

September 6, 2007

Dear Senior Vice President Schuckel:

On behalf of the University of Baltimore staff it represents, the Administrative Council sends you this letter with two main goals. The first is to request that we are included in further discussions of the proposed parking rate increase. The impact that the increase will have on the staff makes the council's participation in the discussions critical.

Below are just a few of employees' comments detailing the impact the increase could have on their personal and professional lives:

"The rise of parking rates will be a huge hit for my family. My wife recently quit work, as any day now, she is expected to give birth to our first child. We already have only one income that we rely on, and having to pay a substantial increase to continue to work here is not right. I love working at UB and love the community, but the parking rate increase will adversely affect me and my experience here.

I do not live near any public transportation, so that is not an option for me. It takes me around 30 minutes each way to travel here, and with gas prices so high, it is not an option for me to be dropped off.

I don't mind a moderate increase in parking, but why not increase it along with our Cost of Living Adjustment increases? When, and only when, we are approved for a 2 percent COLA increase, then increase the parking rates by 2 percent. That would be the fair thing to do. Anything else would be a detriment to our great community."

"When contemplating whether to return to UB and leave my former employer, I considered the entire compensation package. To perform this thoughtful analysis, I subtracted all costs (health care, insurance, parking, etc.) from the salary offered. I even estimated the benefit of continued education for myself. Salary negotiations brought me into the range I found acceptable. I can say in all honesty that a significant increase in the parking rate would have influenced my decision."

"Does the administration truly realize the financial strain a large sudden increase in the parking rates will place on all of the families represented by our staff members? By increasing the fee to \$1,200/year, that means \$100 out of my family budget per month. As a father of four children, this is a huge chunk to take all at once. What activities do I cut from our family life just so that I can continue to park at work?? This would represent a real pay cut, not just a parking fee increase."

Our second goal is to make the following recommendations regarding the parking rate increase that we have been told, via our representatives to the University Council, is inevitable:

1. that the University administration considers carefully how the parking rate increase will affect attraction and retention of staff.
Low parking rates make the University a much more attractive place of employment, considering the University's lack of other state-of-the-art facilities and lack of competitive benefits (particularly retirement benefits). An increased parking cost, equivalent to a reduction in total compensation, will make it much more difficult for the University to attract and retain quality employees. Prospective employees with options—and therefore those who are of the highest caliber—weigh the benefits offered to them very carefully.
2. that if the rates are going to rise substantially, the increase should be phased in over a significant period of time.
Though employees acknowledge that UB parking rates are below market, it is unreasonable to bring them up to market value in a single year. A multiyear phase-in would be more acceptable and show that the administration is sensitive to the employees' needs to plan for such an expense.

3. that the University administration presents to the Administrative Council the various proposed models for parking charges.

While a graduated rate based on salaries makes sense, we do not have enough information to determine that a tier approach is the best one. How are the tiers determined? If an employee gets a raise of \$30 per month, the increased parking cost could push the person's paycheck net to the negative. It could also be a morale issue if there are different parking charges among co-workers.

4. that the University administration provides transparent, clear communication regarding the rationale behind the parking rate increases and the way in which the increase will be executed.

The Middle States Accreditation Team stated that UB could use improvement in the areas of communication and transparency. The decision to increase the parking rates for UB staff and faculty is an example of the lack of communication through shared governance. The amount of the increase is only one aspect of the parking rate issue; how the increase became known to staff (and faculty), without our invited participation in the discussions on the amount and execution of the increase, is of more concern.

A rationale for the increased parking fees based on the costs of providing and expanding this service will be more effective than justifications based on comparisons with commercial parking providers and with institutions such as the University of Maryland, Baltimore, where staff parking fees have to compete with the huge hourly parking income generated by several major medical centers.

5. that the University administration should significantly subsidize the use of public transportation.

Not only would this provide some staff with an alternative to driving to work and paying the increased parking rates, it would have the added benefit of freeing up spaces for those who must drive. It would also enhance the University's image as a "green" institution.

As part of our information gathering, the council was asked a question regarding the rent being generated by leasing the Bolton Yard property to a private developer. How will the money generated by the lease be spent? Will any of the money be used to subsidize parking, or will the faculty, staff and students have the burden of growth placed on them?

In addition, during the construction on the Bolton Yard property, we want to ensure the developer will be providing substitute parking for spaces lost to construction at no additional cost to staff. Any additional information you can provide on this topic would be appreciated.

The Administrative Council board members are committed to working with the administration to develop a fair and equitable parking policy. We offer our continued services, feedback and resources to assist in this process.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

University of Baltimore Administrative Council

on behalf of the University of Baltimore staff who are not members of a collective bargaining unit with an exclusive representative