

### III. CAMPUS FORUMS AND SURVEY

#### Campus Forums

In addition to meetings with representatives of USFSP, other institutions housed on campus, the City of St. Petersburg, and other interested parties, two campus forums open to the entire campus community were held, and one forum was held for administrators particularly involved in student and visitor activities.

- An Open House Meeting was held in Davis 130 from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. on Monday 24 February 2003. This meeting was open to faculty, staff and students.
- A second Open House Meeting was held in the Bayboro Café (USF Dining Center) from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Monday, 24 February 2003.
- A meeting for those administrators and staff involved with admissions, recruiting, special events, campus visitors, and future resident students was held in the Vice President's Conference Room from 12:00 noon to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, 25 February 2003.

Participation for all the meetings was lower than many anticipated due to the change in schedule that occurred. (The initially planned visit had to be cancelled due to the severe storm in the northeast.) Advertising for the change of date was last minute. However, there was a turnout of 20 students, faculty, and staff at the Davis 130 Open House meeting. A number of issues were raised and lively debate occurred over some issues. The other two forums had a limited turnout; however, good ideas and discussion came from these forums as well. All of the issues discussed at the forums have been incorporated in our analysis and recommendations; however, the following narrative offers some insight to the primary concerns brought up at the forums.

A general consensus of the participants of the parking forums that took place 24 February 2003 was that safety and security are significant concerns related to parking on the St. Petersburg campus in the evenings. Most agreed that the campus is "spoiled" in a sense, as there is ample inexpensive parking available located within a short walk of most buildings. However, some members of the campus community feel unsafe walking to lots not located within the academic core, particularly during the evening hours. No one recalled particular incidents leading to such concerns, but rather they had a general perception and concern. It was noted that campus security will escort students or faculty to their vehicles, but often individuals will not call for such assistance or do not want to wait for the escort. It was also noted that the campus has recently completed a pedestrian walkway lighting improvement project throughout the campus, increasing both sidewalk and adjacent street lights – sometimes increasing lighting levels as much as three times the previous illumination.

Physical safety is also perceived as an issue in some locations. The intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a major one that is challenging for pedestrians and encourages pedestrian-vehicular conflict. The campus is working with the City to improve the intersection with delayed signalization and other potential traffic changes. However, until such changes are made, some pedestrians see this crossing as a barrier for pedestrians to walk to the western part of campus and the parking lots located there.

Most participants anticipated and agreed that rate increases will be necessary to support the parking program on campus. The participants were split, however, on the equal opportunity allocation program that exists today (e.g., no particular spaces allocated to the use of a specified group). Some feel that this is important to the campus community ideology while others feel that lots should be specified for employees.

Furthermore, the idea of reserved spaces for a higher cost created some controversy. Some feel this is an ideal way to create guaranteed revenue for the parking program, while others feel that only more well-off students and employees could afford to pay such a high rate and those spaces would not be utilized to capacity, thus adding to the parking deficit at certain peak times. Further, tiered parking (paying more for spaces that are closer and more convenient) would be representative of a hierarchical campus, which some of those attending felt USFSP is not.

The majority of those attending the forums believe that campus visitors should pay for parking. Either the visitor or their sponsoring University organization should cover the parking fee. This belief about visitor parking also extended to non-campus events that use campus parking. As the non-campus events such as the Grand Prix utilize campus parking spaces, thus inconveniencing permit paying students and faculty, it was felt that such events should pay a premium for parking on USFSP property.

## **Campus Survey**

### **INTRODUCTION AND METHODS**

In conjunction with USFSP and University of South Florida at Tampa's Institutional Research (IR) unit, *CHANCE Management Advisors, Inc. (CMA)* conducted a survey of parking and transportation behavior and attitudes. The purpose of this survey was to identify critical issues to aid in the development of recommendations for short-term and longer-term improvements.

The survey was conducted in the spring semester of 2003 in two ways. USFSP and IR chose a statistically significant sample group of student classes (that represented the USFSP student population overall) and delivered the survey and answer sheet during the class times when the survey was to be filled out. Secondly, USFSP delivered surveys and answer sheets to USFSP faculty and staff in their respective departments. (It was discovered subsequently that some employees were inadvertently left out of this distribution, and therefore were not included in the survey.) There were 78 valid responses from faculty and staff surveys and 346 valid student responses received through the surveys.

