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Eugeneans back LTD drivers at demonstration



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Justin Kemerer portrays "Pepper! The Greed Fighting Possum," an informal mascot for fighting management, pickets at the LTD Bus Station Thursday evening.

Union members protested contracts, criticizing health care and leadership

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Citizens from Eugene and the surrounding area rallied at the Lane Transit District downtown station Thursday afternoon with LTD bus drivers and members of unions around the Northwest, showing support for the drivers' contract negotiations with LTD representatives.

About 100 people picketed on the corner of West 10th Avenue and Olive Street, holding signs condemning LTD's leadership and demanding LTD offer a new contract that does not decrease benefits. "We felt we had to alert people because the negotiations are deteriorating," Amalgamated Transit Union Division 757 spokesman Jason Reynolds said.

ATU represents 80 percent of LTD's workers, and LTD repre-

sentatives have said a union strike would halt all LTD services.

According to LTD, nearly 3,000 University students and employees use the bus to get to and from campus. LTD gets \$583,250 in student fees to provide students with "unlimited ridership on all routes and schedules," as stated in its contract with the University.

Reynolds said the purpose of the rally was to prevent a strike by showing LTD representatives the support the union has throughout the community.

LTD bus driver Richard Shrope said all drivers understand how devastating a strike could be and are hopeful one can be avoided.

"We're hoping to get people aware of what's going on so maybe there can be some pressure on people to get things resolved," Shrope said.

Many LTD riders said they were unaware of a potential strike until the rally and were alarmed at the thought of being without bus service.

"It'll put the public in a big crisis," Bridget Perini said.

Perini, 23, who lives in Cottage Grove with her 3-year-old

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MORE ONLINE

For up-to-date information on the LTD-ATU negotiations, visit asuo.uoregon.edu.

For car pool information, visit ltd.org.

East Wing remodeling underway inside EMU

The Master Plan to modernize the building crawls along as administrators search for funds

BY ADAM CHERRY
NEWS REPORTER

All the doors weren't on the hinges yet at the newly expanded EMU Craft Center Thursday afternoon. Craft Center administrators, still without a real office, have sectioned off part of the large room to house their desks and computers, which have collected a thin film of sawdust.

Not that they're complaining. The center just received an expansion of more than 1,000 square feet.

"The wood shop is now roughly twice as big," Craft Center Coordinator Diane Loffman said. The old one was becoming a safety hazard because it wasn't big enough to fit tools, wood and people, she added. Across the hall, the ASUO Women's Center just added more than 400 square feet by extending its floor space into the hallway.

"Before, people were right on top of each other," Women's Center Interim Director Erin O'Brien said, adding that the old office only had space for staff. "There wasn't a usable space to fulfill our mission."

These projects have one thing in common: They took place in the EMU's East Wing, which, in May 2003, was slated to be 70 percent demolished and reconstructed in a more modern and efficient design. However, the "EMU Master Plan," a multi-million dollar face-lift on the 55-year-old building, was indefinitely delayed in the summer of 2003 due to budget woes. Now, improvements are being made one section at a time.

EMU Director Dusty Miller said the student building fee doesn't have the more than \$40 million needed to complete the Master Plan.

"So the plan has been delayed," Miller said. "There are only possibly four ways to get this new building."

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Students' perceptions of diversity clash

