommendations for how schools of agriculture can address the deferred maintenance problem, please go to [www.sightlines.com](http://www.sightlines.com).

### **About APLU**

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. With a membership of 237 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations, APLU's agenda is built on the three pillars of increasing degree completion and academic success, advancing scientific research, and expanding engagement. Annually, APLU member campuses enroll 4.7 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.4 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$42.7 billion in university-based research.

### **About Sightlines**

Founded in 2000, Sightlines gives colleges and universities the independent data and perspective they need to make critical decisions about their most valuable assets – their facilities. Sightlines stewards the industry’s most extensive verified database, allowing more than 450 institutions across the U.S. and Canada to benchmark an institution’s facilities against universities and colleges across the nation. Sightlines’ flagship offering for members is ROPA+, a fully integrated solution for facilities intelligence that leads members through a comprehensive process of discovery, prediction and performance measurement. Other Sightlines solutions provide higher ed executives with insights to assist with capital planning, space management and campus sustainability initiatives. For more information, please call 203.682.4952, go to <http://www.sightlines.com> or email [insights@sightlines.com](mailto:insights@sightlines.com).

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