### **RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

Thirty-one percent of the respondents from the faculty and staff survey were faculty members. Eighty-eight percent of the faculty and staff respondents were full time. Eighty-five percent of the respondents from the faculty and staff survey possess valid USF parking permits.

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents from the student survey were full time students. Forty percent of respondents were juniors (highest response class), followed by 34% who were seniors. Seventy-five percent of the student respondents possess valid USF parking permits.

It is significant to note these demographics as the percentages of the respondents participating in the campus parking permit program are significantly higher than those who do overall. Based on permits sold compared to the campus population, only about 50% of students and 38% of the faculty and staff members participate in the parking permit program.

### **PARKING ACTIVITY BY DAY OF WEEK ON CAMPUS**

Monday appears to be peak day for students parking on campus, with 35% response rate, followed by Tuesday (32%), Wednesday (30%) and Thursday (28%); Friday was the lowest day, at 10%. Saturday and Sunday reported minimal campus visits, at 4% and 2%, respectively. Unlike the student respondents, most faculty/staff respondents drove to campus five days per week.

## **TRAVEL AND MODAL INDICATORS**

Eighty-seven percent of student respondents and 83% of faculty and staff drive alone. Forty-five percent of students travel to USF three to four times per week (36% travel one to two times per week). Ninety-one percent of faculty travel to USF five or more times a week compared to 9% traveling three to four times per week. Eighty-two percent of students and 77% of faculty and staff travel three or more miles to campus.

## **ARRIVAL PATTERNS ON THE MONDAY BEFORE THE SURVEY**

Seventy-eight percent of students and 86% of faculty and staff respondents drove alone the Monday before they took the survey.

Twenty-eight percent (the largest segment) of students arrived between 10:00 and 10:59 a.m. Twenty-four percent (the next largest segment) of students arrived after 5:00 p.m. Forty-one percent of faculty and staff (the largest segment) arrived before 8:00 a.m. and 38% (the next largest segment) arrived between 8:00 a.m. and 8:59 a.m. Therefore, over three quarters of faculty and staff were on campus before the majority of students. This may be one of the reasons that faculty and staff in the forums were not very concerned about designating parking lots solely to their use.

Thirty-three percent of students (the largest segment) departed between 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.; other departures during the day were fairly evenly divided, and ranged from three percent before Noon, to 10% between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. However, 38% (the largest segment) of faculty and staff departed between 5:00 p.m. and 5:59 p.m.; with the largest portion of the remaining departures immediately before or after this time period.

The arrival and departure patterns confirmed both anecdotal and observational conclusions about parking congestion on campus. The period between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. is perhaps the busiest and most congested as faculty and staff are leaving while evening students are arriving.

## **DRIVING AND PARKING PATTERNS**

For students, Monday is the highest parking day, with a 32% response rate; Tuesday and Wednesday are close behind, with 29% and 27%, respectively; Thursday and Friday trail markedly, with 23% and eight percent respectively.

Lot 16 received the most responses for being among the top two parking areas on campus for students, with a 12% response rate; none of the remaining lots/areas in the list received more than a five percent response rate (this may indicate that students are not parking on campus or that the question was misunderstood). However, for faculty and staff, Lot 2 received the most responses for being among the top two parking areas on campus, with a 41% response rate; Area 7 and Area 8 also received over a 20% response rate. It should be remembered that a higher percent of faculty/staff indicated permit ownership in the survey; likely a large number of faculty/staff are parking in the 444 free on-street spaces, particularly because they arrive on campus earlier than the students.

*MAP 3: Campus Parking Lots* illustrates the lots and their common names, as well as their numerical designations.

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MAP 3: Campus Parking Lots



For students, it takes two lots to initially find parking 26% of the time; three lots 23% of the time, and four or more 17% of the time (parking is found in the first lot only 16% of the time). In 51% of the cases, parking is found in less than 10 minutes when arriving on campus.

However, for faculty and staff, 79% of respondents find parking in the first lot they approach. It takes two lots for search of a parking space 13% of the time, and three lots 6% of the time (parking searches require four or more lots only 1% of the time). In 84% of the cases, parking is found in less than 10 minutes when arriving on campus.

Fifty-three percent of the student survey respondents do not relocate their vehicles during the day. However, upon leaving and returning to campus, students find parking in less than five minutes 28% of the time, and in 10 minutes or less 53% of the time (190 responses to this question from 346 of survey respondents, for a 56% response rate).

