



# UW-River Falls Parking Survey

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## Executive Summary

- There are few differences between how people **most frequently** get to campus in good and bad weather. Employees and commuters drive to campus in overwhelming numbers, students resident in River Falls walk.
- Similarly, there are few differences between the **preferred** means of getting to campus in good and bad weather. Similar patterns – employees and commuters drive, River Falls students walk
- The average employee spends about 20 minutes getting to work each morning. Only 29 percent of commuting students report a commute of 20 minutes or less. Virtually all of the students living in River Falls spend 20 or fewer minutes getting to campus.
- Nearly 90 percent of those driving to campus are single-occupancy vehicles.
- Nearly 90 percent of all students have a car or truck that is usually available to them.
- The average time taken by employees to get from their car to their office is about 3.4 minutes and 90 percent reported spending 5 minutes or less to make this trip.
- Roughly 90 percent of both commuters and employees drive to campus at least several times per week, usually Monday through Friday. Students are much less likely to drive to campus on Fridays than are faculty. Students living in River Falls report driving to campus on Sundays in significantly higher proportions than commuters or employees.
- Of those students living in River Falls, nearly half park in some sort of University parking lot, nearly one-quarter on the street, and about one-third in a private parking space.
- More than 60 percent of employees park in university parking lots and virtually all the rest park on the street. More than three-quarters of commuting students regularly park on the street and one-quarter use metered lots. Students living in River Falls are considerably more eclectic in their parking patterns. For students, parking patterns are significantly related to their class standing and gender.
- Commuting students don't buy permits because they don't think spaces are available in convenient locations. Students living in River Falls are significantly more likely to say that they don't drive often enough to justify purchasing a parking permit.
- Nearly 90 percent of faculty and staff indicate that they are always or usually able to park in their most desired location when they drive to campus. When their desired parking location is not available, employees are most likely to park on the street (46 percent of the time) or in another university lot (37 percent).
- Students are always or usually able to park in their desired location only about 33 percent of the time and are rarely or never able to do so about 40 percent of the time. Commuting students are significantly more likely to utilize metered lots at the university when their desired parking spot is unavailable than are employees or students living in River Falls.
- Two-thirds of the employees with disability parking privileges said that they always or usually are able to park in their most desired location. In contrast, a third or fewer students with disability parking privileges said they always or usually can park in their most desired location. Six respondents indicated that more disability spaces are needed in the middle of campus near the library and KFA, 5 identified a need near North Hall, 5 said more were needed in all campus lots.
- If the price of a permit increases by \$200, two-thirds of those currently purchasing permits say they would no longer do so. This would put approximately 169 additional employee cars

and several hundred additional student cars in parking spots on River Falls' streets. Pushing more employees and student commuters onto city streets would create significant public relations costs for the university.

- The proportion of student commuters who say they would purchase a parking permit actually increases as the cost of the permit increases!
- The “elasticity of demand” for parking permits is such that these data indicate that parking revenues would fall with an increase in the fee charged.
- Employees and students living in River Falls have similar opinions regarding the definition of “convenient” parking. Roughly three-quarters of both of these groups say that parking is convenient if they walk 5 minutes or less to get to their destination and only about a quarter are willing to walk more than 5 minutes. In contrast, commuters are willing to walk for longer periods of time; one-third stated that a walk 5-10 minutes to the destination makes a parking spot convenient. The observed differences are highly statistically significant.
- Overall, there are roughly equal proportions of the overall sample that are more or less satisfied with current parking experiences and options (46 percent) and those that are dissatisfied to some degree (40 percent).
- Students, whether commuting or resident in River Falls, are significantly less satisfied with parking than are employees. Nearly one-third of the variation in satisfaction with parking on campus is associated with the status of the respondent (employee versus student) and the average amount of time spent walking from their parking spot to their destination.
- Only one in five students are not employed while at school. Commuting students are more likely to need to use their automobile (96 percent) to get to work than are student resident in River Falls (72 percent). About three-quarters of all students go directly from campus to work at least some of the time. student employment is likely to add to the “churning” of parking spaces on and around campus since most students work, drive directly from campus to work, drive alone, and work most days during the week.

## Introduction

During February and March the Survey Research Center (SRC) sent surveys to faculty and staff, students living in River Falls, and students commuting to campus to solicit their views about parking on and around campus. These three groups were sampled separately because it was hypothesized that they would have different commuting and parking patterns. The questionnaires sent to each group were largely identical, though each had a few questions that were unique. In the text to follow, we will typically refer to “**employees**” to represent faculty and staff, “**commuters**” to refer to students who report residing outside of the 54022 zip code, and “**River Falls residents**” to refer to students living in the 54022 zip code.

