

Rates

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mons — are arrived at objectively by A&M business services. Location, size of rooms and other factors are considered when room rates are calculated, he said.

"We have a really efficient operation there," Powell said. "We do our own maintenance — using our own staff — rather than having to purchase it from the Physical Plant or anybody else. There is some economy in being able to do that."

"When the tuition rate is going up, as it has, then we feel an obligation in business services to keep the other expenses that a college student has down to the lowest possible point. We are

doing everything we can to hold these rates down, but we have no choice but to meet our expenses."

All business services operations, including food services, residence halls and student apartments, operate on the funds they receive from students or faculty for services rendered. There are no tax appropriations or subsidies for business services.

Powell says business services has been able to absorb rising operating costs for the past three years, but increasing utility prices and interest payments on bonds will force rate increases.

Utilities will cost about \$600,000 more this year than last year.

Utilities

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so long to complete because it is an immense and complex document including four contracts and covering 400 pages.

Bardell said it's hard to deal with utility companies because they always request huge increases, expecting and hoping to get half what they ask for.

"They load in every expense they can possibly think of and hope they get 50 percent," he said. "It's an awful practice and it would help if they'd be more honest."

With GSU, though, it's harder to tell if they really need the money. The company has threatened dire consequences if they don't receive increases, saying that even the Texas rate increase won't be enough if they don't also get one in Louisiana.

The company's troubles have been blamed on everything from

corruption to bad management.

Bardell thinks the problems are mostly bad luck.

He traces the problems all the way back to the Carter administration's decision to make the practice of burning natural fuel for energy illegal. At that time, GSU got 90 percent of its power from natural fuel.

Shortly thereafter, the company converted to a mixture of coal and nuclear energy. Then nuclear energy costs soared to all-time highs.

Later, when the company was providing energy to 70 percent of the petro-chemical plants along the Gulf Coast, the price of oil plummeted to \$10 a barrel, causing a veritable depression in that area.

"Now I ask you, is that bad management?" Bardell asked. "It's bad luck."

He said the company lists its cash deficiency at \$425 million annually. Even if the actual figure was half of that, as is often the case, it would still be significant.

The company stopped paying dividends on their preferred stock last week and on their common stock two years ago, he said.

This all leads to the possibility of the company going bankrupt if it doesn't find funds and more credit sometime soon, Bardell said.

If GSU did file for Chapter 11, he said, the intervention of a federal judge into the matter could lead to rate hikes to all customers — including wholesale customers — since the federal government could circumvent the PUCs of the states involved.

Contracts

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filled to capacity with students living in study carrels, she says, but this spring there are about 41 vacancies in her dorm.

"Students simply get tired of living on-campus and want a change," Hynes says. "Incoming freshman will probably fill any vacancies that are caused by the new policy."

Lydia Berzsenyi, a junior mathematics major, opposes the new pol-

icy. She says she has been living on campus for two years and would like to spend her last two semesters living off-campus before she graduates next December.

"I am ready for some space of my own," she says. "With this new policy I can't move out next spring. I'll either have to live off-campus for three semesters or put up with dorm life longer than I want to."

Although moving off-campus in

the spring is discouraged by the new policy, room and residence hall changes still will be offered in the spring.

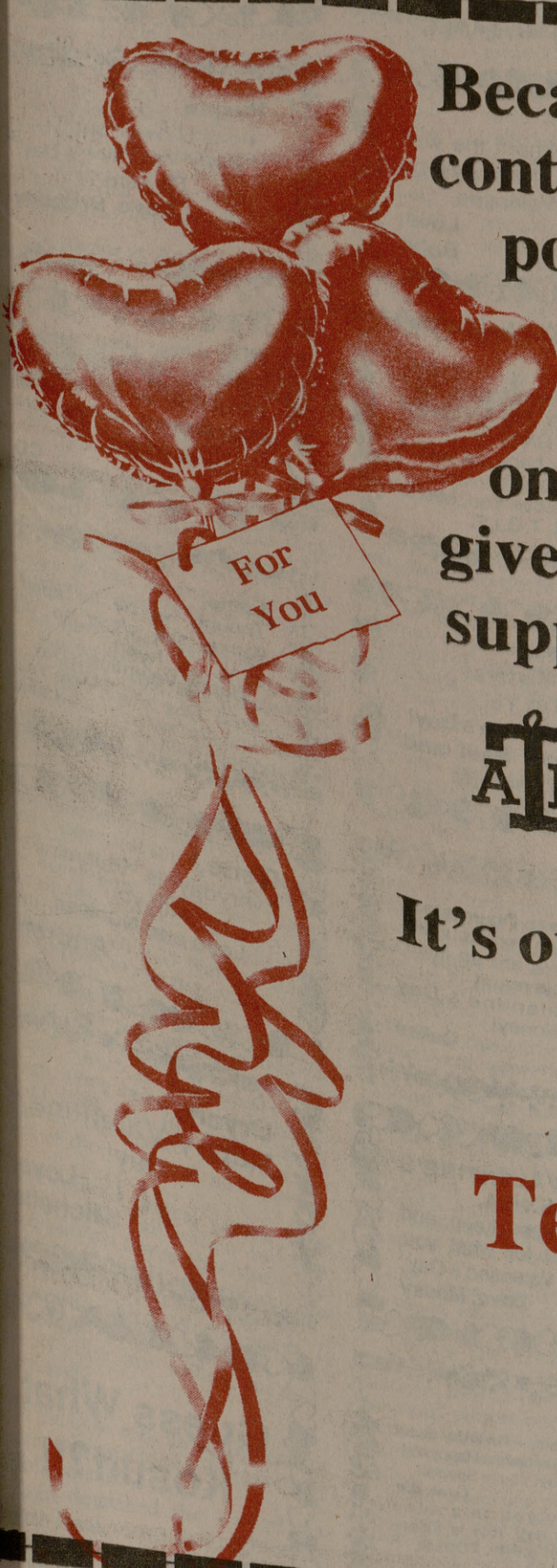
The housing cancellations deadline has been extended from June 1 to June 15 to give students more time to decide on the two-semester contract, Murray says. Students can cancel their dorm reservations until this date with no penalty.



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