Man demands fees, runs away with cash

By J. Leslie Sopko
Lantern staff writer

The Office of Fees and Deposits was robbed of an undisclosed amount of money about 1 p.m. Tuesday as several employees and students stood by, not realizing what was happening, campus police said.

Nick Bondra, police supervisor, said the suspect entered the second floor office in Lincoln Tower and, using threatening language, demanded money from the teller. He did not have a weapon.

Bondra said the man pointed to the money he wanted, which was in a white canvas money bag on top of a file cabinet in the office area behind the teller. The teller gave him the bag and the suspect fled on foot.

Bondra said the suspect robbed the office quietly. "Not many people knew what was going on," he said.

Police describe the suspect as a 30- to 34-year-old black male, about 5'2", with loosely curled hair. He was wearing a navy blue coat and had a very neat appearance.

An employee of the office declined to comment when asked if it is normal procedure to have money bags where the public can see them.

James L. Nichols, university treasurer, would not say how much money was stolen.

Police said an alarm which automatically alerts the police department was not activated. The alarm button is located beneath the teller's counter. A call was made to the campus police shortly after 1 p.m., informing them of the robbery.

Bondra said he does not think an employee of the university committed the robbery.

"There's always a possibility, but we really don't suspect anyone," he said.
Officials disclose $150,000 stolen from bursar's office

By J. Leslie Sopko
Lantern staff writer

More than $150,000 in checks written to the university for winter quarter fees was stolen Tuesday from the Office of Fees and Deposits, according to university officials.

James L. Nichols, university treasurer, said 550 student checks are missing.

Steve Sterrett, of the Office of Communications Services, said a total of $150,000 in checks and cash was stolen. He said less than 10 percent of the amount was cash.

"This is no different from the situation of a bank losing checks," Nichols said. "We know whose checks were involved in the robbery, so we can contact those students."

He said his office is currently gathering names, addresses, and phone numbers of students whose checks were stolen. If the checks are not recovered soon by police, a letter will be sent to the students explaining that a robbery occurred, he said.

Nichols said the students will then have to repay their fees either by mail or in person at the Office of Fees and Deposits.

Nichols stressed that each check had been endorsed by the university and stamped for deposit. "The likelihood of one of those checks being cashed by someone is extremely small," he said. "Any clerk that would cash that check would lose their job."

Nichols added that if a stolen check does get cashed, the university will reimburse the student. He also said no late fees will be assessed to the students who must repay their fees.

Nick Bondra, police supervisor, said a black man, about 6 feet, 2 inches tall with loosely curled hair, entered the second floor office in Lincoln Tower about 1 p.m. Tuesday and demanded money from a teller. The suspect apparently had no weapon.

Bondra said the man escaped with the money on foot.

Police are continuing their investigation.
OSU checks discovered

A white bag marked “U.S. Mint” and filled with checks to Ohio State University was found by a student Thursday along Olentangy River Rd.

The checks could be some or all of those stolen from a teller at the OSU Office of Fees and Deposits in Lincoln Tower on Tuesday. An unarmed man fled with about $135,000 in checks and $15,000 in cash, OSU spokesman Steve Sterrett said.

The find could spare 550 students from repaying their winter quarter fees, but OSU police refused to confirm that the checks had been found.

OSU student Adam Shackleford, 22, of 1407 N. 4th St. said he found the bag in the 1700 block of Olentangy River Rd. around 3 p.m.

He took the bag to an office in Lennox Industries Inc., 1711 Olentangy River Rd., and called Columbus police, who turned over the case to OSU police. OSU police took the bag.

“There was a stack of checks, about 6 inches high. I saw one check was written to Ohio State,” Shackleford said. He said he assumed the checks were those stolen Tuesday.

Gary Wilson, deputy chief of the OSU police, refused to confirm that the checks had been found. But OSU Safety Director Charles Gambus said, “There was a report the bag has been recovered. . . . It just happened early this evening. It’s still being investigated.”
Aid form causes late fees

By Karen S. Koestelnik
Lantern staff writer

Many students receiving financial aid are being charged late fees for failing to sign and return a section of their bills.