Table 1 summarizes the number of surveys sent to each group, the response rate we achieved with each and the confidence interval associated with each sub-population. The confidence interval tells us the expected precision of the estimates to be discussed in this report. For example, in Table 2 we report that 5.7 percent of all university employees reported that walking is the way they most frequently get to campus in good weather. With a confidence of plus or minus 3.3 percent, there is less than a one in twenty chance that the actual proportion who normally walk to work in good weather is less than 2.4 percent or more than 9.0 percent. In sum, because we received a relatively large number of responses from each of the populations, the level of statistical precision is quite good.

Table 1: Survey return statistics

Population	Number surveys sent	Percent returned	Confidence interval
Employees	768	54%	3.3%
Commuters	957	39%	4.8%
River Falls Residents	1,220	40%	4.0%

## Section A: Getting to Campus

The first section of the questionnaire gathered information about how people get to campus in good and bad weather. We asked them about both their most frequent means of getting to campus and their preferred means. Table 1 summarizes the response for each of the groups. The first line of numbers indicates the number from each population (employees, commuters, and students resident in River Falls) who responded to the question.

There are few differences between how people **most frequently** get to campus in good and bad weather. The only significant differences are with respect to bicycles and motorcycles. Fewer than 20 percent of those reporting that their most frequent means of getting to campus is by bicycle when the weather is good arrive via pedal power when the weather is bad. Slightly more than a quarter of good weather bikers walk and 43 percent drive to campus alone in inclement weather. None of the good weather motorcyclists reported using them in inclement weather and nearly 90 percent arrive via automobile in such cases.

Similarly, there are few differences between the **preferred** means of getting to campus in good and bad weather. Most importantly for this study, only 20 percent to those who prefer to drive to

campus when the weather is bad said that they preferred to come by some other means when the weather is good. In other words, for most people weather is not the factor that determines whether or not they come to campus in a car. Half of those who prefer to leave the car at home on nice days walk to campus and a quarter ride their bicycles. Only 8 of 812 indicated that they would prefer to use public transportation (if available) in good weather and 23 in bad weather. In short, there doesn't appear to be a groundswell of support for public transport in the campus community.

If we consider the different groups surveyed, the pattern of responses for employees and commuters is broadly similar. The vast majority of both of these groups indicate that they most frequently get to campus by driving alone, whether the weather is good or bad. Between 10 percent and 12 percent of these groups drive to campus with others (in a car pool or in an unstructured group) in good and bad weather. Differences do appear between these groups when we look at biking and walking habits. Slightly more than 10 percent of employees report walking or biking to campus when the weather is good and more than 8 percent do so when the weather is bad. For obvious reasons, these options are not used by commuting students.

Table 2: Preferred means of coming to campus

	Good Weather						Bad Weather					
	% Most Frequent			% Preferred			% Most Frequent			% Preferred		
Transport Count	Emp	Comm	RF Res	Emp	Comm	RF Res	Emp	Comm	RF Res	Emp	Comm	RF Res
	401	349	356	270	246	349	382	342	446	254	239	339
Walk	5.7%	1.1%	69.6%	13.3%	4.1%	53.3%	6.5%	0.6%	60.5%	9.1	1.3%	33.6%
Bicycle	5.5%	0.6%	4.3%	15.2%	0.8%	15.8%	1.6%	0.0%	0.4%	2.4	0.4%	4.7%
Motorcycle	1.0%	0.6%	0.6%	3.7%	2.4%	1.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.4	0.4%	0.6%
Drive alone	74.6%	87.1%	20.0%	52.2%	72.8%	20.3%	78.3%	87.7%	28.7%	66.9	73.6%	32.4%
Driver/Passenger not in a car pool	8.2%	6.6%	4.1%	5.9%	6.1%	5.4%	8.1%	6.4%	6.1%	9.4	7.1%	13.3%
Driver/passenger in car pool	4.7%	4.0%	1.3%	5.9%	12.2%	2.6%	4.2%	4.7%	3.6%	6.3	13.0%	10.0%
Private commuter bus	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8	1.3%	1.5%
Public Transportation	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.2%	0.8%	0.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5	1.7%	2.9%
Other	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	1.2	1.3%	0.9%

There were 483 students living in River Falls that responded to this survey; 200 live in residence halls and 283 live off-campus. Nearly 70 percent of the 356 students living in River Falls who responded, indicate that they generally walk to campus in good weather but only 53 percent say this is their preferred choice. Nearly 4-times as many students reported bicycling as their preferred means of getting to campus than said that this is their most frequently used means. It is not clear what keeps students living in River Falls from riding their bikes to campus in good weather. One-quarter of the students residing in River Falls report that they get to campus in a car in good weather and nearly 2 in 5 (38%) do so when the weather is bad.

