

# Buses help residents get where they're going

**The fare-free transit system in Chapel Hill is a gem for many residents.**

By Chessa DeCain  
City Editor

Most incoming UNC students have two choices when it comes to getting around town: walking, or the bus.

Fortunately, with 31 different weekend and weekday routes, and 121 buses in their fleet, Chapel Hill Transit is more than prepared for the job.

The transit system covers most major parts of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, including UNC's campus.

More importantly, bus rides on Chapel Hill Transit are absolutely fare-free — something important for students on tight budgets.

Brian Litchfield, assistant transit director for the Town of Chapel Hill, said the service gets about \$18 million annually to operate.

"Chapel Hill Transit is an interesting organization," Litchfield said. "Although we're a town department, we are funded by

the Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Carrboro and UNC."

In total, Litchfield says Chapel Hill Transit gives about 7 million rides a year, or roughly 28,000 each day.

"We're averaging about 45 rides per hour," he said. "Not only double what our peers are doing, but what most systems our size in the U.S. are doing."

Litchfield also said Chapel Hill has the second largest transit system in the state, behind only Charlotte.

"We have a very efficient system," he said.

Susan Hardy, a UNC employee, said she's used the bus system since she was a UNC undergraduate in 2001.

I've used the bus and walking as my main way to get around in my everyday life," she said.

In 2006, Chapel Hill decided to install a web-based tracking system on their buses with NextBus Inc., a California-based company.

NextBus uses GPS satellite-tracking technology to track where buses are in real-time and adjusts for stoplight and traffic patterns.

*"On the whole it's really nice to live in a community that has good transit."*

Susan Hardy,  
UNC employee

Users of NextBus can access the system either online at [www.nextbus.com](http://www.nextbus.com), or on their phones to see when buses will arrive at stops.

In 2009, UNC also contracted with NextBus to implement the technology on the P2P Express buses.

The P2P runs nightly in the spring and fall academic semesters from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m.

"There are always a few days out of the year where you feel like a chump for using it, because it's pouring or it's 10 degrees or whatever," Hardy said.

"But on the whole it's really nice to live in a community that has good transit."

Contact the City Editor at [city@dailytarheel.com](mailto:city@dailytarheel.com).

# Freshmen invited to get involved in government

**Student government gives many options for on-campus involvement.**

By Jessica New  
Staff Writer

Students who want to leave their "heelprint" at UNC should consider joining student government.

"If you love UNC, you feel an obligation to invest in it somehow, and student government is just one of the many avenues at Carolina that affords students that opportunity," said Student Body Vice President Rachel Myrick.

Any student can get involved through applications or election.

"It's open to students from all backgrounds and it can accommodate students with diverse interests and passions," Student Body President Will Leimenstoll said.

"You certainly don't need to be a political science major to get involved," he said.

"I've never even taken a political science course and I'm the president."

Myrick said student leaders are not looking for anyone with a

particular background, major or student government experience.

"You just have to love UNC and feel you have a stake in the campus and culture here," she said.

UNC's student government is completely student-run, from the Executive Branch to the Honor Court.

Its organization mirrors the U.S. government, with a judicial, executive and legislative branch.

All of the branches work closely with administration, and student government is a great opportunity to learn about and effect how the University is run.

"I think UNC has one of the most impressive systems of student self-governance at the university level around the country," Myrick said.

Paige Comparato, speaker of Student Congress, said that student government is valuable experience for any career.

"You get to learn how government works and make connections all across campus," she said.

"It's an application of what you learn in a classroom."

The executive branch includes external appointments, which are positions on committees that make decisions about athletics, parking and renewable energy.

"Whether you're helping to write the University's academic plan or advocating for the placement of recycling bins in athletic facilities, with student govern-

ment you'll have the opportunity to leave a lasting impact on Carolina," Leimenstoll said.

Student government will be represented at FallFest this year. Applications will be available there and online.

This fall, Student Congress is holding special elections to fill some seats.

There are two open seats in District 4, a district that includes traditionally freshman dorms such as Ehringhaus, Hinton James, Horton and Koury.

"Freshmen can run for those seats and can become a part of Student Congress their very first year," Comparato said. "It's a really good way to get involved right off the bat."

Student government has represented the student body amid recent tuition increases and student protests.

Leimenstoll said UNC has a strong tradition of student self-governance.

"The respect afforded to student government and other student-led organizations at UNC is a testament to the quality of the student body here," Leimenstoll said.

Myrick said officers in all branches work closely with top UNC administrators.

"I think the administration cares what students think," she said.

Contact the University Editor at [university@dailytarheel.com](mailto:university@dailytarheel.com).



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