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Bowling Green State University

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Impending new shuttle costs, pressures to save money mean an end to University-owned shuttles. | PAGE 2

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University shuttles driven to extinction

By Meredith Siegel
Reporter

The University is outsourcing its shuttle services, and while some think this will benefit students, others believe the negative consequences drivers could face outweigh the benefits. The department made the decision Wednesday to outsource for lower-cost drivers and use new buses.

“The University is always looking for ways to save our students money, create efficiencies and lower costs, and that's really what started us down that path,” Brad Leigh, the executive director for Business Operations, said.

However, fees for students will remain the same.

“The shuttle service is funded by a general service fee that the students are charged. The fee itself should remain unchanged; it's been costing us more to run it than the fee was covering. This will allow us to lower the cost to run the service so that the fee is sufficient to cover that cost,” Leigh said.

According to an email sent out Wednesday, the buses will need around $250,000 in replacement and maintenance costs, and the decision to outsource will save from $200,000 to $250,000.

This arrangement will go into effect July 1, 2018.

Leigh also said with lower costs, students should be expecting new buses and better technology, hopefully with “the same friendly service they’ve been accustomed to and appreciated.”

Different students have said they loved the service from the shuttles, especially service from Richard L. Van Horn, who goes out of his way to develop personal relationships with all the students who ride his bus. He goes to their sporting events and performances and keeps track of where they go after graduation. He is determined to make them smile. He continually expressed love for students he has met while driving the buses, which he estimated to total about 50,000.

He has been very vocal on Facebook about his opposition to the outsourcing, and he feels that he is not receiving support from the University.

Students have shown love for Van Horn in return. When he expressed his disappointment with the outsourcing on Facebook, students responded with messages of love for him. There is now a petition on ipetitions.com for Van Horn to keep his job, which held 1,090 signatures as of Jan. 24, 2018.

Van Horn had stated before the announcement that, if the University decided to outsource, his last day driving would be May 15, 2018. He feels the changes will make it hard on him, but he said he loves the students nonetheless.

“I’ve never had a decision made by the University that I passionately did not agree with,” Kody Korbas said, a gerontology senior who has been driving the buses for three years. “I’m all for finding ways to save money, finding ways to give the students here the same services, but I truly believe that this decision will not be a great decision for the University for many different reasons — for not providing charters, not hiring students.”

Another problem opponents have with the agreement is that people under the age of 25 cannot currently drive for Groome Transportation, the company that will operate the new shuttles.

“Their current policies do say that the drivers should be 25 years of age,” Leigh said. “That is where it becomes a challenge for some of our student drivers, and we’ve asked (Groome) to revisit that. And they've agreed to go back and talk with their group to see if there could be a way they could make an

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2018 Women’s March: signs and solidarity

One year after millions around the world marched against hate, injustice and Trump, the women are still marching. The 2018 Women’s March brought new issues, along with new and creative signs, to the movement in an attempt to keep the feminist fury going. Here are some of my favorite signs from this year’s march and why they are important:

The theme of this year’s March was “Power to the Polls” which focused on registering and informing voters. Several signs depicted blue waves indicating a possible political shift if people vote promoters of hate and bigotry out of office in the midterm elections.

One of the biggest criticisms of the first Women’s March was a lack of messages about intersectionality. Whether this year’s March corrected the absence of issues such as equity for women of all races, sexual orientations, religions, legal statuses and socioeconomic classes is up for debate. However, the fact that signs such as these are getting attention shows movement in the right direction. Future marches must elevate the stories of underrepresented women if womankind as a whole is to rise up.

One of the biggest movements to shake the nation since the first Women’s March was #MeToo. Women who shared their sexual assault stories on social media were able to stand beside other survivors at this year’s March. Seeing the solidarity of women carrying #MeToo signs in the crowd and hearing the words speakers like Natalie Portman and Halsey had to share nodded to the power these women are taking back.

“Cake, because it's sweet and sugary and icing is so good.”

“Pie, I don't like frosting.”

“Pie, I like fruit and I’m not a big fan of icing.”

“If I could do ice cream cake I would do that, but I prefer pie over regular cake.”
The travel “Trump Slump”

Stepha Poulin
Forum Editor

Tensions are high after President Trump’s recent comments about countries he described with quite “colorful” language – could this, along with the overall political climate in the United States, affect the number of incoming international students?

Research shows the number of international students is declining, according to a Nov. 2017 Inside Higher Ed article. “After years of growth, enrollments of international students at American universities started to flatten in fall 2016, and a downward trend in new enrollments appears to be accelerating this academic year, with nearly half of universities surveyed (45 percent) reporting a drop in new international students this fall.”

While universities are generally seen as liberal environments, the number one reason foreign students cite for not wanting to study abroad is the United States’ political climate. How does this reflect on the average American, though?

Many of my friends and acquaintances are welcoming of foreign students and immigrants, regardless of their political orientation. However, individual experiences don’t change the headlines people abroad see.