In sum, the different groups examined have different patterns with respect to how they get to campus. These patterns, in most cases, don't change dramatically in response to the weather. Interestingly, many faculty and staff appear to be interested in leaving their car at home, at least when the weather is good (75 percent drive alone most frequently but only 52 percent say this is

their preferred means in good weather). What prevents them from acting on their preferences is unclear.

Table 3 summarizes the responses to a series of questions we asked about getting to campus and to class. In each cell we report both the average value for the responses and the number of people from whom we received responses (shown as the “N” value). The average employee spends about 20 minutes getting to work each morning, which is substantially less than student commuters but more than students who reside in River Falls. More than half of the faculty and staff who responded said they live in River Falls and 70 percent say that it takes them 20 minutes or less to get to campus. In contrast, only 29 percent of commuting students report a commute of 20 minutes or less. Virtually all of the students living in River Falls spend 20 or fewer minutes getting to campus. The miles commuted to campus by each group closely follows the patterns just described.

Table 3: Getting to campus and class

Questions	Employee	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
It normally takes me X minutes to get to campus from home	18.6 mins N=387	30.4 mins N=335	11.9 mins N=238	21.0 mins N=960
How many miles one way to campus from your residence?	12.5 miles N=406	26.4 miles N=339	2.1 miles N=335	16.9 miles N=1090
If you drive to campus, counting yourself, how many people are normally in your vehicle?	1.1 N=386	1.1 N=330	1.3 N=230	1.1 N=946
It normally takes me X minutes to walk to class/workplace from where I park my vehicle	3.4 mins N=375	9.1 mins N=334	7.7 mins N=234	6.5 mins N=943

Nearly 90 percent of those driving to campus are single-occupancy vehicles. Interestingly, students living in River Falls do a slightly better job of car pooling when they drive to campus; only 78 percent of these students reported driving to campus alone.

Table 3 clearly indicates that faculty and staff park much closer to their offices than students relative to their classrooms. The average time taken by employees to get from their car to their office is about 3.4 minutes and 90 percent reported spending 5 minutes or less to make this trip. Students, whether commuters or residents of River Falls take more than twice as long to get from their parking spot to their classrooms. Substantial proportions of students who commute (18.9 percent) and live in River Falls (12.0 percent) spend more than 11 minutes to get from where they park to class.

The final set of questions we asked about commuting habits dealt with the types of transportation our students have available to them, how frequently all groups drive to campus, and the days of the week that they drive to campus. The results of this segment of the questionnaire are summarized in Table 4. As the table indicates, nearly 90 percent of all students have a car or truck that is usually available to them. The proportion of students with a car or truck available to them generally increases with class standing. So, 80 percent of freshmen report having a car or

truck available to them compared to 98 percent of juniors. There are no significant differences in access to cars and trucks between young men and women.

Interestingly, only one-quarter reported having access to a bicycle. Young men were significantly more likely to report having a bicycle than were young women, and upperclassmen were more likely than freshmen and sophomores to own a bike.

Table 4: Campus commuting habits

	Employee	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
Do you usually have a vehicle/bike available for your use?				
Count Range	N/A	348-356	433-460	781-808
No	N/A	6%	12%	10%
Yes, a car or truck	N/A	96%	88%	92%
Yes, a motorcycle	N/A	3%	2%	3%
Yes, a bicycle	N/A	5%	27%	17%
How regularly did you drive a motorized vehicle to campus last semester?				
Count	415	335	308	1058
Nearly every day	79%	70%	30%	62%
Several days/week	11%	19%	18%	16%
Once/week	2%	5%	18%	8%
1-3 times/month	2%	3%	11%	5%
Almost never	6%	3%	23%	10%
Days you normally travel to campus				
Count Range	409	333-348	414-423	1056-1180
Sunday	9%	3%	35%	17%
Monday	95%	85%	77%	86%
Tuesday	94%	81%	74%	83%
Wednesday	97%	81%	73%	84%
Thursday	94%	81%	75%	84%
Friday	94%	73%	73%	80%
Saturday	13%	3%	17%	11%

