Shuttle service exceeds first-semester expectations

PLATTEVILLE — The University of Wisconsin-Platteville shuttle bus service provided more than 8,000 rides during the first semester of usage, helping reduce the number of cars on campus and exceeding university expectations.

“I was happy to see the number of people who were riding the shuttle,” said Dr. Christina Curra, special assistant to the vice chancellor of Administrative Services. “I believe ridership will only continue to increase as the routes become more well known.”

The university began the two-bus service this fall in an effort to alleviate the number of vehicles in campus lots and neighboring streets. UW-Platteville’s undergraduate enrollment is at an all-time high of 7,822 students.

The buses follow two routes: a campus loop, following high-density student areas and the university; and a shopping line, focusing on campus, downtown and the Business Hwy. 151 district. Student fees covered the cost of the service, meaning a valid student ID is all that is needed for a ride. Non-students pay just $1 per ride or can buy a $30 per year pass. A $20 pass will cover the second semester, Curra added.

“This provides students an affordable option,” said Amy Seeboth, UW-Platteville’s sustainability coordinator. “They can still do everything without needing a car on campus.”

The service started slowly on Sept. 1, as yellow school buses were used. Stratton Bus Co. then introduced two white 20-passenger buses with the university logo, and ridership immediately increased. “Getting the new vehicles with the UW-Platteville markings really helped,” Curra said.

The most popular stopping points are on Pine Street, by Ullsvik Hall, and in front of the Markee Pioneer Student Center, Seeboth said, noting that as students became more aware of these places, ridership increased. “According to the data we collected, we’ve seen the number of riders grow substantially, which we wanted to see,” she said.

Curra said the university will work with Stratton to continually monitor the routes and make any changes to better accommodate student needs. She said the university is looking into the Student Senate-sponsored idea of a late night bus from downtown to the campus as well as a bus that will travel to Chicago’s O’Hare Airport. The $50 ride would be operational during spring and fall break as well as during holidays.

In addition to providing transportation and alleviating the need for cars on campus, the shuttle bus will help students who land jobs in large cities after graduation, Seeboth said.

“It’s a different way of life,” she said. “It’s a transition we are undergoing, and depending on what cities our students end up in their career, it will get them used to public transportation.”

Contact: Christina Curra, UW-Platteville Administrative Services, (608) 342-1256, currasc@uwplatt.edu

Written by: Paul Erickson, UW-Platteville University Information and Communications, (608) 342-1194, ericksop@uwplatt.edu

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