A concerned U.S. parent may not want to send their child to study abroad because of horror stories published in the media, like a student going missing. However, parents in other countries are concerned about U.S. politics in general or specifically our Commander-in-Chief. International headlines about the United States are not helping attract international students, or even tourists for that matter. The U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office and the U.S. Department of Commerce have reported that U.S. tourism dropped four percent in the past year. An article in Forbes magazine labeled the drop the “Trump Slump.” A small drop in tourism can have a large effect, according to Forbes. “In 2016, the U.S. travel and tourism industry generated over $1.5 trillion in economic output, supporting 7.6 million jobs, according to SelectUSA, an international trade analyst firm. That represents 2.7% of overall GDP.”

The lower rate in tourism has triggered a response from the tourism industry. Basically, they’ve created a PR group for the entirety of the U.S. President Trump has triggered something akin to a public relations crisis in the United States. For someone so business savvy, one would think he would be smart enough to know the financial damage his words may cause.

“International headlines about the United States are not helping attract international students, or even tourists for that matter.”

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Main Street Bowling Green has a new bar crawl stop: a speakeasy-like venue called Vice & Video.

Bowling Green is one of America’s top 100 college towns due to the small city’s bustling nightlife. Vice & Video stands out from the other bars downtown, though. The buildings front façade may trick passersby into thinking a 1980s video store opened.

“It gives it a general video store feel. During the day, people walking by might think it’s just a video store,” manager Preston Crawford said.

Its style turns from retro to modern as visitors enter the bar, all while sticking to the “video” part of the bar’s name. Flat screen TVs are mounted on walls to display classic and new music videos, ranging from Tupac’s hits to Nicki Minaj singles. Rather than just playing music over a sound system, all songs are synchronized to music videos on the TVs.

“The overall vibe is different than other bars in BG,” Crawford said.

Besides the unique look of this venue, Vice & Video offers drink selections that are hard to find in Bowling Green. There are several blended margarita flavors available, ranging from classic margaritas to ones with fruity twists. The bar mainly serves tequila, unlike other bars in the area.

A bar also found on Main Street, 149, is connected to Vice & Video. The bars are connected via a doorway, and patrons can pay a single cover charge to enter both bars. Visitors can enjoy the classic bar vibes of 149 and get a new experience at Vice & Video.

The speakeasy nature of Vice & Video is evident by their advertising methods – there are no advertisements. The bar doesn’t even have an online presence, it simply relies on people finding out via word-of-mouth.

According to workers, Vice & Video has had a lot of success, even without advertising, after opening on Jan. 11.

“Once the word got out, it was crazy,” door-girl Rebecca Mannion said. “It’s like a speakeasy. The bar is a throwback with all the old videos out front.”

Bar-goers, like Robby Hertzfeld, are pleased with the new venue.

“I frequent 149, which has been really popular lately. It used to be more lowkey, so I’m glad I have a new place to go,” Hertzfeld said. “I prefer how lowkey this place is.”
Men's basketball loses to N. Illinois

By Jamison Terbrack
Sports Reporter

The Falcon men's basketball team lost to the Northern Illinois Huskies 93-62 after defeating them earlier this season, as the Falcons now sit at 3-4 in league play.

"We didn't come to play," Falcons head coach Chris Bergeron said. "Their top six forwards have been really good and they've got some guys on the back end that can help with the offense… Without naming just one guy, they've got some guys that can really play and that's where I think this team is dangerous is their offensive potential."

Lake Superior State comes into this weekend holding a 4-13-3 record in the WCHA, however they are just one point out of making the playoffs. The Falcons are coming off of a sweep against the Alaska Anchorage Seawolves, another team fighting to make it into the playoffs.

"Lake Superior's a little bit closer to that eighth spot in the playoffs than Anchorage was," Bergeron said. "I think Lake Superior is really good at home and the message to our group is that we've got to start the series this Friday much more like we started at Ferris State than at Northern Michigan, at Northern in the first seven minutes were not good, but the first seven minutes at Ferris we were winning 2-0, so we've got to be ready to go."

The Falcons will come into this weekend holding an 11-4-5 record in the WCHA. They currently hold the number three seed in the playoff running. Despite the differences in the standings between the two teams, the Falcons believe that both teams are in a similar situation by trying to put themselves in the best possible position going into the playoffs.

"I feel like both teams are playing meaningful games, it's getting late in the year and that's where we're alike," Bergeron said. "We're trying to prepare a team to play a series where these games really matter and so are they."

The team is also looking to focus on Lake Superior State's power play unit, which

Hockey looks to take on Lake Superior

By Zane Miller
Sports Editor

The Falcon hockey team will face the Lake Superior State Lakers on Friday and Saturday night for the second time this season. The previous series between the two teams on Nov. 10-11 resulted in the Falcons taking both games, one of which in a shootout.

"From start to finish our team played poorly in the first half, we didn't share the ball," Huger said. "We were very selfish, we took selfish shots and when you do that it's contagious, one guy gets it and another guy gets it and now your whole team is selfish and we didn't share the ball. Down seven (after the first half) I thought we were fortunate and it showed in the second half, we didn't come ready to fight and we didn't do that."

