Usage and Impacts of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee U-PASS Program

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Chicago Transit Authority’s U-PASS: Any time, Anywhere
Basic Concept of a U-PASS

- U-PASS is a deeply discounted, unlimited access transit pass
- 63 transit systems in U.S. and Canada offer U-PASS plans
- Most are smaller transit systems

Chicago Transit Authority’s U-PASS: Any time, Anywhere
Basic Concept of a U-PASS

- Schools contract for block purchase of passes for its students
- All students purchase passes through activity fee or tuition
- Student uses pass “any time, anywhere” on transit system
UWM’s U-PASS Program

- UWM’s U-PASS is a 4-year old student transit pass program
- Students pay $31 per semester as part of their activity fee
- Comparable transit pass costs $196
UWM’s U-PASS Program

- Students can ride any Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) route without paying any additional fare
Campus Background

- Campus located 3 miles north of Milwaukee’s CBD
- 20,000 and 24,000 students per semester
- 10% if students live in dorms
- High percentage of commuter students
- Eleven transit routes serve the campus
U-PASS Usage by Students

- MCTS on-board counts show a 32% to 45% increase in ridership
- Student surveys show 35% increase
- Undergraduates and new students report a high rate of transit usage
• **U-PASS Impacts**

- 221,000 vehicle trips diverted from UWM Campus
- Reduction of 5.1 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- Parking on campus improved
U-PASS Impacts

- 20% reduction in air emissions
- 7% of students said U-PASS impacted decision to attend UWM
- 25% of students said that U-PASS increased their accessibility
Benefits for All Students

- Provides system-wide mobility
- Reduces overall cost of college
- Can be paid for with student aid
Benefits for All Students

- Reduces out-of-pocket travel expenses
- Encourages participation in community activities
- Can be used for non-school travel
Benefits for Students Using Transit

• **Major savings over best alternative**
  - $31 per term versus $196 for 4 monthly passes

• **Convenient and worry-free**
  - No need to carry money for the fare
  - No need to find parking
  - No frustration about traffic congestion
  - No worries during bad weather
Benefits for Students Who Don’t Use Transit

• Less Traffic Congestion
• Increased Access to Parking
• Alternative or Emergency Travel
  • “Plan B” when car is “in the shop”
  • Short trips during day are pre-paid and convenient

Chicago Transit Authority’s U-PASS: Any time, Anywhere
Benefits to the Transit System

• Increases off-peak ridership
• Reduces dependence on farebox revenue
• Encourages a new generation of transit riders
Benefits to the University

• U-PASS savings makes college more affordable
• Creates a powerful recruitment tool
• Increases student enrollment
More University Benefits

- Helps low income and commuter students attend college
- Reduces parking demand
- Enhances school’s public image
More University Benefits

- Students support program
  - 65% strongly favor U-PASS
  - 24% favor U-PASS
  - 3% oppose U-PASS
  - 7% strongly oppose U-PASS

- School on the “right side” of environmental and energy policies
Conclusions from UWM Program

- Effective way to increase transit usage by younger riders
- Reduces vehicle trips and impact of automobiles on environment
Conclusions, continued...

- Determining factor in student’s decision to attend college
- Can be used in many other settings
Recommendations

• Form a “U-PASS Team” including representatives from:
  • The President’s Office
  • The Dean of Students
  • Bursar or Financial Administration
  • Transportation/Public Safety
  • Student Government
Recommendations

• Notify CTA Officials that you’d like to begin formal discussions

• Authorize an individual to negotiate on school’s behalf

• Establish internal communications plan to keep parties informed