



Walt Boynton has been driving for LTD for more than 29 years. "It may not seem like we try to get everybody," he said. "But there are a lot of other variables to consider, like traffic and bikers." Adam Amato Emerald

LTD drivers stress safety

Although they have received some criticism about hasty departures, LTD bus drivers tout safety and scheduling

Caron Alarab
Safety/Crime/Transportation Reporter

When the Lane Transit District bus pulls away from the curb, it seems no degree of yelling or pounding on the folding door windows will make it yield to a tardy prospective rider. And although most drivers don't feel they're disliked by students for decisions they make on campus routes, many LTD employees who love their jobs say they can't help but occasionally leave the late ones behind because of safety or schedule concerns.

"It may not seem like we try to get everybody," LTD bus driver Walt Boynton said. "But there are a lot of other variables to consider, like traffic and bikers."

After working as an LTD driver for more than 29 years and helping to put his daughters through college with every paycheck, Boynton said he still loves driving and interacting with riders. Although somewhat biased from having a daughter attend the University, Boynton said his preferred group of riders is obvious.

"University students are my favorite," he said.

Despite his enthusiasm, Boynton admits not all drivers enjoy students as much as he does.

Senior Nathan McVeigh, who rides LTD buses almost every day, said some drivers seem to leave students intentionally.

"Some of the drivers are real

dicks," he said. "They'll see you waiting on the crosswalk across from the bus stop and they'll just keep driving."

Mike Duran, who has driven LTD buses for seven years, said he is usually happy to stop for a tardy rider if he's not running late, if there isn't a bus two minutes behind his route and if it's generally safe to do so.

"Above everything else, safety is the main issue," he said. "But students don't always know that, so they get mad."

Although he knows students who have had bad experiences riding on LTD buses, senior Ben Peterson said drivers generally have made his rides enjoyable.

As a rider who takes the bus from Polk Street to campus about four times a week, Peterson said his only problem with LTD is what he considers to be poorly chosen departure times from North University Station.

"Because buses leave at 15 and 45 after instead of on the hour or half hour, some students have to wait 20 minutes to catch the bus," he said.

Sophomore Selma Mahmuljin, who takes the bus to and from Eugene Station, disagrees.

"I think the system is efficient," she said. "Every 15 minutes is pretty often."

As a transfer student from Bosnia, Mahmuljin said she was initially surprised at how often drivers politely say "Hello," "Good-bye" and "Thank you."

"We don't really do that in Bosnia," she said. "It's very different there."

After spending 24 years driving buses for LTD, Debbie Eitterlich said

her interactions with students tend to be short-lived beyond seeing their ID cards and hearing them say "Thanks." In comparison with other riders, Eitterlich said students are tardy for the bus more often than other riders.

"If the rider is running late, it's almost guaranteed that they're carrying a student card," she said.

Contact the reporter at caronalArab@dailymerald.com.

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applications are available in the office of student life & the asuo women's center. application review begins may 21, and applications accepted until positions are filled. contact Whitney Zeigler at 346-4095 or wzeigler@darkwing.uoregon.edu.