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Meghan Short '12 biked past Keeney Quad. There is some support for a bicycle co-op.

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## Since bikes are everywhere, one wonders, can't we share?

**By: Riley Blanton**

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With bicycles locked to railings and trees all around campus, adequate amenities for bike owners are noticeably absent on College Hill. But Joseph Stricker '10 thinks he has the solution.

Stricker, who transferred from Vassar College a year ago, would like to introduce a bicycle co-op - which already exists at Vassar - that would build new bikes from used or abandoned parts and provide inexpensive repairs.

"There's a pretty big bike culture at Brown," Stricker said. "It seems like Brown is itching for this type of program."

Indeed, the campus might seem to have an itch - and last year the Brown Outing Club made efforts to scratch it, according to Carly Sieff '09, a student leader of the group. The club made proposals to both the Student Activities Office and the Undergraduate Finance Board, she said, to create a bike sharing program that would allow students to borrow bikes on a short-term basis. Unfortunately, she said, the group was unable to get either space or funding for the endeavor.

Stricker said his preliminary efforts to find space have been similarly frustrated. He has asked around both inside and outside the University, but to no avail.

"The best offer that has been given is a tent outside of Blue State (Coffee)," he said. Stricker said he gathered between 300 and 400 signatures in support of the bicycle co-op at the Student Activities Fair last month, and that he has been approached frequently by students interested in his proposal.

If given a workspace for the co-op, Stricker said he'd like to first start an informal program that would build and repair bikes for students. In time, he said, the co-op might give rise to a bike exchange program of the kind Sieff proposed.

The exchange program would keep a supply of bicycles at various locations around campus for students'

use - for example, to travel between classrooms, libraries, dormitories and dining halls. As an example of how such an exchange might operate, Stricker cited a program at Vassar which for \$10 provided students with keys that could unlock bikes stationed across campus.

Another possible model of a bike exchange program that Stricker thinks could work is the Yellow Bikes Cooperative at Middlebury College. The Middlebury program, according to the school's Web site, began with nine refurbished bikes in 2001, and within a year had 230 students as members, paying an annual fee of \$6 to use the ubiquitous yellow bikes.

Clear Channel Outdoor, a division of Clear Channel Communications, pioneered a public exchange program called SmartBike in cities in France, and has seen success with the program in urban areas across Europe and in Washington, D.C. The company has recently proposed bringing the program to the campus of Kent State University in Ohio, according to a story last month in the student newspaper the Daily Kent Stater.

Stricker said the impetus and precedent for a University bicycle co-op and bike exchange exist, and he plans to see these programs come to fruition.

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