To all members of the campus community,

Part of the traditional wisdom in higher education circles is that no satisfaction survey on any campus has ever shown that people are happy with parking!  Here at Georgia College & State University we have the added challenge of existing within a historic community that wasn’t designed for cars, adjacent to a downtown business center whose proprietors depend on the convenience of curbside parking to encourage customers to shop downtown.  Surprisingly, though, last year our campus master planning consultants’ analysis indicated that we had a sufficient number of parking spaces for an institution of our size, but that they were not being used efficiently.

In an effort to ensure that we are making the best possible use of available parking, and conscious of our desire to be good neighbors within the historic district and the downtown district, the university commissioned a parking study that was carried out by Walker Parking Consultants in late spring and summer 2005.  In the fall, a committee chaired by Kyle Cullars was appointed to review the Walker report and to make general recommendations for improving both parking and transportation at GCSU.  The committee did their work and submitted their recommendations in November 2005.  I then asked them to reconvene to complete the details needed to implement their recommendations, and they submitted their plans in February 2006.  I hope that you will join me in thanking Kyle Cullars, Ken Vance, John Webb, Janessa Hartmann, Ruby Griffin, Gerald Fisher, Roger Noel, and Jen Russell for their careful analysis of the issues and their cogent recommendations.

Their report then underwent extensive review by campus groups and individuals.  Student Government, Staff Council, and two standing committees of University Senate (University Services and Budget & Planning) reviewed the proposal, offering comments that strengthened the recommendations, and University Services as the relevant standing committee for parking services endorsed the proposal.  The committee conducted a campus-wide forum on March 22 to respond to questions and to hear additional suggestions for improvement.

The report is now on my desk, and I am writing today to let you know that I will approve the recommendations with two exceptions and two modifications:

* On the subject of night permits, we will simply enforce regular permits until 6:00 p.m. in lieu of creating a system of night permits.
* In the case of requiring permits for on-street parking adjacent to the main campus square, we will delete that recommendation, with the possibility of eventually limiting such parking to two hours.
* One recommendation, involving reserved parking, will be modified so that any faculty or staff member may request reserved parking for a $330 annual fee, but an application process will be required.  Applicants must present a compelling case based on job-related factors, such as the number of trips to and from campus each week, to qualify for a reserved space.
* All parking lots at Bobcat Village will be classified as “perimeter” parking.

The parking and transportation plan is a good example of how the university, through careful study, may improve services to faculty, staff, and students within our limited resources.  One feature of the plan is to have freshman cars parked in perimeter lots rather than in the Centennial area.  Since these cars are often “stored” during the week, the results of this move alone will be to open most of the Centennial spaces to visitors and commuters.  Frequency of shuttle routes will be increased so as to serve adequately those who are required to park in perimeter lots.  The completed plan will be implemented over the summer months, with the beginning of fall semester as our target date for full implementation.

The plan is available for study on our web site at <http://info.gcsu.edu/parking> .  I hope that if you have not done so, you will familiarize yourself with the plan and its features.  Questions about implementation may be directed to Kyle Cullars at kyle.cullars@gcsu.edu or campus extension 1976.

Dorothy Leland

President