Residence Life division busy with repairs

By Brian Duncan
Gamecock Staff Writer

The facilities and repairs division of USC's Residential Life Services frequently hears about this being a slack time of year, but according to Dave Castine, "that just isn’t the case."

Castine, university building inspector, said there is actually more for maintenance personnel to do during summer months, because damages often are not reported to the division during regular school sessions.

"You would be surprised how many students just will not call in needed repairs," Castine said, and added fear of being held responsible possibly contributes to the situation.

Generally, Castine said, persons responsible for damages acknowledge "horning around," and in cases involving more than Life accident, the repair costs are not charged to students unless proof of actual involvement is obtained.

GEORGE MITCHELL, assistant director of business affairs for the facilities and repairs division, said so much more work can be done when students are out of the rooms that, in addition to regular repairs to windows, doors, light fixtures and general upkeep programs, special undertakings are implemented during the summer months to avoid problems next fall and winter.

Extra help is obtained according to each program's individual needs, and Mitchell said ten students were given employment this summer.

The current special program involves preventive measures on the more than 5,000 air conditioning units on campus. Castine said since the majority of maintenance staff employees remain in regularly assigned positions because of familiarity with the areas, he added.

BOB STEWART, director of business affairs for Residential Life Services, explained that of the $5,372,000 total housing budget for fiscal year 1977-78, $392,000 is being spent on summer projects this year, while suggested repairs totaled more than $1 million.

According to a diagram developed by housing officials for 1975-76, which is roughly the same this year because of set costs, renovations and improvements constitute four percent of the total housing budget. Annual debt service, salaries and wages combined account for approximately 55 percent, with the rest divided among utilities, telephone, costs for furniture and equipment, supplies and expenses, Stewart said.

"The only money we receive is from student rent," Stewart said. An exception is a specific state grant for historical renovation on the Horshoe.

STEWART said because of mortgages and utilities, every piece of the pie except improvements must be paid. The remaining balance is budgeted for improvements, which are broken down in order of priority.

According to Stewart, problems that must be corrected for reasons of safety and/or facility worthiness are top priority. Under priority two fall renovations that should be done, but can wait, such as painting, while priority three involves improvements of quality, such as carpeting.

"We are concerned we didn't get to improvements this year," Stewart said. "If we don't continually upgrade our facilities, they go downhill."

The division is eager for student input, Stewart said, because if it is feasible, they would rather do it the student's way since, "whatever we do, they pay for."

DORMS OPEN for student use during the summer sessions include South Building, South Tower, Capstone, Snowden, Moore and tenements 23 and 24, according to Castine.

In addition, Bates House is open to participants of the summer basketball camp; Bates West houses visiting faculty members from regional campuses, and Wade Hampton and Douglas provide facilities for Upward Bound, a federally funded, USC-sponsored program designed for high school students with potential for success in education beyond high school.

A Residential Life spokesman said there are 33 single-student housing facilities on campus, providing a total of 6,000 actual spaces.

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