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## Students will use college IDs to make purchases on and, eventually, off campus **Don't leave class without it**

By Nate Traylor, Business Editor | Posted: Saturday, January 29, 2011 11:00 am



### **World Photo by Lou Sennick**

Southwestern Oregon Community College student John Covey shows his Laker 1 Card on Wednesday as he finished his lunch in Empire Hall. Not only is the card his official ID for the college, but he'll soon be able to use it to make purchases on the Coos Bay campus.

COOS BAY - John Covey was the first among his friends to get the new Southwestern Oregon Community College student identification card.

"I'm up to date," he said, brandishing his slick new credential.

What Covey didn't know: He'll soon be able to use the card to make purchases on campus.

"That'd be sick," the 21-year-old exclaimed.

That's young adult parlance for nifty. (See also: neat, cool, swell.)

Even sicker, to borrow Covey's word: Students eventually may be able to make purchases with their IDs off campus.

That's the potential with CardSmith, says Jeff Whitey, SWOCC's director of student housing. The transactions-services provider launched the college's Laker 1 Card system earlier this week.

"They have experience working with key vendors," Whitey said.

### **The card off campus**

Students in other states can swipe their campus IDs for purchases at participating restaurants and retailers.

Applebee's, CVS pharmacies and Chipotle Mexican Grill, for example, accept campus card payments from Jacksonville (Fla.) University students, according to a PaymentsSource article.

Whitey said CardSmith and the college will be reaching out to local businesses for partnerships.

"We'll work together on that," he said.

"Obviously, as a college, we're open to all community members and working with them."

Dozens of local businesses already provide college students discounts of 5-20 percent.

### **Bye-bye coins**

Here's how it'll work: Students will be able to transfer money from their personal bank accounts onto their ID cards. Then they can make purchases with them in the college bookstore, computer lab and dining hall.

That feature will be available within the next couple of months, Whitey said.

Unlike a debit card, however, students cannot use it to withdraw cash.

An earlier version of the card system allowed housing students to use IDs to purchase cafeteria food.

"But it wasn't anything like we're doing now," said college spokesman Karl Eastrop.

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Soon, student IDs will be an alternative to coins. No more pumping quarters into a vending machine when you can simply swipe for a soda.

Pepsi is Southwestern's refreshment vendor.

"We're working with them to get (ID) readers on those Pepsi machines," Whitey said. "We're pretty excited about that."

And searching underneath couch cushions for laundry money will be unnecessary. Campus washers and dryers eventually will be retooled to support card payments.

"I'm changing out quarters weekly," Whitey said. "That'll be another huge venue for them to use the card."

### **Parents can deposit**

Another perk: Students can grant their parents access to their accounts so moms and dads can transfer funds directly onto their cards.

"My son at (University of Southern California) would be lost without his Trojan card," said Helen Garrett, executive dean of student affairs at Lane Community College in Eugene.

"I can see my son's transactions. I can see he was at Subway two nights ago."

Not that she's spying, she added.

### **College commissions**

Garrett said card vendors have pitched LCC on the convenience of a cash-free campus. The college has looked into it. "But it just hasn't taken action to implement it at this point."

"There is some cost to managing it," she said.

Southwestern will pay CardSmith \$20,000 a year to manage transactions and software.

The program was paid for with a federal grant. Whitey said the college had about \$100,000 earmarked for the card program, but it won't likely spend that much on it.

"That's allowed us to move forward after many years of planning," he said.

And there's opportunity offset costs through commissions. The more students use the cards with participating vendors, the more kickbacks the college will receive, Whitey said.

### **Just swipe, that's all**

Where the college sees more potential is in the program's function as an attendance and enrollment tracker, he added.

Plus, no more punching keypad numbers to gain access to the recreation center.

"That'll be streamlined with a swipe," he said. "It'll tighten up service."

Taichi Otsuka, 24, doesn't have his new ID yet, but its potential as currency doesn't appeal to him.

"It's OK," Otsuka said. "But I don't think I'd use it for that."

He's more of a debit and paper -money man.

But Michael Fenton, 41, said he'll keep his loaded with \$60 to \$100. He's especially enticed by the possibility of using it off campus. "They should have done this a long time ago," Fenton said.

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