

October 16th, 2019

**ATTN: Carrie Chassels**

Vice-Provost, Student Affairs  
University Centre (South), Level 4  
50 Stone Road East,  
Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1

Dear Vice-Provost Chassels,

We are contacting you regarding the parking changes that were made effective May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 by Sustainable Transportation & Parking Services. These changes were an attempt to alleviate parking capacity issues on campus and to encourage sustainable modes of transportation. However, the impact has been very different putting undue stress on our students.

There are up to 23,000 students, and 2,928 staff at the University of Guelph. There are far more students on campus than there are staff and faculty. Sustainable Transportation & Parking Services has allocated 18 parking lots (4,122 parking spots) to staff and faculty, while there are only 7 parking lots (2,108 parking spaces) allocated to students – all of which are also available to staff and faculty permit holders. These changes were made without any student consultation and display a blatant disregard to the needs of our students on campus.

Effective May 1<sup>st</sup>, students have been assigned to park in the blue permit areas only, while staff and faculty can park in black and orange permit areas. The blue permit areas include; lots P7, P13, P14, P15, P17, P19, P30, which comprise of roughly 2,108 parking spaces. The orange and black permit areas include; P7(also a student lot), P9, P10, P11, P12, P13 (also a student lot), P14 (also a student lot), P15 (also a student lot), P17 (also a student lot), P18, P19 (also a student lot), P23, P24, P25, P26, P59, P30 (also a student lot), P64, which comprise of up to 4,122 parking spaces. All student lots are available to staff and faculty; however, students cannot park in any of the orange and black permit areas that are available to staff and faculty only. The blue permit areas allocated to students are located at the periphery of campus, meanwhile the black and orange permit areas allocated to staff and faculty are located at the core of campus. This means students have to walk 10 to 15 minutes to get to the central part of campus, while staff and faculty are located much closer. Despite student parking being located in further parking lots, students pay the same parking rates as staff and faculty.

Another focus of these parking changes from Sustainable Transportation & Parking Services is to encourage alternative/sustainable transportation. All University of Guelph students that are taking classes on campus pay a universal bus pass fee each semester, regardless of whether they use it. Approximately 50 percent of all Guelph Transit users are students. Meanwhile staff and faculty are

not required to pay a bus pass fee. The students at the University of Guelph are doing their part in finding alternative modes of transportation (such as using transit and paying the universal bus pass fee).

After parking changes made May 1<sup>st</sup> by Sustainable Transportation & Parking Services were implemented, there has been an online petition requesting the University of Guelph to change their parking system. This petition has collected 1,126 signatures from people in July 2019. Students are experiencing the negative implications of these parking changes and have shared their stories with the Central Student Association. The following stories are grievances from students (undergraduate and graduate).

\*\*The names of the students have been left out of this document for the purpose of respecting the confidentiality of these students. \*\*

### **Story #1**

Hello,

I saw your comment on the Facebook post for the petition to stop parking services from cutting back student parking lots, and I have some info to share! My sister and I both go to Guelph but are living in Milton, so we carpool to school every day. Last year we struggled to find parking spaces if we got to campus any later than 10 am, and would have to park really far away and run to class. There were even times when we were unable to find parking for over 30 minutes and missed classes as a result.

I understand that the school needs to cut back on the number of cars parking on campus, but it is unfair to do this at the expense of students who commute and have no option but to park their car. Now that the number of parking lots available for students like me is getting reduced, I'm worried I won't be able to find parking in the mornings, which will cause me additional stress and anxiety about school.

I find it crazy how we pay over \$500 for parking for the year and this is the best solution they could come up with! They need to be more strict with people who are driving despite having the option to take Guelph transit, without inconveniencing people who rely on parking at the university to get to class. I believe that people who are commuting should have the right to find a parking spot that isn't a 15 minute walk from their classes, and that people who purchase a parking permit should be guaranteed a place to park so that they don't miss classes and labs that they spend thousands of dollars on.

I appreciate you taking this matter up with parking services, and hope this information was helpful!

### **Story #2**

Good morning,

I saw a post on the Facebook group page to email you guys, our situation as it pertains to commuting to Guelph.

I live in Georgetown, which is about a 40 minute drive from Guelph. I have commuted to Guelph all of the four years I've been at this school. I work a part time job in my town, which my shift always starts at 3pm. I have worked this job since high school and even though there is go transit from Georgetown, it would cause me to be late for work as it is the same drive however including multiple stops and then having to drive from the station.