Connie Maxey, manager of the Office of Fees and Deposits, devised a new billing system to help speed the enrollment processing of students who receive financial aid. The new system went into effect at the beginning of the fall quarter.

The new procedure is intended to keep students from having to stand in long lines to confirm their attendance every quarter, Maxey said.

Students who receive bills with a zero balance are ignoring the top portion of the bill, which, she said, must be signed and returned to Fees and Deposits or the university will have no record of payment for that quarter.

According to Maxey, a late fee must be charged to a student after the first day of classes if the signed portion of the bill is not received.

Even if students get financial aid, the late fee has to be paid, usually out of the students' pockets, which causes more problems, she said.

"This is a particular problem with some graduate associates who are getting incorrect advice from their advisers," Maxey said. "But the problem still applies to all students who receive financial aid."

"If they were misinformed by a counselor or adviser, they have to get a letter from that person in order to waive the late fee," Maxey said. "That defeats the purpose of the new (billing) system because they are doing a lot of unnecessary running around."

Mindy Eckman, student services counselor, said the bill must be signed and returned so the university can collect the money from the financial aid institutions.

"If their bill isn't paid them they are not enrolled and we can't issue a paid fee sticker," Eckman said. "The worst aspect of all this is that they are unaware of the unpaid bill until after we charge them with the late fee."

Chris Richter, acting registration counselor, said that regardless of the accounts are paid by the students' particular financial aid program, students are not considered enrolled without their signatures.

"If students are to receive money from a grant or loan, they cannot gain access to it because the university has no record of their enrollment," Richter added.

Eckman said the initial late fee is $25. Each working day that the signed portion is late $2 is added until the late fee reaches $37, then the amount jumps to $50.

After the 14th of the month, students have to petition to be allowed to pay their fees. If the petition is approved, they still must pay a late fee of $65.

"We are revising the format of the bill so it is easier to read, but we need the students to realize the importance of signing and returning the bill," Maxey said.
Deadline information available on 24-hour student fees hotline

By Kathy Baumgardner
Lantern staff writer

Students will no longer be subjected to a busy signal or be put on hold when they call the Office of Fees and Deposits.

A 24-hour hotline has been established to provide students with accurate information concerning payment of fees, registration, scheduling, or student loans.

Doug Leary, clerical specialist for the Office of Fees and Deposits, said the hotline was developed because of concern about students not knowing about deadlines for fees.

The phone number for the hotline, which goes into effect Monday, is 292-FEES.

Callers will hear a recorded message listing the hours for the fees and deposits office, which are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., said Leo Rowe, coordinator for customer service.

The recording will also give the deadlines for paying Summer Quarter fees with no penalty. The June 17 deadline must be stamped on the envelope, Rowe said.

"If your college is not on quarters, call your college for deadlines," he said.

For the answers to any questions concerning scheduling on time or general procedures, call 292-5500.

The hotline for admissions information is 292-3980 and the hotline for information about student loans is 292-3816.

Students who have any questions about fees and deposits may call 292-2812.
Postcard receipt replaces sticker

By Tara Anne Powers
Lantern staff writer

Beginning Autumn Quarter, students will no longer receive paid fee stickers. Instead, they will receive "revised paid fee receipts."
The Office of Fees and Deposits will mail the new fee receipts to students as postcards.
A detachable portion of each postcard will contain the same information as the current fee stickers. The detachable receipt is about the same size as the student I.D. card, but it does not adhere to the back of the I.D.
"This is just the first step in conversion to the magnetic-strip I.D. of the future," said Leo Rowe, coordinator of student services for fees and deposits.
Rowe said some departments are already using magnetic-strip I.D.'s, such as the Office of Residence and Dining Halls.
"This is also a money-saving venture for fees and deposits," Rowe said. The Office of Fees and Deposits estimates the savings to be near $20,000 annually.
The savings will come from the reduced mailing rate for the postcards. These cards will cost 16 cents apiece to mail, compared to 21 cents apiece for the presorted first-class mailings.
It is also more expensive to produce fee stickers than the detachable fee card, Rowe said.
He said students will have to carry two pieces of identification for awhile, but he said "there will be no need to have a paid fee receipt — whether it be a sticker or a card — once we get fully operational with the magnetic strip system."
Dick Lawton, manager of the I.D. center, said the magnetic-strip I.D. cards are being issued to incoming students and faculty this summer.
The new I.D. card combined the picture I.D.'s with the magnetic-strip cards. The two-card system will be phased out within the next four to five years, Lawton said.
"Getting the time and funds to install (the magnetic system) in each and every department where a student is required to show his paid fee receipt is probably the major reason why (departments) have not converted totally," Rowe said.
Rowe said he is uncertain how long it will take for the system to be installed and made fully operational.