Forty-five percent of the faculty and staff survey respondents do not relocate their vehicles during the day. However, upon leaving and returning to campus, parking is found in less than five minutes 29% of the time, and in 10 minutes or less 57% of the time (56 responses to this question from 78 of survey respondents, for a 72% response rate). Thus leaving campus and finding parking upon return is a quite similar situation for faculty, staff, and students.

## TRANSIT QUESTIONS (THE LOOPER)

Eighty-seven percent of faculty and staff respondents and 80% of students reported living in an area NOT served by the Looper. Of the six faculty and staff respondents who reported living in a Looper-served area, five of the six respondents reported never using it. Of the 15 student respondents who reported living in a Looper-served area, 11 of the 15 respondents (73%) reported never using it.

“Inconvenience to destination” was the leading reason for faculty and staff not using the Looper (47% of 32 responses to this question). “Inconvenience to destination” was also the leading reason for students not using the Looper (21% of 192 responses to this question); use of vehicle for personal or business reasons were each reported by 8% of respondents to this question.

*The Looper is not well used by any members of the campus community, in part due to its route and inconvenience related to destinations.*



## PARKING INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Sixty-four percent of faculty and staff and 56% of student respondents were aware that Parking operates as an auxiliary.

Thirty-four percent of faculty and staff respondents believed that building a parking garage averages less than \$3,000 per space (10% reported it costing \$500 - \$1,000; 24% reported it cost \$2,000 - \$3,000) and 58% of student respondents believed that building a parking garage averages less than \$3,000 per space (33% reported it costing \$500 - \$1,000; 25% reported it cost \$2,000 - \$3,000).

This is significant to understand that a substantial portion of the campus community is not aware that Parking operates as an auxiliary and must be self-supporting. Further, a third of faculty and staff and over half of students thought that building a garage costs less than \$3,000 per space. In actuality, it will likely cost more than three times that amount.

## FUTURE OPTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Forty-seven percent of student respondents would favor a significant rate increase for funding a garage, compared with only 26% who would favor a moderate rate increase to support a better shuttle system. Forty-one percent of faculty and staff respondents would favor a significant rate increase for funding a garage, compared with 46% who would favor a moderate rate increase to support a better shuttle system.

“Paying more to park close to destinations” was only slightly favored above having “assigned parking lots”, at 17% versus 14% of student respondents, respectively, while 39% of survey respondents had “no preference.” Similarly for faculty and staff, “Paying more to park close to destinations” was only slightly favored above having “assigned parking lots”, at 18% versus 13% of respondents, respectively, while 27% of survey respondents had “no preference.”

Adjusting class schedules to ease parking demand was favored as a strategy by 49% of student respondents, and was opposed by 33%

Favorable student responses outweighed unfavorable responses for the following alternate class times:

- Friday (30%); Late Afternoon (37%); Early Morning (32%) favorable ratings
- Having more Sunday classes was more negatively received as an option, 34% versus 13%
- More Saturday classes received only slightly unfavorable reviews, 27% opposed versus 25% supportive (48% did not respond)

