Registration Continued from Page 20

tion numbers for the classes they want.

If a class section is full, the voice will list other available sections. When a student has entered the entire schedule, the computer will list that student's classes. The student can call back as often as he or she wishes to make changes in the schedule.

Worth Every Penny

According to University of Washington Registrar Melanie Bell, there have been no significant complaints about their Student Telephone Assisted Registration, or STAR system, which was installed in 1988.

"It is so much more efficient," Bell said. "Students like it, faculty like it, the academic advisers like it and ... our vice president of student affairs says it's the best money the university has ever spent."

According to USC Associate Registrar Fred Dear, the biggest advantage of touch-tone registration is "maximum convenience to the student."

"Plus, there is no paperwork," Bell said.

Now many University students are wondering why they still are sweating out registration in Mac Court when they could be punching a few buttons on their home phones. However, not many University or state board administrators are willing to voice their opinions on why the University is one of the last colleges in the state as well as the Pac-10 to update its inefficient registration system.

William Cannon, Oregon state system director of administration and information systems services, said it was not his place to state an opinion because "most of those decisions were made before I ever got on here."

University Registrar Herb Chereck suggested the state board lacked funds to update the University's registration system in the past, "but I really would prefer not to get into history," he said. "My goal is to move forward from today."

Taking a Quantum Leap

The next step the University takes will be a "quantum leap into the 20th century," Chereck said. As of Spring term, 1989, the University purchased a total integrated student information system from Systems and Computer Technology (SCT).

This information package includes admissions procedures, recruiting, scheduling, cataloguing, billing and touch-tone registration.

All these processes must be integrated into one accessible and integrated database which the University has never had, Chereck said.

"Currently we have bits and pieces of the system all over the place with a little piece in admissions, records and accounts receivable ... but none of these parts work together," he said. "You have to get this information accessible before you can start any automation like touchtone registration."

During the next 12 to 18 months, the registrar's office will be bringing all these individual components into one database. Chereck said the touchtone registration process tentatively is scheduled for general student use by Spring term, 1991.

Although the University's touch-tone registration system should operate like most similar systems, some of the specific features have not been determined yet, Chereck said.

Many Questions Remain

University administrators still have to decide if they will assign personal identification numbers (PINs) in addition to the student's social security number as the access code for each student's file, Chereck said. PINs are used at most other universities using touch-tone registration to ensure ultimate privacy for the students.

"It's a real sensitive issue and one that we have to consider very carefully," Chereck said.

The University also hasn't determined what additional services will be provided over the phone during registration, Chereck said. Fee information might be indicated by the computer voice simulator and students might indicate where they want their grades sent while they are still registering. "The ultimate goal, as far as I'm concerned, is to eliminate paperwork," Chereck said.

Other information available at arena scheduling registration, such as that concerning student health insurance and directory information, would probably be printed in the time schedule book each term, Chereck said.

In addition, with the new registration system, deans and department heads will have the opportunity to plan course section offerings with demonstrated student demand, Chereck said. However, he did not know if departments were planning to utilize that opportunity.

"The opportunity will exist to maintain that kind of information," Chereck said. "The million dollar question is will anyone do anything about it."

Chereck said neither students or faculty were consulted in the search for a student information system. "That is not necessarily a committee kind of an issue ... and besides, I wouldn't know who to return it to," he said.

But Chereck said both students and faculty will benefit from the updated registration system. "For winter and spring terms, it eliminates two days of registration which could be used for teaching time," he said. "Plus, it will provide faculty with more timely class lists.

"But my ultimate goal is to provide better service to students," Chereck added. "It will be more efficient and convenient for them to have the responsibility for the registration process."

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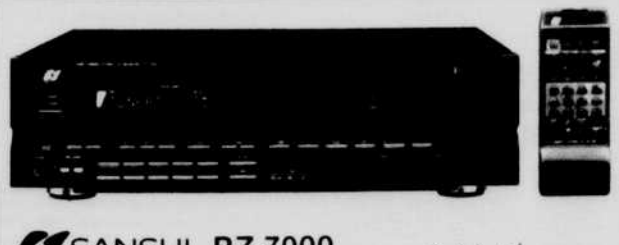

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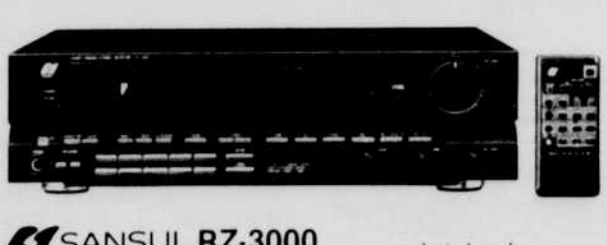

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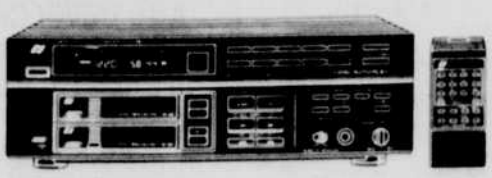

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