Students must show their paid fee stickers to gain access to Larkins Hall and to other campus recreational facilities as well as to check out library books.
"I like the old way better," said Calvin Price, a senior majoring in computer information science and business. "I think that students would prefer to have the stickers."
Mark Thibodeau, a sophomore from Akron majoring in industrial psychology, said people will lose the new cards more often and have to get more replacements.
Thibodeau said he "likes the sticker better."
Al Hartzler, a graduate student in biomedical engineering, said he is glad he is graduating "so I won't have to mess with it."
In order to handle questions about the new fee receipts and provide information about fee payments, deadlines and penalties, the Office of Fees and Deposits has established a 24-hour information hotline, 292-FEES.
Fee sticker replaces postcard; inconvenience ends in winter

By Patty A. Harden
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State will issue fee sticker receipts instead of postcards Winter Quarter in order to restore convenience to students, said Leonard Copeland, manager of the Office of Fees and Deposits.

"We don't want to make students carry two (pieces of identification) instead of one," he said.

Copeland said the university began using postcards because they are less expensive and because time constraints forced the office to find the quickest and cheapest receipt form.

"Students would have had sticker receipts Autumn Quarter if we would have had additional time," he said.

Copeland, who was named manager of the Office of Fees and Deposits in April, said the sticker process takes a lot of time because the printing is done by a computer on security paper, which is difficult to forge. Copeland said there wasn't enough time to have the stickers made this quarter.

Dick Lawton, manager of the I.D. Center, said many students have had their postcards laminated, for which the university charges 50 cents.

"We have not had a single complaint from a student," he said.

Copeland said as of Sept. 20, 51,162 students had paid enrollment fees. "That's a pretty good record to not have any of them kicking and screaming."

Timmy Kenton, a junior from Pickerington, said the postcards are not a good idea. "People carry their I.D.s with them in their wallets — but when they go out they'll leave their postcards in their desks."

"They're (postcards) unattractive because they're large and bulky," said Marc McTeague, a junior from Pickerington.

Karen Blackburn, a junior from Cincinnati, said people will lose and forget the postcards. "Everyone already knows you have to keep your I.D. with you, but everyone will forget the postcard. I might cut mine down and laminate it."

Copeland said many students have been trimming and laminating the receipts.

Receipts probably won't go back to the postcard in the future, but a task force is researching plans to change to magnetic strip I.D.s, he said.

A date for the magnetic strip has not been set. Copeland said it could be a couple years or 10 years before the change is implemented.

A fees hotline, 292-FEES, was begun at the beginning of Summer Quarter to answer questions and give updated information. The hotline enables the Office of Fees and Deposits to handle five times the number of calls it previously handled, he said.

The Office of Fees and Deposits will be open Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for students to pick up paid fee postcards. Fees cannot be paid.
Fees and deposits works to improve their image by improving the system

By Jeffrey Brodeur
Lantern staff writer

The manager of the office of fees and deposits says he realizes that his office has had a bad image in the past, but he hopes his efforts to improve the system have made a difference.

Leonard Copeland said Thursday he wanted students to know his office has been trying hard to improve the situation in Lincoln Tower.

"We got a commitment from the office of the treasurer, so we've tried to improve the office," he said.

Copeland said with the extra resources he received he has been able to open more cashier windows.

"SINCE WE have more cashiers, the lines have been much shorter," he said.

Copeland also said his office is now able to cash checks, both payroll and personal, for students.

"We realize that a student can't always cash checks at off-campus banks," he said.

Marc Goerges, 20, a junior from Fairborn majoring in international business, said he understood where the office might get its reputation, but he thought they were doing well.