As was true when we looked at commuting patterns (Table 2), employees and commuters have broadly similar patterns with respect to how frequently they drive to campus and the days of the week they do so. Roughly 90 percent of both commuters and employees drive to campus at least several times per week, usually Monday through Friday. All students are much less likely to drive to campus on Fridays than are faculty. This pattern undoubtedly reflects the large number of students who return to their home towns most week-ends (which seems to start on Thursday evening for our students!). Students living in River Falls report driving to campus on Sundays in significantly higher proportions than commuters or employees. This, no doubt, reflects the return of students from their week-end at home.

## Section B. Once at Campus

The next section of the questionnaire asked respondents about where they park their vehicles when on campus; our results are summarized in Table 5. The first set of questions pertained only to those living in River Falls and asked where they normally parked their vehicle when they were not in class. As indicated, nearly half park in some sort of University parking lot, nearly one-

quarter on the street, and about one-third in a private parking space (e.g. at a house or apartment). Twenty students report parking vehicles in multiple places when not in class; most frequently on the street and in a private parking space.

Table 5: Current parking habits

	Employee	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
<b>If you have a vehicle in River Falls, where is it usually parked when you are not in class?</b>				
COUNT	N/A	N/A	395	
Residence Hall Parking lot	N/A	N/A	40%	
Other University parking lot	N/A	N/A	6%	
On the street	N/A	N/A	22%	
Private parking space	N/A	N/A	34%	
Other	N/A	N/A	8%	
<b>Where is your vehicle usually parked when you are in class/workplace?</b>				
COUNT	405	453	395	
Residence Hall Parking lot	N/A	1%	22%	
Other University parking lot	61%	10%	6%	
On the street	33%	76%	53%	
Private parking space	2%	1%	10%	
(University) Metered lot	1%	25%	20%	
Other	1%	5%	6%	
<b>If you don't have a permit to park in a University lot, why?</b>				
COUNT	169	346	290	805
Unable to get one	2%	7%	12%	8%
Too expensive	63%	52%	47%	52%
No convenient location available	13%	40%	34%	32%
Don't drive often enough	17%	13%	26%	18%
Other	23%	28%	22%	25%
<b>When you drive to campus, how often are you able to park in your most desired location?</b>				
COUNT	393	344	390	1127
Always	44%	8%	11%	21%
Usually	43%	24%	20%	29%
Sometimes	7%	29%	26%	20%
Rarely	5%	29%	31%	22%
Never	1%	10%	12%	8%
<b>If your most desired place to park is filled where do you park?</b>				
COUNT	358	351	409	1118
University parking lot (permit required)	37%	8%	24%	23%
On street	46%	73%	52%	57%
University metered lot	5%	23%	14%	14%
Private or city lot	2%	3%	6%	4%
Other	9%	5%	9%	8%

Parking patterns of the three groups when in class or at work vary significantly and in predictable ways. More than 60 percent of employees park in university parking lots and virtually all the rest park on the street. More than three-quarters of commuting students regularly park on the street and one-quarter use metered lots (some students listed multiple places where they regularly park when in class so the percentages sum to more than 100 percent). Students living in River Falls are considerably more eclectic in their parking patterns. Half park on the street and roughly one-fifth park in residence hall parking lots or metered lots on campus.

For students, parking patterns are significantly related to their class standing and gender. Underclassmen are, for example, significantly more likely to park in residence hall or other university parking lots than are juniors, seniors or graduate students. Upperclassmen and graduate students are more likely to park on the street or use a private parking space (e.g. at a house or apartment). Women are statistically more likely to park in residence hall parking lots than are men. In contrast, a significantly higher percentage of men (48 percent) report parking on the street than do women (39 percent).

Respondents who don't have a permit to park in one of the university's parking lots were asked why. Interestingly, employees were significantly more likely to say that they don't have a permit to park in a university lot because they are too expensive. Comments made by employees, which are summarized in Appendix A, are consistent with this conclusion. The comments indicate that some employees feel very strongly about the cost of parking; some suggested they might resign from the university if parking fees were increased! Given that faculty permits cost only \$17 more per year than a student permit and that faculty and staff would be expected to have substantially higher incomes, this result is quite surprising. Commuting students, in contrast, don't buy permits because they don't think spaces are available in convenient locations. Students' written comments support this interpretation of the data. Students living in River Falls are significantly more likely to say that they don't drive often enough to justify purchasing a parking permit.