With the new parking changes, I might have to quit my job. I have a class ending at 2:20 which usually would be fine and I would make it just in time for work. However, now I will have to walk to whichever perimeter lot I would have found a spot in (which btw I'm a business student so always near Mac hall). Let's say that lot at the bottom of the hill is full now because of these changes, I will have to park even farther, creating the possibility of having to walk to my car for 15-20 minutes, causing me to leave at 2:40. This would make me significantly late for work and I don't have the flexibility in hours. I will have to quit a job that I have

worked to pay the university in multiple ways (parking passes, food, textbooks, etc) just because of this new parking change. Hopefully the meeting goes well and you are able to get them to truly see the issues being caused.

### **Story #3**

Dear CSA,

I am a commuting student, and this is regarding the parking debacle unfolding at the University.

The Sustainable Transportation and Parking Services (STPS) has sold out of student permits many times in the past 9 months. This is preventing students from performing day-to-day academic activities such as attending labs and lectures. This failure indicates complete incompetence by the STPS, and warrants resignations by all staff involved, as they clearly are not doing their job.

Public transit is not feasible for students from nearby cities such as Cambridge.

A 20 minute drive can take upwards of 3 hours via public transit. As such, the STPS should not be trying to limit the number of students driving to campus, unless they can provide efficient public transportation, which obviously they will not.

The real solution is obvious and a tried and true method. Many other campuses build large parking lots around the campus, and run shuttles so students can reach their classes quickly. Students have seen the viability of this solution for years, and it is unbelievable that the STPS is incompetent enough not to recognize it.

Of course this project will require capital. This can easily be arranged by suspending all expenses relating to enforcement, including laying off meter maids, and postponing the LPR experiment. It is absurd to be wasting money on enforcement when there isn't enough parking permits available in the first place. That is similar to banning homelessness rather than addressing poverty. No penny should be spent on enforcement until STPS can prove that they have provided efficient means of arriving to campus for every student.

### **Story #4**

Hi I just wanted to share the comments I had regarding the recent parking changes. I'm copying and pasting some comments i've written publicly on Facebook since this has happened - feel free to share the entire excerpt or take blurbs :)

"An open letter to all my friends who have attended or are still attending the University of Guelph, regarding the reclassification of parking lots on campus: As a student who has been utilizing the parking lots on campus for the past 4 years, I can attest to the fact that even finding any parking during peak hours of the day during the semester are extremely difficult. Having most of my classes near Thorn and Rozanski, it is ridiculous how many times trying to find a parking spot that isn't on the other side of campus has taken up to 15 minutes. The prior lots that were open to all passes around the main areas of campus were typically full by noon on a weekday in a semester. Those of us on the south side of campus barely find any spots during these times, even in the lots they think are currently being underused (eg at the Soccer Complex). This, while considering

that the price of parking passes for students and staff are the same - we're forced to spend >\$800 on a parking pass for the year or >\$500 for two semesters - is overwhelming. Staff already take up a large portion of the parking spaces during the day (students generally have breaks throughout and will leave campus more frequently than staff), so spots that open up are already limited. If they're going to take parking lots away it seems only fair they start limiting the number of parking passes they sell to prevent the issue of having to spend time looking for a spot or start charging less for a pass if they don't think students have a right to use that space. However, this isn't the case because they're still selling passes at the same price. On top of that, they're eliminating the resident student classification, meaning that students living on campus with a vehicle (who would assumably not be using their cars as often as students commuting back and forth off campus) would be able to park in the same lots AND park there for days on end. This means they'll be taking spaces from students who actually need them when arriving on campus to get to class. A lot of backlash has come from staff on Facebook groups and other forums stating that there is no proof that the number of spots available to students has decreased, and that they pay ridiculous amounts while going through the same struggle to get to work, etc. but the fact of the matter is that most students don't have time for full time jobs. Many of us are weighed down with student debt, living costs, and even cost for basic needs like nutritious food. For us to have to pay the same amount now with these changes, on top of having a reduction of 10 lots to still have to walk across campus to get to class seems a little preposterous. From personal experience, there have been many days where simply showing up to campus 45 minutes before a class when that time could have been spent studying, prepping for said class, or even doing something like going to the gym or taking NEEDED time to myself becomes a stressful situation driving around aimlessly looking for a parking spot. More than once I can say I've even skipped class because I've missed the first 15 minutes of a 50 minute lecture driving around the south parking lots hoping somebody is about to leave."