"Considering the vast amount of students they deal with, they do a good job," he said.

Goerges said he mails his fees to avoid lines at Lincoln Tower.

"I just send it in, so the problem of waiting isn't there," he said.

Copeland said his office would be revising students' bills for autumn quarter, something he said was badly needed.

"We're trying to cut the clutter and clearing it up a bit," he said.

Copeland said the new format was reviewed by a panel of students to see if any other changes should be made.

Goerges said he thought any change in the billing procedure would be a good one.

"I THINK by simplifying the bill, it would make it much easier for them," he said.

He also said fees and deposits has a hotline for students to call if they ever have any problems with their bill.

"The number is 292-FEES, and it's a recorded message that is updated constantly to assist students before they come to the office," he said.

Brian Kropp, 21, a junior from Canton majoring in communication, said he was very pleased with the changes at fees and deposits.

"FOR THE most part they're fair and they listen to your gripes," he said.

Kropp also said he mailed in his fees because it saved him time.

"Lines are inevitable, but if I can avoid them by mailing mine in, I'd rather do that," he said.

Copeland said he wanted OSU students to know they are welcome to make any suggestions to his office.

"Fees and deposits is here for the students. Without them, we wouldn't be here," he said.

"Everyone is not a number with us, they are a human being."
Assistants
help ease
loan lines

By Theresa Marvin
Lantern campus reporter

Long lines for picking up bank loan checks have been alleviated this quarter through changes in the office of student financial aid and the treasurer's office, said Leonard Copeland, manager of the office of fees and deposits.

College offices can now tell students if their checks have arrived so students are not waiting in line just to see if their checks are available.

According to Copeland, arriving bank loan checks have been entered into the university's BARS computer system.

"We've had people working nights to keep this information current," Copeland said.

This combination of increased volunteers and computer utilization has enabled the offices of fees and deposits and student financial aid to disburse 867 bank loan checks in the first two days, an increase of nearly 50 percent over last year.

When picking up bank loans, students are required by new federal regulations to attend an entrance interview before receiving their check. This is an attempt to ensure that students understand the obligations of these loans.

Copeland said the interview takes about five minutes. He said that even with the new interview regulations, the time students spend waiting for their checks has been shortened with the help of volunteers from the office of finance.
Hot line handles student fees

By Sandra Scult
Lantern staff writer

In a fast-paced, hustle and bustle world, OSU students are probably not willing to wait for anything — especially when they have to wait in long lines or stay on the phone for long periods to resolve fee payment problems.

The Office of Fees and Deposits and the Office of Student Financial Aid have enhanced their phone systems to meet students’ needs.

Leonard Copeland, assistant treasurer for the Office of Fees and Deposits, said the office has established a telephone service center and a “hot line” to handle students’ calls and problems.

For example, if students need information about a refund check or if they have questions about their fee statement, they can call the center at 292-2812 and someone will assist them.

If students dial the “hot line number,” 292-FEES, a recorded message will give information about bank loan disbursements, fee deadlines, dropping classes and the office’s check cashing policy.

Mary Haldane, director for Student Financial Aid, said her office recently changed phone systems from INFO LINK to DIAL.

“This system is a lot more user friendly and is quicker for the students to use,” Haldane said.

The DIAL system will allow students more recorded information choices and it enables them to reach a representative quicker.

Haldane said the most popular feature on the new system is a special mailbox for long distance callers.

The caller can leave a message and a financial aid representative will return the call within two days, so that students do not have to incur the cost, Haldane said.

The new system was implemented because the Financial Aid office did not have enough staff to assist students.

Kathleen Gagnon, student services coordinator for the Office of Fees and Deposits, is responsible for training staff at the phone center.

Gagnon said her employees get an assortment of calls that pertain to other departments, such as Student Financial Aid.

“The staff must learn basic information so they will be well-versed in many areas, and they will know where to refer the students,” she said.

Gagnon said the office is always open to student suggestions.

“We want them to know we are not the bad guy,” she said.

Yolanda Sterling, a senior from Dayton, said she had to call the phone center because she paid her fees by mail and did not receive a paid fee sticker.

“I called Fees and Deposits and they explained to me that mistakes happen, and asked me to come in and pick one up. They were very nice about it,” she said.

