

Census

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here is because of the convenience," Grover said.

But Bell, and many other residents, said location is not the only deciding factor. The neighborhood's atmosphere is also a major draw. The area is high-density with little space between houses and apartment complexes, adding to the close-knit social atmosphere.

At night, some people go from party to party, others bump into friends on the street and make plans like friends would if they lived in a small town. Bell said he's looking forward to walking half a block to see what his friends are doing on a Friday night — instead of them being just a few feet away in another room. He adds that he'll appreciate the extra control over his privacy.

"I'm getting older, and all the freshmen are still 18," Bell said.

When the weather is nice during the day, students relax on porches, balconies and yards, studying or chatting. They sit on rickety plastic furniture, or recliners and couches they purchased at nearby garage sales — or simply claimed from the side of the road after other students moved out and abandoned the furniture.

But Grover said the social life is the biggest drawback to her time in the neighborhood, and she's looking forward to leaving.

"I'm a country girl, so the biggest problem is the traffic," Grover said. "Both foot and car traffic."

She said she's had to deal with a number of bizarre invasions of her privacy, including the time she and her two roommates came home last month and found a couple having

sex in her garage — or Friday night when a massive party turned into a riot 100 feet from her front door.

Franz said the two amorous lovers politely and apologetically left when once she found them, but there was nothing she could do but watch as riots charged and fled up and down her street.

Eyster agreed that, regardless of the drawbacks, students are going to want to live as close to campus as possible, and he thinks the West University Neighborhood can expand. He said property owners need to take the initiative. The area is high-density and much of the property is old and could be torn down, making way for larger apartment buildings. Eyster said national companies like the ones that built Duck's Village and the University Commons could also renovate the area.

"All it would require is for someone to buy the property," he said.

In the meantime, Leavitt said the University is looking at institutional changes it can make that would have an effect on rental rates, such as expansion of LTD express routes to campus.

She said there could be unintended benefits from University President Dave Frohnmayer's May 20 decision that all Greek houses must achieve higher academic standards and have alcohol and drug free housing by December to remain affiliated with the University. She said once Greek houses adhere to Frohnmayer's new standards, administrators will be more comfortable suggesting the Greek system as a housing option, taking some pressure off the rental property in the neighborhood and helping the Greek chapters improve their recruitment and mem-

bership, which has been down over the past few years.

"I would really like our Greek houses to be at a place we can recommend to people who want to live with others but don't want to live in a full apartment," she said, adding that many administrators also want to build a new residence hall as soon as possible to house the large incoming freshman classes.

Leavitt is part of the 17-member Enrollment Management Council, a group that analyzes enrollment figures and makes suggestions for how the school should handle the ebb and flow of students.

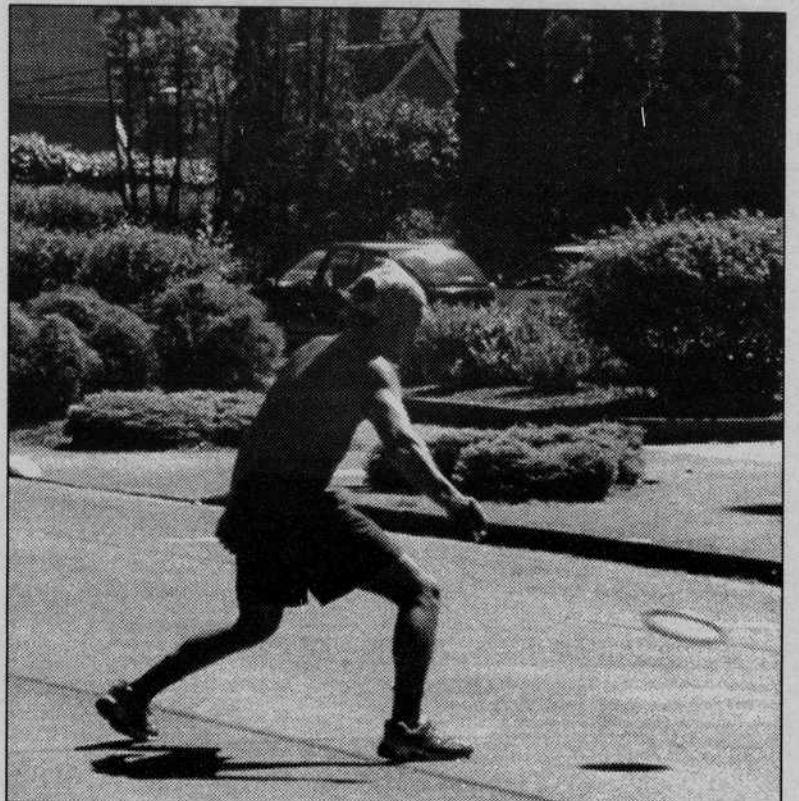
But so far, the council has focused solely on how the increased student population will affect the availability of classrooms, professor offices and public computer terminals. The group hasn't said who should work on how enrollment affects housing in the West University Neighborhood or any part of Eugene.

