



University of Houston  
Division of Administration and Finance

## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ENERGY IMPROVEMENTS TO FARISH HALL AND AGNES ARNOLD HALL RESULT IN SAVINGS

The Utility Services Department has been able to take advantage of programs offered recently by CenterPoint Energy. CenterPoint offers free energy audits to groups willing to make a commitment to improve the efficiency of a building's energy usage. As part of this Retro-commissioning initiative, Farish Hall and Agnes Arnold Hall underwent an overall upgrade to their building automation systems. The first steps included replacement of the existing controls for the main air handling units, incorporation of new variable frequency drives for fan motors and circulating pumps, and interfacing with new duct dampers. The variable frequency drives were installed by our in-house electrical staff. These retro-commissioning upgrades change the way in which the originally installed systems operate to provide improved occupant comfort.

These early 70's building's air conditioning systems were originally designed to supply a constant air flow, continuously supplying either warm or cold air to the occupied spaces to maintain a desired temperature. By changing the systems operation to the newer technology of Variable Air Volume through the use of dampers and variable frequency drives, the systems become much more efficient.

Through the use of scheduling, occupancy sensing, and carbon dioxide monitoring, air conditioning can be increased or decreased resulting in a very efficient system. Managing building operations in this manner can generate a 30% savings in utility usage, plus savings in electricity, chilled water and steam generated by the Central Plant. Buildings upgraded and controlled by the Energy Management and Environmental Controls Systems (EMECS) department can recover a capital investment of this type through energy savings in as little as 18 months while rendering the added benefit of increased comfort and productivity of the occupants.

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