Mark Wilson, a sophomore from Columbus, said he paid his fees by check a week before they were due during fall quarter 1989.

“The person I spoke to didn’t seem to really know what was going on. They couldn’t help me at all,” he said.

“The TA’s kept asking me if I paid my fees because I was not on their list as being paid,” Wilson said.

He said he called back a few times and the problem resolved itself.

Two people are staffed to handle calls at the phone center. They answer about 120-150 calls per day during an 8 hour shift, Gagnon said.
Students, employees share stress

By Sandra M. Scott
Lantern staff writer

Often students get irate after going to the Check Disbursements Office to pick up a loan check, only to be told that their check isn't in.

Employees of the Office of Fees and Deposits said they would like to retaliate when students are rude, but they just 'take the heat'. They have learned how to handle these trying situations by attending stress management seminars.

Leonard Copeland, assistant Treasurer for the Office of Fees and Deposits, said since he has been in the department he has known that people need to attend crisis management courses.

Copeland said his background is in customer services and he realizes that people dealing with the public are told to keep things inside. "The customer is always right," he said.

Ralph Jackson, a sophomore from Columbus said that he's spoken to people over the phone and has had to go in person to the office of Fees and Deposits. He said that he gets upset when he gets a negative response from the employees.

"Even when people receive irate calls, they should not be rude. They are there to serve the public," he said.

Copeland said he sends his employees to stress management seminars so that they can be more productive knowing how to handle stress.

"Because we work in a government situation, you can't pay them what they are worth," Copeland said. "If they are at home ill because of stress related jobs, they cannot be helpful to me ... I believe that a healthy workplace is a happy workplace."

Tres Baker, vice president of marketing for North Central Mental Health Services, markets the center's stress management program to perspective employers.

"We found that it is because stress is triggered by a number of mechanisms we teach employees techniques so that their absentee rates from work are not that high," she said.

Baker said that people experience stress at home and they take it to the office where it can surround their life. Life's processes are more difficult than they were 15 years ago, Baker said. Jobs are more complex and there is an additional amount of stress on dual-income families, so people are healthier when they are more equipped to manage stress, he added.

Copeland said the Office of Fees and Deposits is a stressful operation, so he scheduled to send his employees to such seminars as they are offered.

Kathy Gagnon, staff employee of the Office of Fees and Deposits, recalled attending several stress management courses with employees from the Office of Finance.

She said the seminar lasted two days and they learned how much they are in control. They learned how they can control their actions in a given situation, but she said "there are days when it will get to you."

Mary Cathy, a senior from Cleveland, works with check disbursements. "Working with the students can be stressful at times, especially at the beginning of autumn and winter quarters," she said.

Cathy said the most stressful situation she encountered was when she was walking down High Street and someone confronted her because she did not have a check for them to pick up when they came for it at the disbursement window.

Cathy said, she thinks student help should be allowed to attend stress management seminars because "sometimes I get really upset and want to yell back." Knowing about stress management will probably help her, she said.

Leonard Roundtree, a sophomore from Cleveland, also works in the check disbursement area. He thinks that he can benefit from stress management classes, so that he will be able to better deal with certain situations and he will be more effective in dealing with people in general.

Copeland said to help the problem of irate students and to minimize the stress on the employees that deal with them, the office has put up a time saver board. The board is located outside of the Office of Fees and Deposits, and it gives students current information regarding the dates checks will be disbursed at Drake Union.
Fees and Deposits sets new programs for fall

By Melissa Visnic
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State's office of Fees and Deposits is gearing up for fall quarter with the introduction of two new services designed to eliminate some of the red tape involved in student financial aid.

One new program is aimed at students who have earned less than 45 credit hours and are applying for student bank loans for the first time, while another program will aid mostly teaching associates, said Dolly Hasebrooks, assistant manager of Fees and Deposits.

The new student financial aid program was developed in response to state legislation enacted last year requiring a 30-day wait for students with less than 45 credit hours who are applying for student loans from a bank for the first time.

Ohio State requires verification of a first-time student loan applicant's financial aid status within 15 days.

