

Students impacted by consistently inconsistent bus schedule

For students without a means of transportation, public transportation plays a vital role in getting around campus. However, as the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District bus driver shortage worsens, many students no longer have reliable transportation to classes.

The Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, or MTD, issued a statement on Aug. 17 to inform passengers of [the possibility of service reductions for several bus routes due to a shortage of qualified drivers](#). These reductions ultimately were put into place, affecting many bus routes including the 12/120 Teal, the 13/130 Silver, and the 22/220 Illini.

Ashley Lucken, freshman in LAS, said that she frequently has to deal with busses not arriving when they are scheduled to arrive.

“I’ll be sitting there sometimes and look at the times and it’ll say the bus is coming in eight minutes, then eight minutes will pass, and it’ll say something like eighteen minutes,” Lucken said. “It’s very inconsistent.”

In addition to frequently being late, Lucken explained that sometimes, a bus won’t come at all. She said that this was most common with the 13 Silver route.

For new students who are still getting accustomed to being on campus and using public transportation, it can be difficult to get acquainted with the busses due to the service reductions and other issues. Yuzhu Liu, sophomore in media, explained some of the issues she had early on.

“I’m new here, so I didn’t use the MTD app,” Liu said. “I just use Google maps and the schedule here is just a mess.”

With the driver shortage showing no signs of getting any better, students have had to adapt and change their habits in order to work around the inconsistent schedule. Liu explained that she has become adjusted to the issues.

“Before I realized this is a real issue, you know, I was just usually late,” Liu said. “Now I’m highly used to scheduling everything around this bus schedule. I started to schedule everything earlier.”

While the service reductions have become increasingly impactful for students, both Lucken and Liu claim that the schedule had issues even at the start of the semester. Both students claim that the issues started becoming more frequent near the end of September.

“I noticed the issues getting really bad within the last month,” Lucken said. “Before then it hadn’t really been that bad, definitely not as often.”

These claims coincide with a statement released by MTD on Oct. 1. In the statement, they addressed the [issues with the inconsistent bus schedules and confirmed that the service reductions proposed in their previous statement would be going into effect until further notice.](#)

Lucken explained that she now has to leave much earlier in order to make it to her classes on time.

“If I don’t leave 40 minutes before a class starts, I’m not going to get there on time unless I walk,” said Lucken. “I have more issues when the weather is not too good as well.”

As the weather continues to worsen and get colder, this driver shortage will become more problematic for students unprepared to walk in the cold. In addition to the cold, another issue has

appeared as fall continues, as shown through a recent situation Liu and her roommate found themselves in while waiting for a bus.

“If we missed the one we took, we’d have to wait for an hour and it’s already about 10 P.M.,” Liu said. “So, we were so scared.”

After daylight saving time on Nov. 7, the inconsistent and infrequent busses will create even more [issues for students trying to get home after the sun has set](#).

Similar to Lucken, Liu explained that in order to consistently catch the bus, she has to look over the schedule up to an hour in advance.

“Now I check the bus schedule maybe 30 minutes or one hour earlier,” Liu said. “Sometimes I just walk.”

Liu choosing to sometimes walk instead of taking the bus speaks to the greater issue of students having to risk being late every time they take the bus. Lucken explained that sometimes, depending on what bus route she would need to take, she will instead opt to walk to class as opposed to risking being late due to a bus not showing up or not being on time.

Lucken also said that she has become mostly able to tell whether or not she will be able to catch a bus without being late to her classes.

“For the most part, now that I leave a little bit earlier, I can usually tell if I’m not going to make it in time, and then I can start walking if I need to,” Lucken said.