

Energy Center at AU to Undertake Baseline Study of University Buildings

5/17/99

Alfred, NY – When the electric meter at Alfred University turns, it does so at a rate that would make a homeowner shudder. With more than 60 buildings, ranging from residence and dining halls to sophisticated research facilities, Alfred University is using 6.9 million kwh of electricity annually. But trimming that usage – and the cost – has been difficult because many of the buildings do not have separate electric meters, explained Dr. Robert K. Bitting, director of the Center for the Engineered Conservation of Energy (EnCo), who has obtained a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority to undertake a baseline study of energy consumption in various locations on the campus. "We see this baseline study as a first step in a comprehensive campus-wide energy conservation program," explained Bitting. Working with Sear-Brown Group, a consulting engineering firm, and New York State Electric and Gas, Alfred University, under the direction of David Peckham, assistant director of physical plant and project manager, will install temporary data loggers in unmetered buildings on campus, keeping them in place for approximately one month to determine measure current, as well as generate consumption and demand data. That information, along with utility use and billing data from existing meters, will help the University develop energy conservation measures, said Bitting, who says the goal is to eventually reduce energy consumption on campus by 18 percent, saving more than \$125,000 annually for the University. But the study is not just about savings for the University, notes Bitting. There is an educational component as well. AU students will be collecting and analyzing raw data before it is turned over to Sear-Brown and the NYSEG staff for final analysis. "This will be valuable on-the-job training that will augment the formal education for some of our engineering students," he said. With the information from the baseline study, AU's facilities staff will be able to determine if equipment is malfunctioning or if a building is using more energy than could be expected. Furthermore, the data could be used for comparison purposes by other institutions in a similar climate, particularly those with campus-based systems, such as colleges and universities, hospitals, correctional facilities, and industrial parks.