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## Intern Learns It's Not That Easy to Drive a Bus

By LISA HUYNH

(April 15, 2004) I'm not cut out to be a Metro Bus operator.

I got my first taste of what it's like to drive a bus when I got behind the wheel of the bus simulator at Operations Central Instruction.

I ran six red lights, drove over too many curbs to count, crashed into a parked car, drove against traffic and went airborne after speeding on a sharp left turn.

Good thing this wasn't real, because I broke every traffic law in existence.

The simulator had many high-tech features. For example, every time I hit a curb or drove over train tracks, it emitted sounds that made it feel like I was really driving a bus.

The simulator also has a feature that can manipulate or change the environment.

For instance, Mark Anderson, director of Operations Training, made it rain and snow on me. He also was able to make it day or night and control the flow of traffic, like how many cars would be on the road.

### Most difficult thing

The most difficult thing I encountered while operating the simulator was making clean right turns.

There's a certain way to turn so that you don't end up on the curb or drive against traffic, which I did plenty of. It takes coordination and the right timing to safely execute a right turn.

It was also hard to get full control of the steering wheel because it's so big. My five-foot-two inch frame was barely able to turn the steering wheel while making right turns.

Another challenge was staying in one lane. I often found myself drifting from lane to lane, or should I say, lane to curb.

During my simulator adventure, I decided to challenge myself even though I knew my career as an operator had died when I went airborne. I pulled into a bus yard, found a parking space and parked my bus.

### Caused some damage

Well, at least I thought I did. Even though I caused some damage to the parked buses while trying to maneuver my bus in the tight space, I

PHOTOS BY KIM SIM

#### Communications

Intern Lisa Huynh learned that piloting a Metro Bus – even in OCI's simulator – is not for amateurs.

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thought I did a good job.

However, a computer monitor would later reveal that my bus not only was sticking out of its parking space, but also was crooked. I decided to retire from my short-lived career after ten minutes of service.

I did so poorly that Anderson didn't even reveal my score.

I don't know how Metro Bus operators do it, but I commend them for the work they do. I discovered that it takes a lot of skill, precision, stamina and patience to drive a bus.

I think I'll just stick to writing.

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