Last year, in response to the legislation, students had to apply for an interim loan from the university at the beginning of their first quarter to pay student fees, Hasebrooks said.

In effect, this forced students to go through the loan process twice. Then, when students did receive their bank checks, they turned them over to the university.

This year, however, the Office of Financial Aid will notify Fees and Deposits about which students fall into this category and the university will automatically advance the funds to the student until bank checks are received, Hasebrooks said.

Last year, 2,000 students fell into this category, but only 700 actually applied for an interim loan from the university, she said.

Students who are eligible for an advance loan this year will be notified by the Office of Financial Aid.

The other new program, for teaching associates, is being tested and refined this summer and will be ready for full implementation in the fall.

Because scheduling takes place so far ahead of the actual start of fall quarter, the office of Fees and Deposits needs confirmation of the TA's plans to attend Ohio State closer to the beginning of the quarter, Hasebrooks said.

In the past, in order to obtain scheduling confirmation, each TA was sent a fee statement with a confirmation form enclosed. TAs were then required to return the fee statements so Fees and Deposits could charge individual departments for the TA's tuition, Hasebrooks said.

She said this confused many TA's because they didn't understand why they were required to return fee statements when their departments were supposed to take care of their tuition.

Under the new system, Hasebrooks said student TA's can confirm enrollment by phone, saving the cost of a stamp.

Hasebrooks said some TA's may not take advantage of the new system fall quarter because many students spend the summer at home, but she said she expects the new system to be fully utilized by winter quarter.
Student fee refund checks less than $50 will not be mailed

Kevin McLain
Lantern staff writer

Students who are checking their mailboxes every day for a fee refund check of less than $50 can stop looking.

At the beginning of this quarter the Office of Fees and Deposits stopped mailing refund checks of amounts less than $50.

Previous to this quarter, Fees and Deposits would process and mail out a check for any amount of refund due to a student after the sixth week of the quarter, Guy Flora, cashier supervisor at Fees and Deposits, said.

"We've mailed out checks for one cent before," Flora said.

Flora said he and Dolly Hasebrook, assistant manager at Fees and Deposits, decided on the new policy when they found that 20 percent of the refunds that were mailed were for less than $50, while 80 percent of those were sent to students living in dorms.

"Now, after the sixth week, students can come pick up their refund or they can leave it as credit toward the next quarter," Flora said.

Flora said there were 1,128 refunds this quarter for amounts less than $50; 517 of which were for amounts less than $20, and the average refund was $7.46.

Flora said he is not exactly sure how much money this new policy will save, but he figured that using the special check paper, envelopes and printing makes each check cost at least one dollar.

Flora also estimated that, with administrative costs included, it costs the university about $14 to process one check. He added that the cost is probably lower for bulk check writings.
Monthly fee billing plan gains support

By Danielle Rogers
Lantern staff writer

A monthly payment plan to help students pay their tuition might become a reality next fall.

The Ohio Plan, as it is called, has been approved by the Office of Fees and Deposits, but it still needs an OK from be approved by OSU President E. Gordon Gee and the university executive committee, said Leonard Copeland, director of Fees and Deposits.

Copeland said the proposal is the result of high demand from students and parents, a sluggish economy, the rise in tuition and the number of students requesting aid.

The plan breaks up each quarter's fees into three payments for a total of nine monthly payments each year. For example, tuition, health insurance, computer fees and parking fees would make three monthly payments of $500. For Fall Quarter 1993, the monthly payments would begin in August and follow through October.

TOP would not interfere with student financial aid, Copeland said. Using the same example, a student with $1,500 in total costs and $1,200 in financial aid would pay $100 monthly, Copeland said.

"If anything, it (TOP) would help financial aid by reducing the number of small emergency loans," said Kathy Gagnon, coordinator of the program.

There is also a proposed annual $35 user fee, which would be paid only by students participating in the plan. There will be no interest payments. The plan is flexible enough to allow quarterly fee adjustments in the third payment of each quarter, Copeland said.

The Office of Fees and Deposits polled students in the winter of 1991 and realized most were in favor of a payment plan. Other universities with monthly payment plans were then contacted to find out how their plans were administered, Copeland said.

