Pedaling new wares

Bike share program slated for October

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The Office of Sustainability will be initiating a new bicycle rental program on campus in October.

The “bike-sharing” program will make bicycles accessible to students. The bikes will be available outside of the student union, near the Girard Park Circle parking tower and at Cajun Field.

“We’re excited about it,” Gretchen Vanicor, director of the Office of Sustainability, said. “We’ve been working on it for about a year now so we’re excited to finally get the bikes here.”

The bicycles will be provided by Rugged Cycles, a company that has provided bicycles for Texas A&M University for the past three years. One of the owners is an alumnus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

The bicycles were originally made for refineries in west Texas, Vanicor said, so they are extremely sturdy.

“They’re meant to be really safe,” Vanicor said.

The tires will be solid rubber so students do not have to worry about flat tires, the frames will be rust resistant and the chain will be completely enclosed to avoid snagging pants as students ride.

“We have most of (the bicycles) for the commuter students for now because we are really hoping that will take off as an alternative for them,” Vanicor said.

Vanicor said the Office of Sustainability plans to put 10 bicycles at both sites on campus and 32 bicycles at Cajun Field for commuter students.

The bicycle rental process will be managed by a kiosk at each station. Students will need to register, free of charge, online to use the kiosks. When renting a bicycle, they will either swipe their Cajun card or enter a passcode and the kiosk will distribute a key. The key will open the tire lock on one of the bicycles.

The first hour and a half using the bicycle will be free. Bicycle rentals will cost $1 and for $2 eight hours. After eight hours it costs $1 per hour to use the bicycle.

When a student registers online they will enter a debit or credit card for their account. The money for rentals will be charged to the card.

“Our plan for this is not to make a lot of money off the students,” Vanicor said.

Vanicor said her office hopes

Photo by Leah Cavalier/The Vermilion

Bicycles are locked up on racks outside of Bonin Hall.
to make the bicycle sharing program self-sustaining. There will be opportunities for sponsors to advertise on the bicycles and the money would go towards the program.

The bicycles can be ridden anywhere around Lafayette by anyone in the community. The Office of Sustainability hopes to install other bicycle docks at the Horse Farm, in downtown and the Oil Center. They would also like to add 40 to 50 bikes on UL Lafayette campus by next April.

“We really want to see more faculty, staff and students on bikes,” Vanicor said.

The annual cost of the program will be less than $30,000, Vanleer said. If more bicycles are added this amount will increase.

“It seems like a pretty cool idea, but ... biking on campus doesn’t really work for me because my classes are usually close together,” said Mackenzie McAnally a junior English major.

McAnally said the bicycle sharing program would not be something she would personally take part in. Her classes are usually close together and she spends too much time trying to navigate crowds with a bike and finding a place to lock it up. It is easier for her to walk.

Though she would not personally benefit from the program, McAnally also said it is “another cool thing the university has to offer.”

“It’s a good way to influence people to start riding bikes,” Meredith Guidry, sophomore architecture major, said.

Guidry said renting a bicycle would be a good option for students who can’t afford their own. She thinks the program will help to make roads more “people friendly.”

Guidry said the program is a “fun option to have for students.”