



To: Alan Wildeman
President
University of Windsor

From: Ryan Osterberg
Vice President Administration
University of Windsor Students' Alliance

RE: Parking

Dr. Wildeman,

I am writing you regarding the very serious concern many students at our University have with the availability of parking at the University. While this has been an issue for the last couple of years, it was magnified last semester with the closing of the FF lot for the construction of the new Engineering Building. While the UWSA is strongly in favour of the expansion of our infrastructure and the construction of this new building, it has caused some issues for students in regards to parking spaces. This closure has removed nearly 366 student parking spots, which has made it very difficult for students who purchased permits to find spaces close to campus. This has forced students to either come to campus much earlier for their classes in order to secure a spot or left them in a position where they are late for class.

In the past, parking services has traditionally oversold their parking permits by about 10%, but with the closure of FF this number has spiked to nearly 32%. While I acknowledge that less passes were sold this year than last, and no new passes were sold for the Winter semester, it has still resulted in a shortage of accessible spots close to campus.

It is not my intention to merely highlight the issues; I have had many productive conversations with parking services on behalf of the UWSA and found them very open to our input and ideas. This was demonstrated with the recent announcement by Mr. Willets that F lot will be open after 4pm. This I believe will address the safety concern that has risen with students having evening classes and having to park far from campus. I believe this was a very positive step.

I would like to express some further ideas that can continue on this track. I have discussed with Parking Services the opening of faculty spaces in R lot, which are not being utilized by staff, to students with parking permits. Currently half of R is open to students with permits while the other half often sits partially empty and is open only to staff. I believe by opening some of those spaces it will provide students with more spots closer to campus.

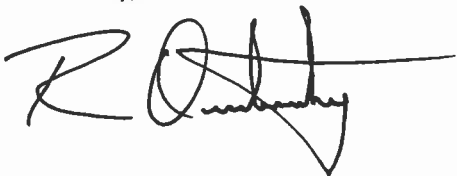
Students have also asked that more of the pay and display lots be shifted to student permit parking. This will again allow more parking closer to campus.

A more long term solution that I believe will help spread out parking over all of our lots would be a tiered parking pass system. A reversion to the old system in which students could purchase a cheaper pass to park in other farther parking lots such as the St. Denis Centre, while students wanting to park closer to campus can pay slightly more. However, if this system were to go forward, and given the current issues with parking, I would ask that there be no raise in student parking fees currently in effect. With increased costs of post secondary education this is an additional burden to place on students that, given the reduction of available spaces, is unnecessary and unfair.

While these steps can make moves towards addressing some of the issues, some students feel that they are not getting what they paid for with their parking passes. While the pass does not guarantee parking, there has been a somewhat drastic change in the number of available spots, and some students feel it is no longer worth their money to continue to have this pass. I would ask that refunds be offered to those students who no longer wish to have a parking pass and wish to seek alternate arrangements. I believe it is the most equitable way to deal with the oversubscription of parking spaces.

I strongly feel that these ideas I have outlined are measured and feasible alternatives to address this very serious situation and demonstrate our commitment to finding a solution. While we have come up with some of these solutions, I believe there are more ideas out there that have not been considered yet and encourage parking services and the administration to continue to seek new methods to solve this problem. I must express the urgency of this matter, given that morning after morning I hear of more and more students having difficulty finding parking near campus, and their growing frustration with the situation. Solutions must be found and implemented as soon as possible. The UWSA and myself stand ready to help in any way we can but action must be taken. I look forward to further collaboration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Osterberg', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ryan Osterberg
Vice President Administration
University of Windsor Students' Alliance