Youngstown State has had a monthly payment plan since last year. It is actually a pre-payment plan since students begin paying tuition in July, said Tom Martindale, director of YSU's bursar's office.

The plan is administered by a private company, Tuition Management System, which collects the students payments and then forwards them to YSU. There is a $50 application fee, but there is no interest charged to unpaid amounts. There are 100 students enrolled in the plan.

"It works for the student," Martindale said. "It is designed for a certain kind of lifestyle. The people that have it, love it."

Cleveland State also has a monthly plan, but it is administered by the university and does not require early payments. Students pay 40 percent of their fees two weeks before the beginning of the quarter. They follow with two 30 percent payments during the fourth and eighth weeks of the quarter, said Jack Ganz, university bursar.

After the first payment, a student is considered enrolled and does not affect the university's subsidy count. Ganz said. In this plan, 70 percent of a student's fees are paid by the time of the count.

State-supported schools receive a subsidy for every student who pays their fees by the 14th day of the month. For Ohio State, the subsidy changes with the amount of total enrollment and fund appropriation by the state legislature, said Eric Kuz, assistant vice president for university budget planning.

CSU's plan has a $15 surcharge and a $10 late payment charge. The surcharge covers the 15 percent of the 4,500 participating students that do not pay their fees by the end of the quarter, Ganz said.

"We've lost some investment income because quite a few students don't pay their fees," Ganz said. "There's a lot of bad debt in this plan, but we think it's a positive program because it assists students and families."

"The plan does pay for itself because we have a large participation and were highly automated," he added.

Gagnon expects high participation in OSU's proposed plan. The number of students projected to participate in the plan has ranged from 5,000 to 20,000. Ohio State chose to administer the plan itself to provide convenience and a wider range of services, Gagnon said.

"We feel this is going to be the best plan in the country in as far as flexibility and services to the student," Copeland said.

TOP has received support from several campus offices, including the Council for Graduate Students, USG, the admissions and registrar's offices.

Brad Myers, associate registrar, said the plan is good because it provides students with an option without affecting state subsidy. He added that most universities either have a fee payment plan or are moving toward it.

"From a practical standpoint, no matter how you budget, it's hard to come up with (a fee payment). It's more practical to say by this date you must pay one-third of the bill," he said.

Karen Duncan, president of the Council for Graduate Students, agrees.

"For any student coming up with the lump sum for tuition is pretty hard to do. If the student has the option to spread that payment out, it could be a real service to students and their families," she said.
Faxing fees

Students no longer have to listen to busy signals when trying to contact the Office of Fees, Deposits and Disbursements. Now they can send requests or questions by fax, said Kathy Gagnon, coordinator of the telephone center for Office of Fees and Deposits.

"We're just providing another service for students who can't get through on the phone," she said.

The new Priority Service program will start March 15, the first day the office accepts fee payments for Spring Quarter.

The service guarantees a solution or response within 24 hours. Students must include a fax or phone number with their requests so they can be reached, Gagnon said.

The office has a hotline for general information, so the program should be used more for service requests and other questions, said Samantha Stainaker, a graduate student working in the Office of Fees and Deposits.

— Shuly X. Cawood
New service to cut student aid lines

By Kelley Kurtz
Lantern staff writer

Don't get weak knees from standing in long lines this quarter — help is just around the corner. "On the first day of class, it is important that you are in your class and not waiting in a line someplace," said Dolly Hasebrook, coordinator of Student Aid Disbursements.

Students will no longer need to stand in line to pick up University Loan checks, a university news release said.

The offices of Fees, Deposits and Disbursements and Student Loan Services are implementing new procedures to apply University Loans directly to students' accounts, the news release said.

"We are slowly getting away from paper checks and going directly to electronic transfer," said Treasurer James Nichols.

Approximately 80 percent of all student aid is now done by electronic transfer instead of paper checks, Nichols said.

"That is going to help the kids tremendously, because it will eliminate a line that they have to stand in," Assistant Treasurer Leonard Copeland said.

The university loan is automatically placed on the student's account, Copeland said.

The only time a student would have to come in would be to make the application in the Financial Aid Office, Hasebrook said.

The transition to Electronic Funds Transfer, from the traditional system began two years ago, according to Copeland.