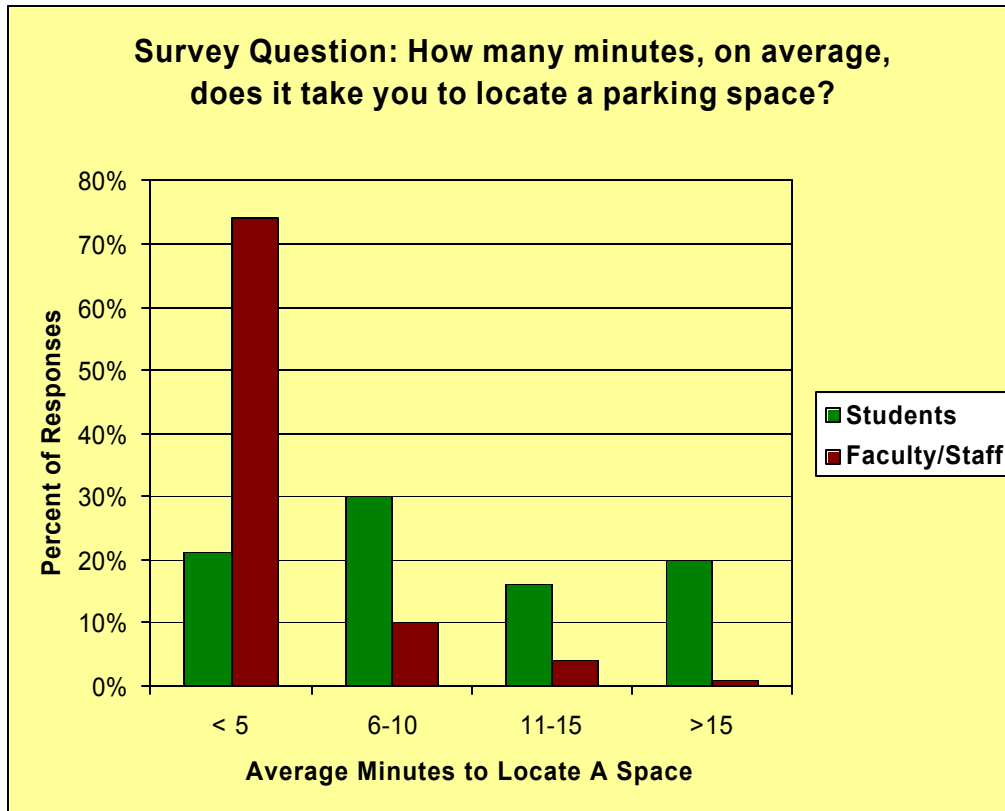
Adjusting class schedules to ease parking demand was favored as a strategy by 59% of faculty and staff respondents, and was opposed by 28%. Favorable responses outweighed unfavorable responses for the following alternate class times:

- Friday (42%); Late Afternoon (40%); Saturday (38%); Early Morning (32%) favorable ratings
- Having more Sunday classes was more negatively received as an option, 27% versus 17%

## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

For further analysis, *CHANCE Management Advisors, Inc.* compared three questions from the two surveys in more specific detail. There were significant differences in the amount of time it takes faculty and staff to find a parking space versus students. This is most likely due to when the respondents arrive on campus. This is illustrated below in *FIGURE III-1*.

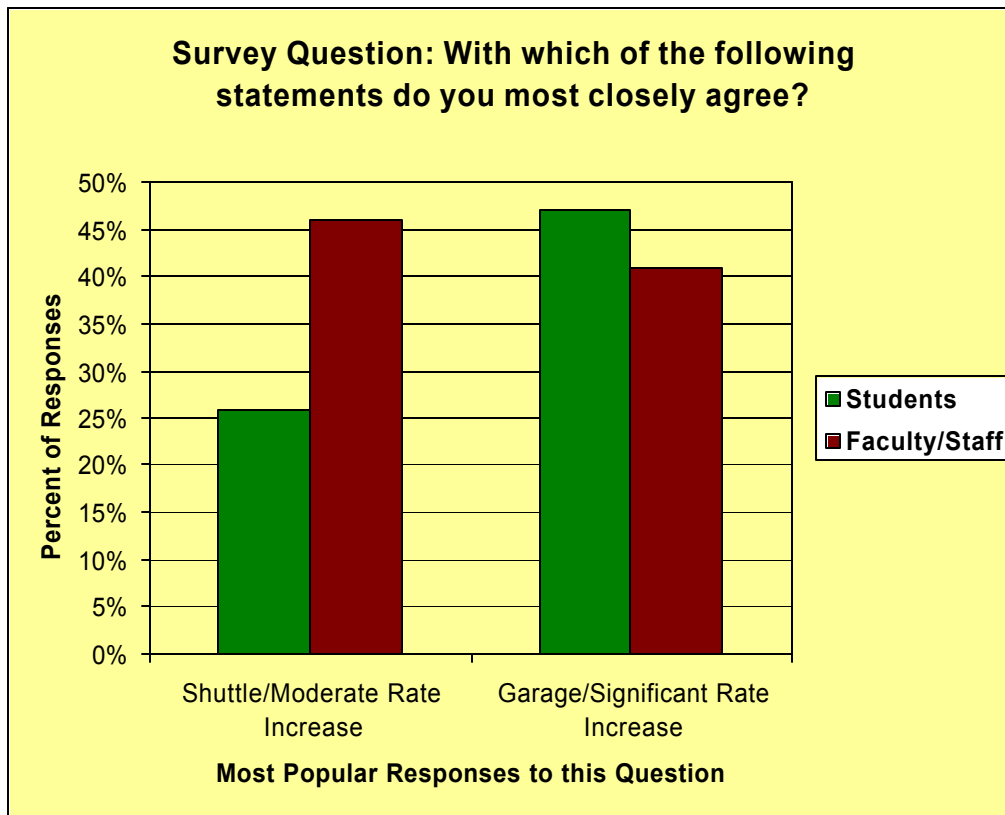
FIGURE III-1: USFSP Parking Survey Comparison: Average Minutes To Locate A Parking Space



