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Union files complaint involving LTD labor

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

The Amalgamated Transit Union Division 757 has filed an unfair labor practice complaint against Lane Transit District in response to a nine-month-long contract dispute that has resulted in the union declaring a strike date of March 7.

The complaint, dated Feb. 10 and filed with the Oregon Employment Relations Board, outlines 27 points, most involving allegations of a lack of communication on the part of LTD negotiators and unfair bargaining procedures used by the district.

LTD Service Planning and Marketing Manager Andy Vobora said LTD does not see any merit to the complaint, adding that "the district has bargained in good faith and will continue to do so."

"We feel it is a strategy the union has used in labor negotiations here and elsewhere," Vobora said about the complaint.

Jonathan Hunt, vice president for ATU Division 757, said the complaint is a response to LTD's unfair labor practices, particularly the district's demand to decrease the amount of time drivers are allotted to inspect the safety of their buses before their shifts begin.

LTD proposes changing the safety inspection time from 15 minutes to 10 minutes, which is the industry standard, according to the LTD Web site.

ATU and LTD are scheduled to return to the bargaining table Feb. 25 and March 4, and both sides say they're hopeful the negotiations will be successful and a strike will be averted, though they disagree on the best way to do so.

Hunt said the union is hopeful that LTD will reconsider its decision not to allow the LTD/ATU Community Committee to play a role in the negotiation process, which LTD has already made clear it will not do.

The committee, a group formed in the hope of intervening in the negotiation process and providing an outside expert to examine where the negotiations broke down, met with the LTD Board on Feb. 8 in a meeting the committee said did not produce the answers they were looking for.

According to a Feb. 9 memo from Vobora addressed to LTD partners, "the LTD/ATU Community Committee represents one perspective; however, this perspective does not represent the entire community. ... The LTD Board is appointed to represent the entire community and believes that the bargaining process is best served by LTD and ATU participating in negotiations at the bargaining table."

One of the points in ATU's unfair labor practice complaint against LTD focuses on the fact that only eight bargaining sessions have taken place so far in the negotiation process.

Vobora said the point does not take into consideration the fact that LTD had to work around the union's schedule when setting up bargaining sessions and does not consider the fact that there is no requirement in collective bargaining law about the number of times negotiating teams can meet.

Hunt said there are many things driving the disputes in the negotiation process and the union is prepared to strike if LTD does not reconsider the Feb. 1 final contract implementation and start taking union demands seriously.

"If we can't get this resolved, (the drivers) are ready and willing to strike," Hunt said. LTD needs to understand the consequences of its



Students gathered at the steps of Johnson Hall on Thursday afternoon to pressure University administration to take steps toward reducing hostility on campus.

NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Students protest hate, discrimination

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Students concerned that the administration has not adequately addressed issues of hate, violence and minority oppression on campus rallied on the steps of Johnson Hall on Thursday afternoon.

About 30 people occupied the steps of the building, which houses the offices of University President Dave Frohnmayer and other officials, holding signs condemning the administration's lack of involvement in the recent controversy over what they called hate speech printed in the

Oregon Commentator.

Students held a forum Tuesday night to express concerns about the campus climate, suggesting a University effort to educate students about queer issues. The forum was also prompted in large part by debate over whether to fund the Commentator after the journal of conservative opinion published controversial material.

Senior Pira Kelly said the demonstration wasn't organized by a particular group, but instead comprised "just people who care."

"People are experiencing violence and hate on campus, and the administration needs to take

responsibility for that because they're supposed to be in charge of the school," Kelly said. "They haven't done nearly enough."

Gregory Vincent, the vice provost for institutional equity and diversity, and Anne Leavitt, vice president for student affairs, watched a portion of the demonstration, eventually responding to demonstrators' requests for them to speak.

Vincent said the administration is working on both short-term and long-term strategies to address climate concerns.

Leavitt commended the demonstrators, saying the administration will hold more forums to

address concerns.

"Your voices are a strong reminder, to me at least, that our work is not done," she said.

Vincent, who told the Emerald he knew of the event in advance, said the administration is working to balance free speech and safety issues.

"I think it's important for students to be able to express their concerns in a public forum to point out where they think the campus community should respond to concerns," he said.

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Two UO professors study multi-tasking, computer efficiency

BY EVA SYLWESTER
NEWS REPORTER

Many University students commonly multi-task, using a computer to engage in multiple activities at the same time. However, some University professors say multi-tasking is not entirely productive.

"We know that multi-tasking has a cost. It has a true ... performance cost," psychology professor Ulrich Mayr said.

Junior multimedia design major Eric Beltran said when he uses a computer, he usually has three or four applications open at the same time: homework, e-mail, AOL Instant Messenger and sometimes a game such as Minesweeper.

"Yeah, really, it slows down my homework," Beltran said. "I guess I'm just easily distracted, and there are distractions available on the computer."

Computer and information science assistant professor Anthony Hornof researches human-computer interaction at the University.

"As soon as the computer starts giving you tasks and you start accepting tasks from the computer, people start thinking they can handle more distractions than they really can," Hornof said.

Hornof said awareness of computer distractions is continually increasing. While e-mail spam was once considered easy to delete, it is now recognized by the U.S. Congress as an enormous problem for worker productivity, he said.

Hornof's research also illustrates that online banner advertisements can be a distraction.

"My research shows that it's true people do not remember the

RAs say residence hall rules enforced with inconsistency

The assistants also claimed students do not come home when intoxicated, creating unsafe situations

BY KARA HANSEN
NEWS REPORTER

Following a few administrative mix-ups that led to unwarranted write-ups for some students in the residence halls fall term, several resident assistants have come forward addressing failures in a system of rules they say is set up to be broken.

The RAs said enforcement of University Housing's rules lacks consistency between its five complexes, and the guidelines for documenting students for violations raise questions about the housing department's concern for resident safety.

University alumnus Will Carson, an RA in the Hamilton Complex for 2002-03 and at Barnhart Hall for 2003-04, said University Housing has unrealistic expectations of both residents and RAs.

"It's a system set up where you have to break the rules," Carson said. "That's not a good system."

RAs are required by contract to document incidents in which they smell or see alcohol or hear excessive noise. Residents aren't allowed to have flammable items, such as candles and incense, alcohol, empty alcohol containers,