"What has benefitted us is showing students how to fill out applications," Copeland said.

Next year, Ohio State will participate in a new Direct Lending Program, said Hasebrook.

"We started this process (EFT) about two years ago," Nichols said. "We hope in two to three years down the road, (paper transactions) will cease to exist."

Students who did not choose the EFT option are waiting in long lines to pick up Stafford Loans in Drake Union, this week, Hasebrook said.

"We know from the first day working here, students were standing in line for over four hours walking around Lincoln Tower," Ralph Vopper, Systems Analyst for the Office of the Treasurer, said.

"Students are frustrated with long lines and believe EFT transfer will be more efficient. With the long lines, it just gets in the way of doing some other things you would rather be doing," said Mark Kavacich, a sophomore from Euclid majoring in business.

"It would take away a lot of the red tape to go through different channels," Kavacich said. "It would free up the advisors here for students who really need them."

"Electronic transfer would be great," said Rhonda Carpenter, a sophomore majoring in criminal justice from Parma. We would not have to waste time standing in line and they (the university) would not have to have all of those people working over here (Drake Union)."

Because of budget cuts, everybody is somewhat short-handed, Copeland said.

"What has been most beneficial is showing creativity and figuring out non-personal ways to speed up the process," Copeland said.

Copeland encourages students to use the 292-EASE phone service to confirm loans, find out balances and add or subtract student health insurance. It allows the university to place emphasis on behind-the-scenes work, such as answering student's needs and issuing loan credit balances to students, he said.

"We think it (292-EASE) benefits everybody," Copeland said. "A lot of these ideas comes from students, staff, and we are listening to what they are telling us."

Anthony Gary, from Akron, has his turn at the Office of Fees and Deposits after waiting in line Monday for 20 minutes.

"I've been at the university for almost 20 years, and I have seen a lot of progress," said Hasebrook.

"With direct lending, there will no longer be paper loans," Hasebrook said. "The university will be your bank."

Direct Lending gives the university more control so that the funds are available when needed, said Brenda Stearns, associate director of Financial Aid.

"I've been at the university for almost 20 years, and I have seen a lot of progress," said Hasebrook. "It is exciting to see this much progress happening so quickly. We are making forward and making the system better for the student."

The Office of Financial Aid is expecting EFT to help the university this year, and direct lending next year, Stearns said.

Information and instructions will be mailed to all university loan students at the home address listed with the university, the news release said.

If students have not received this information by Sept. 29, they can call 292-1056 during normal business hours. Students can call 292-EASE to ensure loan funds have been applied to their student account.
Services added at Fees and Deposits

By Alison Crawford
Lantern staff writer

OSU's Office of Fees and Deposits has added new services for Autumn Quarter that will shorten lines and make the lives of students easier, according to Guy Flora, Fees and Deposits coordinator.

One change this quarter is the implementation of the new student ID, Flora said.

A magnetic strip on the front of the card holds a data base that can be swiped at one of the many terminals located around campus, Flora said. It can instantly show card holder information like: paid student fees, health insurance, or credit hours. This strip also makes paid fee stickers obsolete, he said.

Students need a new ID if they received their cards before 1988, Flora said. The ID should have a black magnetic strip on the lower front side. Cards with unusable magnetic strips will be replaced for free, he said.

Another new service from Fees and Deposits is direct lending.

This program eliminates banks from the student loan process making the University and the Federal Government the only participants.

Under the new system, the loan is automatically put on the student's account as direct credit. "This shortens the processing time so much," Flora said.

"Until now, once you've signed the promissory note, it could take three or four weeks for your loan to show up at the school," Flora said. "Now it's three or four days."

A third new service offered by Fees and Deposits is an improved automated information line.

Fees and Deposits has enhanced the automated information line (292-EASE) by making more information available and adding extra phone lines, Flora said. The line is open 24 hours-a-day and provides students with information about tuition balance, TOPP (Tuition Option Payment Plan) balance, loan information, and allows students to add or drop student health insurance.

Leonard Copeland, Fees and Deposits assistant treasurer, said he recommends students call EASE before making the trip to the second floor office in Lincoln Tower. The office is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.