Law succeeds; strike failed

Rice janitors now have $1.25 wage

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Rice University maintenance laborers and janitors are receiving a $1.25 per hour basic wage, according to James T. Berling, Buildings and Grounds Manager.

The University has previously been exempt from minimum wage requirements, Berling said, but a recent revision of the law requires Rice to pay at least $1 per hour. After 4 years the required minimum will increase to $1.60.

Despite the higher wages, Berling reports that there has been some difficulty recently finding men to fill the janitorial positions. Five women have been hired on a trial basis to do work previously done by men.

Less Employees

Berling stated that this year the University employs 70 janitors, but last year they employed 91.

The women employees do the same work that the men have done, said Berling, “except heavy lifting.” He said that he did not know the specific instructions that had been given to the women employees.

According to reports from several of the men’s colleges, however, the women are not emptying trash cans and students are required to do it themselves.

Strike Last Year

Eleven of the workers quit their jobs last year after they were denied a ten cent salary increase from the then current rate of $1.15.

The abortive strike was unsuccessful because the workers had no union, and the University was legally able to replace the men who walked off. Texas has no Fair Labor Practices law to protect non-union strikers.

Since last September there have been no more organized requests by the laborers for salary increases.