"there are already staff parking lots in place that are much closer to campus buildings than the other lots that were open to commuting students were. additionally, if you've taken a look at what is being released about the changes made to the parking situation, it is even mentioned currently on the parking services website that they're experiencing higher than expected volume. it's only the summer semester when the number of employees and students on campus is minuscule compared to that of the fall or winter semesters. the following statement is on their website stating "if you aren't on campus with your vehicle prior to 9 am you are advised to check the other lots for space availability". while this has only been in effect for 2 months or so, it's a pretty clear indication that this change they've implemented isn't going to hold up once campus is at full capacity. they also mention that these periphery lots have "many open spaces" when i can attest to not being able to find spaces in either the north lot or the soccer complex lots during the middle of a weekday in a semester. often it takes students 10-15 minutes to drive circles around the parking lots trying to find spaces which are by majority already taken up by staff members at the university. though i do not disagree that faculty and staff are integral to our learning here at the university, students are also in pretty dire need of those parking spots. the south lot fills up by 10 am most days and anyone trying to get

onto campus after that time usually wastes time that could be spent studying or preparing for class driving around praying someone is about to leave or missing the beginning of a lecture or class to do so. so you're right, commuters should not be given special reserved parking spaces, that's not what most people are upset about. it's the fact that now, commuters are being treated unfairly whilst having to pay the same price as before and as any body else who drives to campus who isn't taking ANY classes. even if you work part-time on campus, you are still considered a student and cannot therefore park in the staff lots. reducing the number of lots available to students by 10 and telling them they must be on campus by a certain time or "too bad, so sad" mentality doesn't help any one in this situation, especially considering that it can affect a lot of students financially to pay for a parking pass and never even get to use it."

Thank you for taking the time to make sure students' opinions are heard, especially about this matter. Please reach out to me if you want any other comments or have any questions about what I've said.

### **Story #5**

Dear CSA,

I saw your Overheard at Guelph post asking for comments about the new parking situation. Thank you for taking the time to listen to our stories.

I commute from Waterloo everyday (~35min drive each way). With the changes, the closest parking lot will now add ~10min each way in walking distance, which is approx. a 30% increase in commute time. Although I am fortunate enough to not have a walking impairment, this will not be pleasant in the winter or when I carry heavy equipment for my research. Additionally, I often arrive here at 7:30am, so it seems unfair that I will have to walk past 100s of empty spots to get to my building despite paying the same amount for the pass as people who can access the closer lots. I am also often here past midnight, and will again have to walk past many empty spots in the dark and alone. Guelph's parking pass is more expensive than other equivalent universities in Ontario and now brings with it fewer services. I am disappointed with the changes they have made without consulting the student body.

### **Story #6**

Thank you for posting about the parking in delta on Facebook, as I was worried about spending money on a u of g parking pass and not getting parking!

I heard you are collecting stories to share with parking services about the concerning changes. I live just outside of Guelph on Jones Baseline which is not on a bus route and not close enough to walk thus I depend on driving in to campus to attend classes. I am going into my 4th year and have driven in every day for 3 years the parking is already overcrowded but there was always a few spots in the parking lot just off of south ring road, however with decreased amount of parking lots i'm afraid that there won't be any spots available and I will have to miss classes due to this. Students pay a lot in tuition and should be able commute into campus and make it to class, perhaps more parking should be investigated such as a parking garage or a shuttle bus from an off site parking lot!

### **Story #7**

I saw your post on facebook looking for input from students on parking. I will be working as a work study student as well as attending classes in the fall and will be driving to campus from the other side of the city because the bus takes way too long to get to school. My concern however is I will be coming just for work 2-3 times a week and the student parking is so far away from my place of work, i have inquired about getting a staff parking pass so I can use the lots but was told since i am primarily a student I cannot get this. If i'm paying \$544 to park so I can go to work, a 20 minute walk across campus basically defeats the purpose of driving to work 🙄♀

### **Story #8**

Hi there, I am very concerned as to the parking situation that is being implemented, I drive in from Waterloo 5 or more days a week to Guelph as I am also part of the varsity volleyball team. This past year parking would fill as early as 10am some mornings with all of the lots available, now that so many are being cut out I'm afraid to be paying for a pass that doesn't even guarantee I get a spot. I appreciate the time being taken to read through all the concerns other students have with this unexpected change, I'm also curious if there was a reason discussed as to why so much parking is being taken away from the students? If there is any knowledge on this I'd love to know, thanks a lot.

