

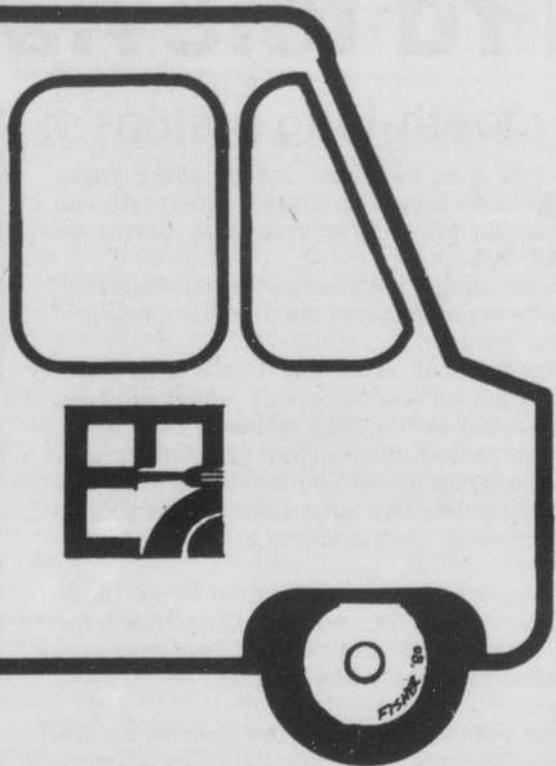
emu Food Service

Food Van

Library turnaround
9:30-2:00 15th & Kincaid

Fresh Baked Croissants

Vegetarian Sandwiches
On Whole Grain Bread



University scrambling to entice more renters

By Paul Danzer
Of the Emerald

Declining enrollment and a renter's market have combined to throw the University housing department into competition with off-campus alternatives for student's housing dollars.

For the first time in 10 years, space available in University dorms exceeds the demand.

The University has capabilities to house 3,000 students in its seven dormitory complexes. This year, less than 2,800 students will be living in the dorms, says Don Williams, director of housing.

The major reason for the decline is a smaller-than-usual freshman class.

Approximately two-thirds of dormitory residents are freshmen, Williams says. That adds up to about half of the freshman class.

With the freshman class declining, the difference must be made up by enticing more upper-class students into the dorms.

"The satisfied customer is what we are aiming for," says Marge Ramey, assistant housing director.

The housing department is an auxiliary enterprise of the University, which means its only source of funding are the room and board payments made by the residents.

For many years that was considered to be a disadvantage, Williams says, but with the reduced state funding of higher education he now considers it an advantage.

"If we were funded by the state we would never have this flexibility," Williams says.

The housing department's independent status gives it the ability to balance its budget

without filling each dorm while improving programs and facilities in order to attract more students.

"For the room and board rate to stay at a manageable level it is very much to everyone's advantage for us to fill every room," he says.

The key to filling rooms is the resident retention rate from year to year. The housing department has introduced several new programs in the past two years to help fight the battle, and more are on the way, Williams says.

The most visible and most successful change has been the special interest dorms which were introduced last year. These include academic pursuit halls, an environmental hall, an international studies hall and a creative arts hall.

Writing labs are a popular new program added last year to each complex on Sunday evenings. This year mathematics sessions will be added as well.

Other activities include picnics, sports activities and social programs sponsored by the Residence Halls Governance Committee.

All the added programs have made the 1982 retention rate the highest ever, says Ramey.

"There seem to be a lot of walk-ins who appeared to be out shopping around and then decided this would be a good buy," she says.

To attract more of those walk-ins in the future, the housing department will be assessing possible changes in physical arrangements and policy this year, says Williams.

"We're a little more relaxed with how the students use their space," says Williams.

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