The faculty and staff seemed more in favor of a moderate rate increase for a shuttle system compared to the students. However, it is not known whether increased shuttle service would result in increase ridership by faculty and staff. This is illustrated in *FIGURE III-2* below.

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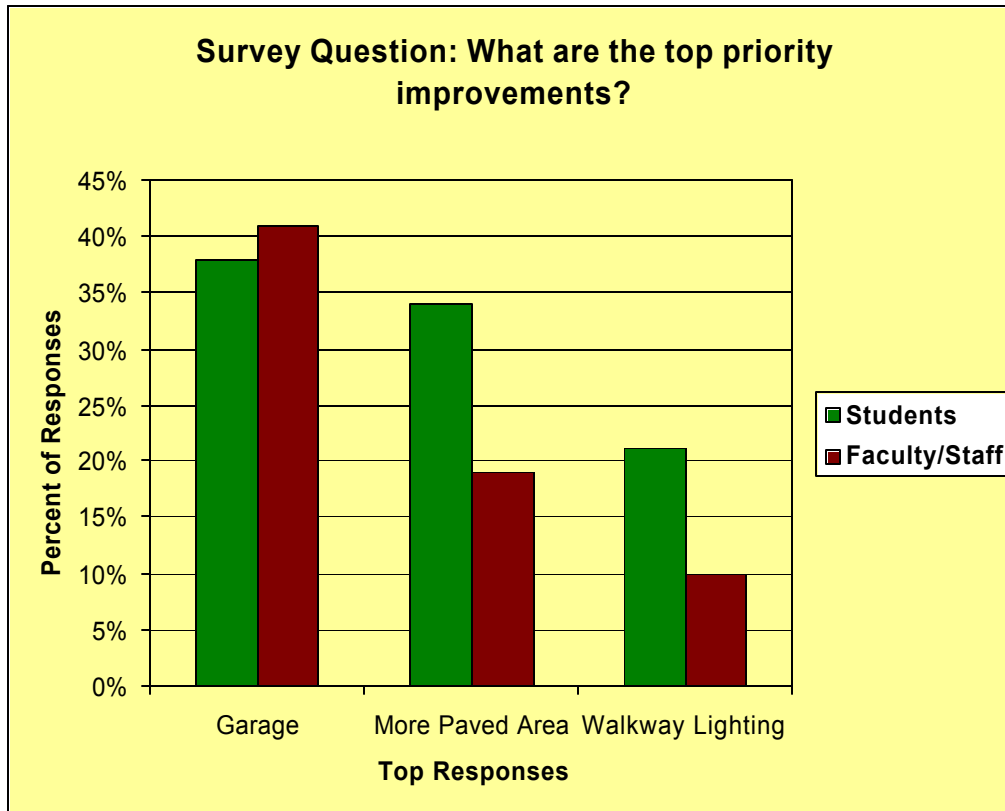
FIGURE III-2: USFSP Parking Survey Comparison: Favorable Opinions On Rate Increases



Both groups felt that constructing a garage was a top priority as a solution for parking problems on campus; however more students than staff felt that more paved parking and better walkway lighting were necessary. This is illustrated below in *FIGURE III-3*.

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FIGURE III-3: USFSP Parking Survey Comparison: Top Priorities For Improvements



**CONCLUSIONS**

There is variation between the two survey groups: students and faculty/staff. The priorities for a garage and rates varied between the two groups. Students have a more difficult time find parking than faculty and staff which correlates to class schedules. This may explain why they are more willing to have significant increases in costs for parking permits, or to consider changes in class schedules. However, in order to implement rate increases, general information will need to be explained to the campus community about 1) the parking program must be financially self-supportive and 2) garages cost about \$10,000 a space to construct.