### **Story #9**

I am a recent graduate of a Masters program here at the University of Guelph. I have come back to pursue a BAsC degree while also working as a Research Associate in a lab at the university. I am not considered a staff member according to the school because I am a student first, according to HR and parking services. I am considered a student employee which doesn't seem to count for much at the school. I was wondering if this could please be brought to the attention of who you are speaking with? Most of my classes are at different areas of main campus and in between classes I have to walk to the Ontario Veterinary College where I work. Usually I am able to move my car close enough to the OVC in between classes but now I will not be able to and with only an hour between some classes, this may negatively affect my ability to get to work and have time to work. I am also concerned now that if I move my car I won't even be able to find a parking spot afterwards. I hope this email is clear. Please let me know if you need anything else from me. Thanks for posting on Overheard at Guelph to let us know what is going on!

### **Story #10**

I just made a complain about the new parking policy for students at the front desk in the CSA office. I think the new policy is really unfair to all the students. First of all, there are only four blue parking lots on campus, and I am honestly not sure if all of us will be able to fit in these only four lots. Secondly, as a student lives off-campus, I have been paying the same amount of money before and after the new policy; however, since the new policy came out, I paid

the same money but I do not get the same service as before. In fact, now the parking spots for students living off-campus are extremely limited and I honestly if I will be able to find a spot in the blue lots when more students coming back in the Fall. Thirdly, I also think it is really unfair to the students living on-campus too. They are paying more money now, as the same rate as the off-campus students; however they are getting the same service as how there have been treated as usual.

As a students in university of Guelph for 3th years, it is my first time that I ever have made complain about the unfair policy to students. I personally believe it is a real issue that needed to be addressed.

I am looking forward to hearing your feedback.

### **Story #11**

Hi there I wanted to bring forward a concern that I have been hearing several students chat about.

I am a final year vet student and we have rotations at the hospital and on-call requirements that require us to come into school at all hours of the night. Particularly our emergency and critical care rotation requires a shift from 4pm-1am. Many of us students are uncomfortable with the idea of walking at 1 am through campus to the back lot on college at 1am. There is a ton of construction surrounding that lot and its also just a less frequented area of campus. Im not sure if there could be a way that while on this rotation students are given permission to park in the lot at the hospital entrance from 330-5 to avoid this potentially unsafe situation?

### **Story #12**

Hello,

I just wanted to share my thoughts on the current parking situation now that the changes have been implemented.

I have bought a parking pass on campus in the past, and even prior to these changes there have been dozens of times where I have been unable to find a parking spot, and either resorted to paying even more money for daily/meter parking, or missing my class/lab entirely and having to drive home.

As soon as I saw the proposed changes this year, I decided against paying for a parking pass and have been parking off campus. Many of the lots that I have been parking in have signs saying that no students are allowed to leave their cars in them, however many of us are forced to in order to ensure that we can actually find a spot and make it to class on time. This is likely to be an issue that is going to cause tension between the university and the surrounding community.

From what I have heard from friends, the changes this year have magnified the issue even further on campus. A couple of them have been to campus multiple times this semester and have been completely unable to find a parking spot in any of the six allowed lots any of the times they've tried.

In my opinion, Parking Services has done a terrible job of looking out for the best interest of the students, and have been essentially ripping students off for years by selling way more passes than there are spots. When students are paying thousands of dollars in tuition every semester, hundreds more for a parking pass, and are unable to make it to the classes they pay for as a direct result of there

not being enough room for parking, there is a major problem. The changes this year just make the situation that much worse.

The school needs more lots, and preferably close to the center of campus. A parking garage will have to be built eventually if the university plans to keep up this level of growth, so why not make that happen sooner rather than later? I understand this would not be completed before I graduate, but I believe that we as students would be much more open to the current parking issues if we could see that a future solution was being worked towards.

### **Story #13**

First of all, I want to thank you for being a voice for the students in this fundamental issue.

I wanted to share my serious concerns about the parking situation. According to the STPS website they were sold out of all student permits as of Friday. This is simply unacceptable, as for many students driving (and hence parking) is the only feasible way to get to campus. President Vaccarino has in fact agreed that it's unacceptable to not have enough parking for students, and he said "we need to do better" about the parking scandal. I have proof of this, but it is confidential, so I'm hesitant to share it in any permanent form.

