

Synopsis of SMU Parking Policy

The contention that there is no “free” parking is false. The university provides at no charge to faculty, staff and students (save a first time card fee of \$5) a DART pass that can be used anytime, on any of the buses, light rail and commuter lines administered by DART (Dallas Area Rapid Transit). The DART surface parking area at Mockingbird Station (for example) is free. What is not “free” at SMU is convenience parking. If one chooses to have the opportunity for close in parking, the University charges a monthly fee. As an urban, land locked institution surrounded by densely populated residential areas, SMU does not have land available for acres of parking (like UTD, for example.) SMU has built a number of parking garages in the last 10 years, which has helped to alleviate most of the insufficient parking woes on campus.

Regarding metered parking and visitors, SMU from the highest level on down has established a policy that all users of parking on campus must pay for the privilege. Parking must be considered a resource, and it is a mistake to think of squandering this valuable resource. The events that visitors attend on this campus are of the highest quality, and are still very reasonably priced. If a department considers a particular visitor to be of such academic or other intrinsic economic value to their department, then that department usually obtains parking for the visitor by paying a nominal fee to Park and Pony.

The University has become a leader with initiatives in recycling and LEED buildings. One of the new parking garages was even built with provisions for electric cars to plug into while the driver is at work.

The culture of the automobile as an asset with no limitations is fast disappearing from the American scene. Alternative fuels, car pooling, bicycle commuting, public transportation and other not as yet determined options are fast becoming mainstream alternatives.