

Extended Loop statistics released

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The ridership statistics for spring semester's trial period of the White Loop extension program were recently released by CATA, further proving the significant decrease in ridership from 4 a.m. to 4:30 a.m.

As shown by the data, the percentage of people who rode the buses after 4 a.m. was noticeably smaller than the percentage of people who rode from 2:30 a.m. to 4 a.m.

Because the data displayed such a noteworthy difference, the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) recommended that the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) shorten the length that the Thursday through Saturday extension program ran by a half hour, CATA Service Development Manager Eric Bernier said.

"The numbers speak for themselves," he said. "We told [Christian] we could continue to run it till 4:30 a.m., but you could see that obviously you reached a point of diminished returns at 4 a.m. — that information jumped right out at you."

Student body president Christian Ragland said UPUA decided to take CATA's advice because cutting the program saved UPUA about \$3,000 to \$4,000.

But the program has not only been beneficial for students, Bernier said it is beneficial for CATA, too, because he believes it has helped to decrease behavioral issues.

"Since we didn't have such a crush of people between 2 a.m. and 2:30 a.m., we're almost certain that that contributed positively to the reduction in behavioral issues," he said.

Bernier said originally there was "no science" to determining that the extension program would lengthen the White Loop's operation until 4:30 a.m.

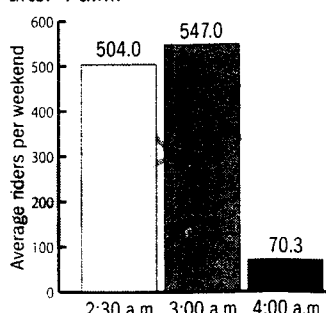
"That was just the block of time that we decided with the former UPUA president, Gavin," he said.

"Part of running the trial basis in the spring was to try it out. [We wanted to] have it run long enough to make sure it captured folks that were riding it."

Ragland (senior-political science) said the program — which began its second semester trial run last Thursday — is off to a

White Loop Extension Program

Spring semester White Loop data shows that ridership decreases after 4 a.m.



Source: Eric Bernier, CATA Service Development Manager
Ashley Rickard/Colegian

good start. He added that he was happy the program was shortened because he served as an ambassador for the first weekend.

"I had to take an alcohol course here. It didn't work. I went out that night," Belton (junior-health policy and administration) said.

Now, Penn State officials are trying a new, more personal approach to dealing with students who violate alcohol policies. The Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention of College Students (BASICS) program is already impacting Penn State, only a week since the trial run began.

"We've run about 50 students through in the first week," said Damon Sims, Penn State vice president for Student Affairs.

BASICS is a one-on-one alcohol counseling program some Penn State students will be referred to when they get into legal trouble on- or off-campus.

The program will focus on individual students' needs in order to change or improve their drinking habits in a personalized setting.

Linda LaSalle, University

To e-mail reporter: krl5106@psu.edu

PSU implements BASICS program

By Matt Scorzafave
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

After getting into trouble at Penn State, student Belton said she was not happy with the ineffective consequences she was given.

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Health Services associate director of Education Services said BASICS is "the national gold standard in terms of alcohol intervention for students."

The program has been used around the country and will now be used on a trial basis as one approach to tackling what some residents and students think is a drinking problem at Penn State.

BASICS is currently being implemented on a trial basis, but Sims said there is not a set timeframe for the program currently.

The program came after group collaborations and discussions with many factions from across the university.

After such discussions, some students said they felt current alcohol-related consequences are neither effective nor harsh enough, Sims said.

Though hopeful, Belton said she does not believe the program will put an end to Penn State's drinking problem.

"There's always going to be a problem, but at least Penn State is taking the initiative to decrease drinking," Belton said. "This program is bound to reach and influence some individuals."

Linda LaSalle, University

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Those interested should come to a brief information session at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 7, at the Collegian office in the James Building on South Burrowes Street.

Applicants must be full-time Penn State students to be eligible. Students who cannot make it to the information session can email Heather at hrs5029@psu.edu.

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