"You have to ask, 'Is that even part of the institutional mission?'" said Associate Vice President Jim Buch, the chairman of the committee.

Eyster said he wouldn't be surprised if other national companies are looking at building more property like Duck's Village and the University Commons, which would be attractive to some West University residents with the ability to commute to campus. Eyster added that he hasn't heard of any specific companies with their eyes on Eugene, but "I'd be surprised if there aren't any."

"They can see this bulge or boom just like anybody else," Leavitt said.

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Adam Jones Emerald

Michael Grey, left, and Aaron Bliznut play a little 'Urban Frisbee' in the intersection of 14th and Mill street within the West University Neighborhood.

Enrollment jump catches administration by surprise

■ The University's physical facilities may not be able to bear the strain of more than this year's 20,000 expected students

By Jeremy Lang
Oregon Daily Emerald

Enrollment is expected to surpass 20,000 students for the first time this fall, a sudden jump that caught many administrators by surprise.

A September 2001 report by the 17-member Enrollment Management Council predicted the student population wouldn't surpass 20,000 until fall 2005. Jim Buch, the council chairman and associate vice president for enrollment management, said that when council members submitted their report, they expected enrollment to remain steady between 16,000 and 17,000 — which it had done from 1994 to 2000 — or even drop slightly because of a year full of bad press.

"In the past 18 months, the University of Oregon's image has suffered from several public controversies," the report said.

The report cited the secretary of state's audit of the school, the investigation of women's basketball coach Jody Runge that led to her resignation and the school's departure from the Worker Rights Consortium factory monitoring group, a decision that led Nike CEO and University alumnus Phil Knight to vow never to donate money to the school again.

"These high-profile events have a cumulative effect on public perception," the report said.

But after a year of football and basketball championships, the University's departure from the WRC, Knight's subsequent return to donating and a number of research accomplishments by professors, Buch said the school's public image improved — at the same time that high school graduating class sizes are increasing.

"The flip answer is that everybody wants to come here," Buch said. "There is going to be continued growth. There's going to be continued demand if the University continues to be an attractive choice."

So far, neither the council nor any other University committee has

officially discussed a cap on enrollment, Associate Vice President Anne Leavitt said, but she acknowledged that administrators are aware of the urgency that the 20,000 plateau presents.

"The physical facilities (on campus) are really not equipped to handle many more than 20,000," said Leavitt, who also sits on the enrollment council. "We have to get to work on this."

University Housing Director Mike Eyster said this isn't the first time the University has faced a sudden increase in enrollment. In the early 1990s enrollment jumped into the 16,000 student range, and independent rental companies saw an opportunity to expand into the Eugene market. Two companies bought land north of campus near Autzen Stadium to build the Duck's Village and the University Commons apartment complexes, joining the Chase Village complex. Both opened in the late 1990s when enrollment had leveled off and, for a few years, vacancy rates were high there and in the West University Neighborhood.

But those empty apartments are filled now, according to the fall 2001 report by Duncan and Brown, a local company that studies housing trends in Eugene.

"The campus area appears to have recovered from ... four years of high vacancy," the report said, noting that 2001 was the first time in four years that rents have increased in the neighborhood. "While the increases (in rent) are few and small, it does indicate a change in the direction of the market."

University Housing runs the residence halls and limited graduate student housing only, but Eyster still keeps an eye on where his residents will go when they leave the world of bunk beds and cafeteria meals, and he noticed the vacancy rates starting to fall more than a year ago.

"There is no question that enrollments play a huge role in the vacancy rate in the campus neighborhood and other student housing," Eyster wrote to administrators in a December 2000 e-mail.

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