

Internal shuttle buses to be funded by students

By AVA KING

A dollar doesn't buy much anymore, but it will get Texas A&M University students a full semester of intra-campus shuttle bus service next fall.

Student Service fees at Texas A&M University will go up \$1 to help fund the Internal Shuttle Bus System for the Fall 1978 semester. The first semester of experimental operations for the intra-campus shuttle was funded entirely by Memorial Student Center (MSC) bookstore profits.

The Student Senate has decided to test the system for another semester to provide a more thorough evaluation of the system's necessity and efficiency. Of the estimated \$30,000 pending, two-thirds will come from student service fees and one-third from the MSC bookstore profits.

For the first semester of its operation the internal shuttle bus system was allocated \$60,000. This allocation was to cover the cost of operating two routes with three buses on each route. Running the buses costs an estimated \$100 per day per bus.

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clockwise making stops at Krueger Hall, Zachry Engineering Center Northgate (by the Campus Theater on University Drive), the Veterinarian Hospital, the Entomology Building, parking areas 56 and 61 and Rudder Tower.

The Internal Shuttle Bus System was implemented for several reasons. In 1972, the Texas Transportation Institute prepared a briefing document on the campus traffic situation at Texas A&M. The studies show that the increasing number of cars and pedestrians made the streets less usable for cars and more dangerous for pedestrians.

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The Transportation Institute's brief concluded with the statement, "Street capacity is not adequate to serve vehicular needs even without the conflicts from pedestrians." This means that the University has outgrown its internal street system.

On Oct. 24, 1977, a student government subcommittee held a public hearing to determine the student body's interest in an internal shuttle service. At that hearing, the subcommittee, the Agricultural Council, the Engineers' Council, the Saddle & Sirlon Club, the Graduate Student Council, the Collegiate FFA and the Off-Campus Student Association all stated that an internal shuttle service was needed.

The groups gave the following reasons why an internal shuttle service was needed: (1) the distance from the Veterinarian school makes walking to the main campus for classes inconvenient; (2) the distance to the west campus and to peripheral parking areas makes walking from classes on the main campus inconvenient; (3) traffic congestion on the inner campus would be partially alleviated; and (4) students would be protected in bad weather.

The subcommittee decided that the buses should make stops at peripheral parking areas, the Veterinarian school, west campus and at the three existing off-campus shuttle bus stops. In addition, it was agreed that a stop would be made at Northgate to serve the north dorm area and help reduce traffic congestion at Northgate. This would also permit students to shop without using a car.

The groups involved in the decision favored the use of student service fees over user fees (such as off-campus shuttle buses) as a means of funding the intra-campus service. A report on the hearing said this decision was made because all students benefited from the easing of traffic congestion and payment through a general fee would encourage use of the buses by all students. It was also pointed out that no passes would need to be issued with this method of funding. The report said the checking passes would slow down the bus system.

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At the recommendation of E. C. Oates, Chairman of the Shuttle Bus Operations Committee, the number of buses on each route will be reduced to two for the fall, saving the university \$200 per day. Oates said that the reduction will not affect the system's efficiency but will avoid the incidents of "two working and four sitting" on the west campus.

The buses are dispatched every 10 minutes and run an 18 minute round trip. The red route, identified by a red card in the bus window, runs a clockwise route making stops at Krueger Hall, Rudder Tower, parking areas 56 and 61, the Entomology Building, the Veterinarian Hospital, the College Station Post Office (University Drive), Milner Hall and the Architecture Building.

The green route runs coun-

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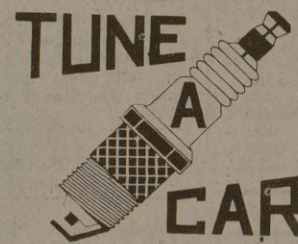
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