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A Simple Guide to Student Happiness

With limited parking and endless construction on Parker Street, Lee students are looking for new transportation methods. The ever-growing Freshmen classes make it difficult for students to find legal parking, and with the inevitable threat of parking tickets, it seem futile for infrequent users to bring a car. With Lee seemingly disinterested in creating new parking lots, the future of our university's entire transportation system could be at risk in coming years unless a drastic change is made. A bike sharing program is the obvious solution.

Bike sharing has already been implemented successfully in campuses around the United States (Princeton, Penn State, Dartmouth, etc.), and it would do exceedingly well at Lee University. The school would purchase a small fleet of bikes and two docking stations on campus. Students would check out a bike with their Student ID—and Student ID number to reduce theft—for the day to ride around campus, take a trip to the grocery store, or to bike along the Greenway. Whatever the use, students would return the bikes to the docking stations for others to utilize. A student worker could be hired for maintenance purposes. With a bike sharing program in place, more students might elect to leave their cars at home, investment in local community would increase, and students would have an alternate outlet for exercise.

Bike sharing is a practical and valuable solution for an expanding campus, especially if students wish to avoid using public transportation. According to the Cleveland Urban Area Transit System, one month passes for public transit cost \$20.00, totaling \$640.00 for four academic years of usage. With the closest major store to Lee (Save-a-Lot) being only 0.8 mile

away, basketed bikes will enable students to take essential expeditions, like trips to the grocery store, for free. In addition, bike sharing programs enable those who leave behind their cars or do not have licenses to access off-campus jobs as well. U.S. News reports that 70% of students currently bring a car to our campus; this program would make it feasible and affordable for some to leave their cars at home. Plus, avoiding the \$40.00 parking pass fee means 33.6 additional Taco Bell tacos as an environment-helping, exercise-loving reward.

Biking creates a pleasant exercise alternative; however, students, like me, who cannot transport or do not own personal bikes are at a disadvantage. Personal bikes are impractical for international students to bring, expensive on a college budget, irrelevant for infrequent users, and are often left abandoned in bike racks over the summer. Bike sharing solves all of these issues. With the Greenway being so close, biking also provides the perfect opportunity to explore areas of Cleveland inaccessible to cars, and it encourages students to exercise more. A Zagster survey reports that 62.2% of bike-share users feel more connected to the community, and according to a study by Dr. Miriam Ricci, “31.5 percent [of students] reported stress reduction and about 30 percent indicated they lost weight as a result of [a] bike-share.” Furthermore, with Lee upgrading the look of Parker Street and surrounding areas, the unnecessary clamor of cars clashes with the beautiful serenity of our community. A bike sharing program will make Lee University a peaceful, healthy, and community-oriented campus.

Bike sharing programs have received backlash in recent years, and an article written by Andrew Small studied the number one reason they did so poorly in the Seattle area—a harsh landscape and unprepared terrain. Apparently, Seattleites are less likely to bike on hilly roads or in areas with poor access to bike paths. Because Lee is a relatively flat campus, students have

easy access to over 850 local bike routes, and bike lanes are available on several Cleveland streets (Keith and 25th, for example), our university has no reason to fear this program.

Some may also say that bike sharing programs are only for larger schools, and while that may have been applicable twenty years ago, today's incoming students are searching out bike-friendly universities. In fact, according to The League of American Bicyclists, there are only three "Bicycle Friendly Universities" in Tennessee; the highest ranked university is Lincoln Memorial University— enrollment 4,338 students. According to their alumni association website, LMU earned this prestigious rank by embracing the trend of naturally integrating more bicycles onto campus with a fleet of 20 bikes purchased in August 2013. These have made it easy, safe, and affordable to bike on campus. Lee University can always benefit from national rankings, so why not join LMU and two other schools in Tennessee as Bicycle Friendly Universities— automatically at least top four in the state! Our environmentally-friendly generation now looks at colleges for having bicycle-friendly campuses, and U.S. News reports that over two thirds of millennials say they want to live in a place where they can get around without a car. Because of this, a bike sharing program will most likely attract incoming students.

The benefits for both students and administration are plentiful. Bike sharing is the perfect way to encourage Lee students and faculty to be healthier, more involved, and more invested in the local environment. To the administration: I urge you to consider implementing a program in upcoming years, and to the students: I encourage you to explore the benefits of a healthy lifestyle even now so that when we do get a bike sharing program, you can ditch both your car and your stress! Biking is the alternative transportation of our generation, and it is time for Lee University to see how impactful it can truly be.