

University changes bike registration program



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A student unlocks their bike outside the English Building on Oct. 26, 2018. The University will soon be implementing a new bicycle registration database called 529 Garage.

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In order to prevent theft and vandalism, the University offers registration services so residents of the campus area can keep track of their bikes. Already a Silver-level Bicycle Friendly University, the University is transitioning its bike registering process. The University announced on Tuesday that it would be changing from its existing bicycle registration process to another national database called 529 Garage. The Project 529 is made up of more than 400 law enforcement agencies, universities, bike clubs and shops nationwide, according to a news release.

One of the most common crimes on college campuses is bike theft, according to the University of Illinois Police Department. In fact, dozens of bikes, often totaling to over \$10,000 are stolen each year at the University.

By registering a bike, riders will receive a tag or shield with a unique registration ID. The ID can be used to contact bike owners in case of theft or abandonment.

The database's "Missing Bike Bulletin" available to the Project 529 community and social networks will allow for owners and law enforcement to recover stolen bikes. There is a one-time \$10 fee for registration. A portion of this fee will also go to educational initiatives to encourage bike riding as a sustainable and efficient transportation option.

"Protecting bikes is a top active transportation priority of the University," said Dr. Mohamed Attalla, executive director of Facilities & Services, in the news release. "The addition of the Project 529 bike recovery service addresses requests to provide a more user-friendly program that enhances the well-being of the bicycle community."

According to a University Bicycle Ordinance, all bikes parked and operated on campus must be registered. Those who do not register will be fined a minimum of a \$25 fine.

An improved registration system was one of the recommendations the League of American Bicyclists made to the University, according to the press release.

Data on bike ownership allows the University to more accurately plan for infrastructure projects.

"At Illinois, we are always striving to improve our sustainable transportation network," wrote Stacey DeLorenzo, transportation demand management coordinator. "The partnership with Project 529 will not only benefit the individuals who use their service but will also support others and allow for the expansion of future bicycle programs."

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