

Enforcement of parking policies is a necessity

Both students and security must abide by university parking regulations

Parking on campus can be a hassle for students, but it is even more of a hassle for security officers who distribute citations.

Before commuter and residential students complain about fewer parking spaces, they should consider abiding by university parking regulations.

One important regulation is parking in your designated area.

Residential students are not allowed to park in nonresidential student or faculty lots at any time, according to the UNC Asheville Transportation Office.

"Quite often, we find residential students who do not park in their section because it was full," said Dennis Thompson, university security officer. "There is a \$10 fee for unauthorized parking."

Fewer parking spaces exist for everyone when someone parks in the wrong area.

"On the fifth citation, students get the boot. This is one of many methods we use that get the driver's attention," Thompson said.

Since university officials tell residential and commuter students where to park, everyone should follow these regulations.

"When I'm late to class, it's because I couldn't find a parking space," commuter student Tonya Warren said. "I have to leave 45 minutes in advance – 30 minutes to get to school and 15 minutes to find parking and make it to class."

How would you feel if someone took your parking space?

It's not fair to nonresidents like Warren who arrive early only to find no parking.

"The worst was when I had to go all the way up to the Reuter Center to get the very last spot," Warren said. "All of my classes



By Precious Barksdale
STAFF WRITER
PJBARKSD@UNCA.EDU

are in New Hall and Zageir Hall, so it doesn't make sense for me to park anywhere else."

Although there is limited parking, commuter students can also use free parking sections on campus.

Lots A and B are areas where commuter students can park for free, according to UNCA officials.

"My husband and I park in Lot A because it's much cheaper than paying \$70 for a parking permit," commuter student Laura Fountain said. "If I had to decide between walking for 20 minutes or paying gas money, I'd be willing to take the walk."

Just because free parking lots are not in the desired proximity for commuters does not mean they shouldn't be used.

"The university should build more flat land parking. With winter coming and the asphalt being so slick, I can't imagine walking up or down the hill during such bad weather," Warren said.

While bad weather does hinder commuter students from driving and parking on campus, they can also ride the shuttle. The university shuttle takes anyone to areas all around campus.

"Now that I know the shuttle stops where I park, I will definitely use it when winter arrives," Fountain said.

If commuters used more university methods of transportation,

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there would be fewer parking issues.

"A lot of the parking concerns come from people who don't read the policies," Thompson said. "I would be more than willing to answer questions about parking regulations instead of writing so many parking citations."

The transportation office Web site includes parking regulations, alternative transportation and other programs, Thompson said.

"The majority of parking citations come during the beginning of both the spring and fall semesters. The percentage dies down as the semester goes on," Thompson said.

Lack of communication could also be a reason commuter students are unaware of parking regulations.

"I've noticed a lot of people who park in places where they aren't supposed to park. Maybe it would be better if the university put up more signs that distinguished parking areas," Fountain said.

The university campus map seems to be the only source of parking designations other than the transportation Web site.

The parking signs are too small, especially due to the amount of scattered parking areas. If the university provided larger signs, there would be less confusion.

This constructive criticism does not excuse lazy residential and commuter students who

should know where to park.

Rather, it is a suggestion for nonresidential students that attend the university on an everyday basis.

"Even visitors have a hard time trying to find parking on campus," Fountain said. "There should be more signs that tell students, faculty and staff where not to park."

The transportation office should better inform students of parking options, while well-informed students should follow the rules.

"To me it seems like the number of commuter students enrolled and the amount of parking spaces provided don't match up," Warren said.

Although university parking decreased due to construction, the transportation office said it will provide more parking for commuters.

The answer is not to create more parking areas, but to maintain and legitimize the existing policies. Either residential and commuter students do not follow regulations by choice, or they aren't properly informed.

Building another parking deck would only solve part of the problem.

The university shouldn't offer more spaces if parking regulators and students don't communicate and try to curtail parking citations.

Campus parking policies are available online at www.unca.edu/transportation/parking.asp.