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Heat available to 95 buildings Monday

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Starting Monday, Facilities Management will make heat available to 95 major buildings on campus, paying special care to make sure energy use is both environmentally and financially conscious during the winter months, staffers said.

The 95 buildings are heated by Brown's central heat plant. The heat to other university buildings is provided by a system of 220 independent boilers. In an effort to conserve energy, heat will be available, but not turned on until a specific building meets certain requirements.

"Outside temperature, number of calls we're getting and actual temperature in the buildings" will be the determining factors for when heating systems will turn on in individual buildings, according to James Coen, director of Maintenance Services at Facilities. Heating the University is complicated by a 3.5 mile loop of piping that must run for a buffer period before campus-wide heating can commence.

"It's not like a heater in your house," Director of Sustainable Energy and Environmental Initiatives Chris Powell said. He added that there have been several upgrades to the system that will make winter climate control more eco-friendly.

Powell specifically noted that the replacement of all steam traps and condensate receivers, parts that improve circulation, prevents extra heat loss and decreases the need for extrachemical treatment of the water used to heat campus. Better filtration equipment, an upgraded and fully automated central control system and renovations to residence halls are some of the changes that Coen said will be "major energy savers."

Facilities will also heat buildings only during hours when they are normally in use.

Carlos Fernandez, assistant vice president of Facilities Operations and Engineering, said Facilities is using updated technology to reduce Brown's carbon footprint. For example, Facilities has installed thermostats throughout Minden Hall in order to heat the building more efficiently. Previously, the dorm had only one thermostat in its lobby, Fernandez said.

The department's efforts have already reduced University-wide carbon emissions to 2003 levels since last year, while Facilities is still doing "everything we can to keep heating costs down," Powell said.

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