While some non-white students feel accepted, others express uneasiness

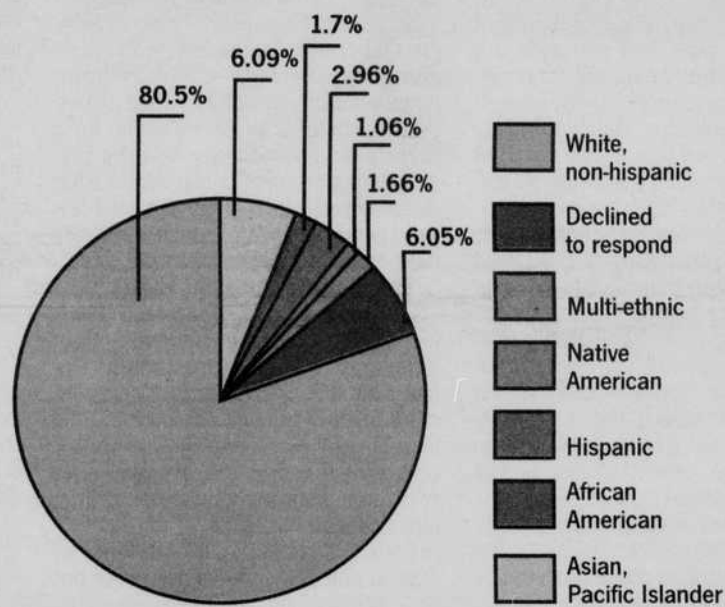
BY AMANDA BOLSINGER
NEWS REPORTER

Her first class at the University wasn't until noon, and the freshman student thought she knew the right building. She was wrong. Lost, she asked a passing student for directions, which confused her even more. A second student guided her to the right building and told her the correct door was at the building's rear. It wasn't. She rushed back to the front of the building and went inside.

Twenty minutes late, she rushed into class, made her breathless apologies and sat in the first open desk she could find. Then, she looked around the room at her classmates and realized that she was the only minority student in a full class.

This experience isn't an isolated one for freshman student Victoria Chang and other minority students at the University. With a campus that is 87 percent Caucasian, even the largest classes often have only one or two non-white students.

"Often in the classroom I am tokenized," said Scott Lu, fourth-year student and member of the Asian Pacific American Student



BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

Union. "If I am the only person of color in a class, then I am expected to represent and speak for all people of color."

With Martin Luther King Jr. Day approaching, people are celebrating the progress that has been made in diversifying the community and showing tolerance, examining current circumstances and asking how far they have come. Opinions vary as experiences vary. Some students say the University is relatively diverse. Others say it's not at all. Students' perceptions

often depend on their personal backgrounds.

Freshman football player Kwame Agyeman said the University is more diverse than his hometown, Chicago.

"I lived in the northwest suburbs of Chicago; it's not nearly as diverse as people think. I grew up and went to school with all Caucasians," Agyeman said.

He has also found that on campus people assume he is an athlete because he is black and people are quickly accepting.

"On campus, people are quick to know if you're black, you're an athlete, and you're OK," Agyeman said.

Agyeman said it's not just the campus that is more diverse, but that most people are more open-minded here.

"In Chicago, the parents were kind of the last generation with problems with things like interracial dating," he said. "Here people are much more OK with it and a lot more laid-back."

Lu had other perceptions. He grew up in Southern California and remembers his impression of the first day of classes at the University.

"I just looked around and thought, 'Wow, it's really white here. What am I doing here?'" Lu said.

He also remembers that toward the end of spring term of his freshman year he was on campus and a couple came up to him and asked him slowly and loudly where a building was, assuming that he was an international student because he is Asian.

While the school doesn't have an open problem with racism, Lu said it's hidden and subtle here.

"It's not that whites hate blacks. It's a multilevel problem and it's extremely subtle. People think it's all OK, but it's not, and it's obviously not for the people

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Finals Week library schedule in jeopardy



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Erin Toews studies Spanish in the Knight Library on Tuesday afternoon.

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

The Knight Library may no longer offer students a place to study around the clock during Finals Week next year unless student leaders authorize incidental fees to cover half the cost for the popular service, a move senators appeared hesitant to make during Wednesday's Student Senate meeting.

The library began offering 24/7 service during Dead Week and Finals Week in spring 2003 to provide students a safe place to cram for exams throughout the

night. Yet keeping the building open — which costs about \$4,000 a term for security — will no longer be affordable after this year for the cash-strapped library, University Librarian Deb Carver said.

Library records show that the extended library hours are used about 4,000 times per term, Carver said.

"There's a big demand," she said. "It's ended up being a much more popular service than I would have expected."

Carver said the library won't

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