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Senate Campus Development and Environment Committee

Annual Report

2001-2002

Submitted by Linda Benson, Chair

Committee membership for the year included the following:

Linda Benson, History [chair]
Richard Fekel, Oakland Center
Carolyn Johnson, Campus Facilities and Operations
Greg Jordan, Campus Recreation
Joan Love, University Housing
Ramune Mikaila, Nursing
Seigo Nakao, Modern Languages and Literature
Rusty Postlewaite, Facilities Management
Richard Rosek, Health Sciences
Kathy Rowley, Registrar's Office
Kristine Setzekorn, School of Business Administration
Stevie Toth (student representative)

The first major piece of business addressed by the committee concerned the parking situation on campus in the fall. At the September meeting, committee discussion led to the submission of a memo asking that some short term action be taken immediately to address the problem and also offering long term suggestions to address the need for additional parking spaces as enrollment continues to grow. In particular, the committee asked that the practice of reserving large blocks of parking spaces for non-academic programs during the busiest time of the academic day stop until such time as additional parking is made available. (A copy of the memorandum is attached).

During the fall term, the committee also reviewed plans for the new parking structure, to be built near the new School of Education and Human Services. Safety concerns included lighting and pedestrian traffic to and from the structure, as well as the use of cameras inside the structure.

During the winter term, the committee voiced its support for a proposal to expand the Oakland Center. An overview of the expansion plans was presented in October by committee member Richard Fekel, and following discussion at subsequent meetings, the committee sent a memo of support for the proposal to the Board of Trustees (Copy attached --see below).

The committee also discussed the possibility of university-wide guidelines for food consumption in classrooms, particularly in new buildings with carpeting and new furniture. It was finally agreed that enforcing such guidelines would be difficult, but the growing amount of food debris in classrooms suggests that this issue may yet need to be addressed. Likewise, decreasing civility among drivers--those who drive too fast, do not stop for pedestrian traffic, and are otherwise inattentive as they drive on campus--drew committee discussion, but no final recommendation on possible action was reached. This, too, may require committee attention in the coming year.

MEMORANDUM

October 1, 2001

TO: Gary Russi, President
Virinder Moudgil, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost
Mary Beth Snyder, Vice President of Student Affairs
Greg Kampe, University Parking Committee

FR: Linda Benson, Chair
Committee for Campus Development and Environment

RE: Present and Future Campus Parking

This is an urgent request for the implementation of policies to maximize availability of parking spaces during periods of highest student demand and to offer specific, concrete suggestions that will help reduce the congestion we have all experienced since the beginning of the fall term. As a Senate committee charged with advising on both development and present environment on campus, we also have several recommendations, detailed below, which we ask be considered as part of the planning process as we re-access campus parking needs.

Committee members realize that the current shortage of parking spaces is the result of increased enrollments; we also understand that long term solutions have been the focus of much discussion on various committees prior to this year's severe parking problems. We hope our suggestions will provide immediate relief, but we also have long term concerns, some of which stem from our examination of the report provided last year by Walker Consultants. The flaws in that report are now apparent and its proposals obsolete. As we all pursue solutions to what is a shared concern across campus, we should not be guided by information which may have contributed to our current problems.

The following are our recommendations, divided into short term [immediate] solutions as well as long term plans. We hope that the

former might be implemented beginning this week of October 1-5.

- ◆ Establish a university policy which gives parking priority to students and faculty over all other events until there is greater availability of parking space. The education of students is the primary concern of any university, and the ability of students and faculty to meet their classes is hindered when non-student populations are given privileged parking. By putting students first and adopting this policy, the following changes are a natural consequence.
- ◆ Use the parking areas at the Meadow Brook Music Festival grounds for people attending special events (career day, Meadow Brook Theater matinees), and provide a bus shuttle service to bring them to the main campus.
- ◆ Put in place a system that will prevent the unfortunate situation which occurred on Wednesday, September 25, 2001, when three major lots were partially closed from early morning until late in the day. This clearly aggravated an already tight parking situation. As noted above, non-academic programs cannot be privileged over academic programs through allocation of prime parking at prime class times.
- ◆ Schedule special events for after 3:00 p.m. on all days when classes are in session and include in all special event announcements the new arrangement for parking via a shuttle service. Post signs for each event to publicize the service.
- ◆ Return to the practice of giving special day passes to faculty who have guest speakers on campus, are interviewing job candidates, or on other vital university service.

Long term considerations include the following:

- ◆ Move toward restoring "open parking" rather than expanding special interest parking. Currently, parking slots are reserved for various individuals and groups, reducing the number of slots available in the most convenient locations. Until there is adequate parking for students during the busiest hours on campus, cut back on all such special privilege parking. Obviously, this does not apply to mandated handicapped parking spaces.
- ◆ Begin urgent review of parking structures, particularly to serve the needs of the Rec Center and the new School of Education building. The Vamer parking lot will not be able to accommodate the needs of staff, faculty, and the student populations who will use both venues. The parking lot at the east side of the new building is too small to impact parking demand, but a larger, reconfigured lot might. It is worth considering enlarging that lot now, before the new building comes on line.
- ◆ In tallying numbers of parking spaces on campus, do not make the assumption (as the Walker report does) that students in the new campus housing will walk to class. The 500 parking slots planned for that development will not serve the general student or faculty population, and many of those cars will most assuredly be driven across campus to class even in good weather.
- ◆ Explore the concept of increased bike paths and secure parking for bicycles on campus, as an alternative source of transportation for students living on campus and in nearby housing.

We are committed to assisting in whatever way possible to improve the availability of parking for students and faculty during prime class times. We look forward to your response and to working with you to resolve this difficult issue.



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