The Falcons finished with mixed team stats in this one as they shot .286, perfect from three point range, but had 13 turnovers.

"I thought we played poorly in the first half, we didn't share the ball," Huger said. "We were very selfish, we took selfish shots and when you do that it's contagious, one guy gets it and another guy gets it and now your whole team is selfish and we didn't share the ball. Down seven (after the first half) I thought we were fortunate and it showed in the second half, we didn't come to play."

The team will next play on Saturday, Jan. 27, on the road against the Toledo Rockets.

Freshman forward Max Johnson skates against Alaska Anchorage earlier this season.

holds a 17.7 percent success rate with 20 power play goals scored this year.

"They've got special teams that are capable," Bergeron said. "Especially on the road, that momentum, whether it's five on five or five on four, matters and we want to keep that momentum at least neutral as much as we can. I know that offensively and from a power play perspective, this is a dangerous team and those are two areas that we have to be focused on and those are two things that I expect from Lake Superior."
Shuttle continued from page 2

Kody Korbas
Gerontology Senior

adjustment to their current policy to allow for student employees at the University to continue to be drivers under this new agreement. So, all we can do is ask them to revisit it, and they have agreed to do that. If, in the event that they are not able to change that, we would gladly work with all of our students to find them other employment opportunities on campus.

Seven students will have to be considered for continued employment or find new jobs next year. Shuttle salaries are among the highest for student on-campus jobs, at $11.57 per hour.

“A lot of things that I view that could be problematic — because the reason we started hiring student drivers was because there was not enough interest in the community, and so I foresee that being a problem with the potential outsourcer,” Korbas said.

Korbas loves driving the buses, and he thinks it a great opportunity for students to meet people, get to know the campus and surrounding areas and have a job that is not sitting at a desk.

He considers his fellow bus drivers a “second family” and worries about the impact on them.

The University’s current drivers will be considered for employment with Groome, but there is no guarantee. All drivers must be able to obtain an Ohio Department of Transportation Operator Card. Requirements for the card include a physical exam.

“I’m all for saving money, making the University as best as it can be, but I don’t want this decision to impact so many people it will be impacting — not just student shuttle drivers, but full time and part time people as well,” Korbas said. “A third party company compared to an employee from the University… can be completely different.”

Current employees may not necessarily be taking a pay cut, but their pay is not longer up to the University; it will be determined by Groome Transportation, Leigh said.

Groome will also not be providing charters, which Korbas finds problematic.

“(Groome) won’t be providing charters, and so the people on campus will have to go through a different company. So, money that could be staying in the University will not be because the new company will not be providing that service. Someone who uses the charter service often will have to be paying an outside service for it and have to be paying more for it because it’s an outside service. For instance, Childers is a company in Toledo that we use for big events that we can’t provide enough buses for, like preview days, stuff like that; they are more expensive to charter bus than we offer,” Korbas said.

Charter buses are something the shuttle department is looking into with Groome, Leigh said.

Other departments on campus have been outsourced in the past, like the dining halls and the Falcon Health Center.

New buses should be arriving on campus next fall, Leigh said.

“I don’t want this decision to impact so many people it will be impacting — not just student shuttle drivers, but full time and part time people as well,” Korbas said. “(A) third party company compared to an employee from the University… can be completely different.”

Much like the current, the new shuttles will be University branded.

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The University released its 15-day enrollment numbers for the Spring 2018 semester today, breaking down statistics for graduate, undergraduate and Firelands campus students.

Enrollment rates in the undergraduate, graduate and Firelands programs have all stayed relatively flat; growth this semester is 0.6 percent. Firelands enrollment has dropped almost five percent this semester, undergraduate enrollment has increased.

Associate Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Planning, said, “Our enrollment growth continues to be driven at our undergraduate main campus enrollment, as well as our eCampus, which is how we deliver most of our exclusive online degree programs,” Cecilia Castellano, vice provost for strategic enrollment planning, said.

The graduate program enrollment has dropped almost five percent this semester, and undergraduate enrollment has increased 0.6 percent. Firelands enrollment has dropped by three percent this semester.

Graduate students have seen a 59 percent increase in eCampus enrollment this semester, while undergraduate students have seen a 41 percent increase. This has coincided with a decrease in distance education programs, which are now moving towards online platforms.

“Part of our strategic plan at the University is to continue to expand the quality of a traditional four-year institution education of a traditional four-year institution where students come in and take courses part time (for) eight weeks.”

With enrollment at Firelands and distance learning programs dropping, the University is pleased to see enrollment in eCampus courses increasing. The program will serve as another option for those looking to invest in higher education but need a more flexible schedule.

“One trend that has carried over from the Fall 2017 semester is a decrease in international graduate students. The University has continued to work with students to gain deferred acceptance, but troubles have risen when obtaining student visas.”

Read the rest of the story at www.bgfalconmedia.com