

White Paper

CU Student Bus Pass Program Social & Cultural Assessment, 2008

Background:

The student bus pass program at the University of Colorado at Boulder is committed to being a positive element of a multicultural organization. The definition of a multicultural organization is as follows:

The multicultural organization reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations and products or services; it acts on a commitment to eradicate social oppression in all forms within the organization; the multicultural organization includes the members of diverse cultural and social groups as full participants, especially in decisions that shape the organization; and it follows through on broader external social responsibilities, including support of efforts to eliminate all forms of social oppression and to educate others in multicultural perspectives.

In keeping with this commitment, the program is conducting a study to evaluate the levels of social and cultural participation in the student bus pass program.

The student bus pass program is paid for by a mandatory student fee and provides a universal-access transit pass to all fees-paid students. In 2008, the fee was \$53.44 for the spring and summer semesters and \$58.00 for the fall semester. The universal-access pass provides fare-free access (students simply show the driver a valid pass and continue on-board) to all regularly scheduled RTD routes, and selected special ride services (e.g., BuffRide, BroncosRide and RockiesRide).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the following aspects:

- Accessibility of this program for all eligible students,
 - *“What is the average frequency of transit service to campus?”*
 - *“What are the hours of transit service to campus?”*
 - *“What is the average proximity of students to transit services?”*
 - *“What are the outliers?”*
- Quality of this program for all eligible students,
 - *“What is the awareness and use of the program?”*
 - *“What is the level of satisfaction? Of safety and convenience?”*
- Comparative demographics and behavior patterns of participating students,
 - *“How does the demographic profile of student transit riders compare to the that of the overall university community?”*
- Students and campus affiliates not eligible for this program,
 - *“Who is excluded? Is the exclusion systematic or institutional?”*

Further, this study will narrate both areas for further study and strategies for improvement or expansion of the current program after having established through the above-outlined process the overall level of service that this program delivers from a social and cultural perspective.

Resources

Though some primary research may be conducted through this study, a large component of the analysis will be generated from secondary research. In late 2008, RTD staff completed their on-board survey that included statistics such as occupation, income, age, and level of education attainment. RTD also maintains studies regarding transit service financial performance that subsequently guide their service frequency and other decisions. These and other studies are available through their “facts/projects/criteria” section (www.rtd-denver.com).

In addition, the college pass program maintains databases containing student rider counts, available in a monthly breakdown by route. Also, the university’s office of planning and budget analysis maintains records of general student demographics, such as residency, area of study, and class level.

Schedule

To be determined; a recommended completion date for the 2008 analysis will be the end of the spring 2009 term. Subsequently, this study should be repeated each year as new data from the resources becomes available, or as services within the program change.

Report

The result of this study will be an evaluation report that may be disseminated to interested stakeholders, who may include students, faculty and staff, community organizations, general public and social studies researchers. The report will be made available through the Environmental Center’s website or by request from the program manager. In addition, this report may be disseminated through related email list serve organizations such as TRANSP-TDM, interested in transportation demand management, GRNSCH-L, an environmental sustainability planning group, and the CPARK-L, a parking administrators group increasingly facing these topics.

Contact

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