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LTD conducting rider study

■ The transit district will determine where student bus ridership is heaviest

By Jessica Blanchard
 Oregon Daily Emerald

It may take a little longer for students to get on the bus this term, but a little extra time now may mean shorter lines at bus stops next year.

Lane Transit District began a study Monday to determine when University students, faculty and staff ride the LTD buses in an effort to improve bus service to the University community.

Until the study ends March 31, students along certain routes will be asked to swipe their student identification cards in a scanner as they get on the bus.

The scanner's counts will be downloaded each night by LTD and sent to the University, where

the results will be put into a database and analyzed to determine ridership patterns.

While some students might be worried about privacy issues, Michelle Geschke, a marketing representative for LTD, said the scanners are merely counting devices and no personal student information will be collected.

The point of the study is to determine how many University students are utilizing their bus passes, and when and where the high-demand routes are, she said.

"This will allow us to track a little better which routes students are riding," said Rand Stamm, the University parking and transportation manager. "Then we can look at that transportation information and look at how to improve services."

"We just want to make sure that it's worthwhile [for students] and

that they're getting the service they need," Geschke said.

The study might be a minor inconvenience for some students, but in the end, they'll benefit, said ASUO Vice President Mitra Anoushiravani. The results of the study will give the ASUO a better idea of how many students are using their bus passes, which will give them more leverage when bargaining with LTD for future bus service contracts.

While LTD has been doing ridership studies for years, the scanners and student identification cards are new technology that LTD officials hope will help speed up the process and improve its accuracy.

"We finally have the technology to track who's using the service and on what routes," Geschke said. "So far, it seems to be working out very well."

Health center fills empty positions

■ A doctor and a nurse practitioner join the staff of the health center

By Ben Romano
 Oregon Daily Emerald

The University Health Center has found replacements for two practitioners who left in fall of 1999.

Dr. Ben Douglas, a Family Practice Board certified family practitioner and Marjorie McDaniel, a family nurse practitioner, will fill the health center staff openings, said Dr. Gerald Fleischli, health center director.

Douglas is replacing Dr. William Disher, who retired from the health center last September

after 12 years of service. Disher, who was a women's health specialist, will continue to work one day a week to follow up on his patients, Fleischli said.

Douglas earned his medical degree from the University of Mississippi in 1985. He went on to a University of California, Davis program to finish his residency training in 1988.

Douglas worked in private practice and the 12-bed Seneca Hospital in Chester, Calif., before moving to Eugene four years ago. He has worked in the emergency room and assisted in surgery in addition to his general medical responsibilities.

"We are fortunate to have people who have had this kind of ex-

perience," Fleischli said.

McDaniel, who began at the health center Jan. 4, is replacing Kathryn Brown, who left for the Peace Corps last October. After spending 15 years as a registered nurse, McDaniel returned to University of Texas, Austin to earn a master's degree and become a family nurse practitioner.

The major difference between a registered nurse and a nurse practitioner is the ability to write prescriptions for medication. A nurse practitioner can diagnose and treat a variety of acute and chronic problems. Advanced training allows nurse practitioners "to do 80 percent of what a physician does," McDaniel said.

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