

TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Florida – FSU Partnership

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Florida State Seeks to Cut Energy Costs With Help From Consulting Firm

By Byron Dobson, Democrat Senior Writer

In Florida, where the thought of hiking tuition to bolster the bottom line is forbidden, universities need to be creative about curbing expenses and generating revenues.

Florida State University projects it can save \$12 million in energy costs over the next five years with its new agreement with Cenergistic LLC.

The Dallas company has helped universities and school districts across the country collectively save millions in energy consumption. It considers energy costs second only to personnel expenses for universities.

Florida State spends approximately \$32 million annually on utilities.

The company is working with FSU to create an energy conservation program specific to the university's needs and current practices.

"This partnership is a key part of our strategic plan to reduce our overall footprint and build a university-wide culture of environmental care," said Kyle Clark, vice president for finance and administration.

Energy conservation efforts already underway at FSU include the use of LED lighting technology, scheduling buildings to be in a reduced energy use mode when not in use, and installation of high-efficiency HVAC systems.

"We work across all areas and departments to optimize how classrooms, laboratories, and other space function in an effort to improve safety, maintain a stable environment, and save energy," Clark said.

Cenergistic will focus on FSU's current use of energy, while also promoting behavioral changes, the university said.

The company's goals are to identify how energy costs can be reduced, allowing the university to reinvest that money into improving the quality of its academic programs and furthering a culture that embraces conservation.



Florida State University, already considered one of the country's most efficient, is working with a firm to identify savings on energy expenses.

Cenergistic will provide six full-time energy specialists as well as support from their corporate staff to review the energy performance of all campus buildings, Clark said.

The agreement, which took effect Sept. 1, is based on a shared responsibility concept in which the company provides extensive resources, education and on-site training with the commitment that the university will cooperate to implement its program, FSU said.

FSU will not pay for the management of the program. Instead, 100 percent of the company's compensation is paid based on the actual savings realized by the university.

Cenergistic says clients using its "behavioral-focused energy conservation" approach have saved on average 26 percent in energy costs, enabling them to collectively redirect \$4.8 billion to other needs.

Students also benefit from the arrangement, as Cenergistic will hire at least four interns each summer and recruit on campus.