I do not believe anyone who says there are viable alternatives for everyone, as there are 20 thousand students, each with their own unique circumstances, so it is incredibly ignorant to claim every student can take public transit or move closer or whatever. For many students, parking on campus is the only option, and anyone who denies it needs to learn empathy skills. As far as I know, UoG has become the first and only Ontario university to fail to provide enough student parking for the majority of 2 consecutive years. Furthermore, it is absolutely alarming that the STPS ignored [this petition](#) with over 1100 signatures, as this is a majority given there are only 2045 student parking spaces.

I am a commuting student from Cambridge, which is only a 20 minute drive away, but it can take over 3 hours via public transport. As an engineering student who often has 8:30am and 7pm classes on the same day, it is simply not feasible for me to spend 6 hours on public buses everyday. I believe I should be able to attend every class, given I've paid around \$40 thousand to this institution over 7 semesters. As I am on a co-op term this semester, and am scheduled to be back in school in the winter term, I did not purchase a permit. However, now I am seriously concerned about my academic future because this parking scandal. I hope the University quickly resolves the issue, and terminates any employees at fault, or else I will have to take legal action.

On a semi-related note, why are UoG's parking fines so high compared to the other institutions? This will not solve their utter incompetence in creating enough parking spaces, and is simply padding the pockets of the STPS.

### **Story #14**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> year UofG bio-med student. I am contact you because I am spent a large amount of time seeking more information regarding parking lot allocation and how the decision was made. I decided to conduct a personal query about how this awful decision regarding student parking was made because I am not a big believer in petitions.

Over the summer, I spoke with:

- Ben Doadt, Associate University Secretary, University secretariat
- Shannon Talbot, Acting Manager of Sustainable Transportation & Parking Services (STPS) for University of Guelph
- Claudia Runciman, Director, Finance & Administration for University of Guelph's Physical Resources

I was hoping that you could elaborate as to:

- What is the CSA stance on the changes to student parking lot allocations?
  - Is the CSA advocating for a **reversal** to the changes or simply, giving up and suggesting alternative places to park?
- Who is the CSA executive discussing these issues with?
- Can you provide more information about how this decision was made internally within the STPS?
  - Were any students consulted during the allocation process?

### **Story #15**

I saw your post on Overhead at Guelph on Facebook. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a graduate student in Molecular and Cellular Biology at Guelph. I have some concerns about the current parking situation (shared by my lab mates, too):

- The parking allotted to students doesn't seem to be sufficient for commuting students
  - Staff can park in student lots (though they tend to not) but students are limited with the lots in which they may park
  - The parking pass is as expensive as ever, but the spots are limited, which means the cost to park per parking spot available has skyrocketed -- could they drop the cost of parking passes for students?
  - Graduate students are considered students with respect to the new parking regulations -- we pay tuition -- but we're also on payroll, and as TAs are staff employed by the department/university (?) -- this seems like a gray area
- Thanks for speaking on behalf of the undergraduate (and graduate) students!

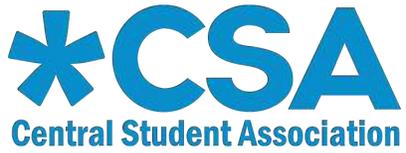
### **Story #16**

I saw your post on Facebook today and just want to thank you for such a considerate and caring message. I'm sure you are getting a lot of concerns regarding the parking, but I just wanted to add mine to the list.

I am a commuting student this semester and unfortunately the selling out of student parking passes caught me by surprise. I know have to pay for meter parking every day, anywhere from \$10-\$15 each day. By my math that means anywhere from \$500- \$750 for the 10 week semester! This is more than double the cost of a permit and is a cost that is completely unreasonable for me and my finances, all due to the changes in parking policies.

Once again, thank you for advocating for us students. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me back.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**



The Central Student Association is calling on the University administration and Parking Services and Sustainable Transportation to address these concerns with utmost importance. Future changes to the parking services on campus should ensure equity and access for all permit holders. A temporary solution to the current parking situation would be to reverse the changes and go back to the first come first serve system effective immediately. The University must engage various stakeholder groups through consultation and collaboration to find a long-term solution.

Regards,

Horeen Hassan  
CSA VP External  
[csavpexternal@uoguelph.ca](mailto:csavpexternal@uoguelph.ca)  
University Centre 250  
50 Stone Rd. East, University Centre 247  
Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1  
Traditional territory of the Attawandaron People