The next portion of Table 5 clearly highlights the fact that faculty and staff have a very different parking experience than do students. Nearly 90 percent of faculty and staff indicate that they are always or usually able to park in their most desired location when they drive to campus. Students, on the other hand, are always or usually able to park in their desired location only about 33 percent of the time and are rarely or never able to do so about 40 percent of the time. These differences are statistically significant at very high levels of confidence.

When their desired parking location is not available, employees are most likely to park on the street (46 percent of the time) or in another university lot (37 percent). Commuting students are, by a very wide margin, the most dependent upon street parking when their preferred spot is not available. Given that more than three-quarters of such students reported that street parking was where they usually park when they drive to class, this probably means that they just park further from campus and face a longer walk. Commuting students are also significantly more likely to utilize metered lots at the university than are employees or students living in River Falls. About half of students living in River Falls park on the street when their favored site is taken and a quarter use a university lot.

Only 27 of the 1,257 respondents said that they have utilized a temporary or permanent disability parking permit (Table 6). As was true with general parking, the experiences of employees with disability parking privileges are quite different than those of students with such privileges. Two-thirds of the employees with disability parking privileges said that they always or usually are able to park in their most desired location. In contrast, a third or fewer students with disability parking privileges said they always or usually can park in their most desired location.

While the numbers are small, all three groups feel, strongly, that more disability parking spaces are needed on campus. As noted in the comments section (Appendix A), 6 respondents indicated that more spaces are needed in the middle of campus near the library and KFA, 5 identified a need near North Hall, 5 said more were needed in all campus lots, 2 identified both Karges and Centennial Science, and one each in Rodli, Agricultural Science, South Hall, and on the non-parking side of streets in the Winchester neighborhood.

Table 6: Disability Parking Opinions

	Employee	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
If you have a temporary or permanent disability requiring parking close to a building, how often have you been able to park in your most desired location?				
Count	17	6	4	27
Always	18%	17%	0%	14.8%
Usually	47%	17%	25%	37%
Sometimes	18%	17%	0%	14.8%
Rarely	0	33%	50%	14.8%
Never	18%	17%	25%	18.5%
Is there an area on campus where more disability parking spaces are needed?				
Count	15	8	2	26
Yes	87%	86%	100%	81%
No	13%	14%	0%	19%

Table 7 summarizes responses of the three groups if parking permits increased in price by \$50, \$100, and \$200 per year. The pattern displayed by employees and students living in River Falls is as expected but commuting students produced a very unusual pattern. Table 5 indicated that slightly more than 60 percent of all employees currently park in a University lot. If the price increases by \$50 per year, the percentage who say that they would continue buying a parking permit falls by about 20 percent (to 42 percent). If the price increases by \$100 per year, permit purchasers fall by another 16 percent (to 26 percent) and by another 9 percent (to 17 percent) if the price goes up by \$200 per year. So, if the price of a permit increases by \$200, two-thirds of those currently purchasing permits say they would no longer do so.

The bad news is that faculty are not saying that they will leave their automobiles at home if the price of a permit increases – only 1 percent said they would car pool and a maximum of 13 percent (with a \$200 increase) say they'd get to campus without a car.. Most employees say they would park where no permit is needed if the price rose. In large part, this means they will park on city streets. Currently, 33 percent of employees report that they normally park on the street (Table 5). This increases to 64 percent with a \$200/year increase in the cost of a permit. If there are roughly 600 people working on campus and we assume that they continue to arrive on campus with 1.1 people per car (Table 3), there would be approximately 169 additional employee cars parked on the streets of River Falls.

Students living in River Falls indicate that they would behave as an economist might predict. As the price of a permit increases, the percentage of students living in River Falls who say they would buy a permit falls, from 19 percent with a \$50/year increase to 12 percent with a \$200/year increase. At the same time, time, the percentage getting to campus without a car

increases from 24 percent to 31 percent. The percentage saying they would park where a permit isn't required (on the street) doesn't change appreciably from the current situation (Table 5).

Table 7: Response to parking permit price increases

	Employee	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
If you had to pay an additional \$50 per year just to maintain current parking facilities would you:				
Count	407	342	470	1219
Buy a permit	42%	4%	19%	22.6%
Park where no permit needed	44%	93%	53%	61.3%
Car pool	1%	1%	2%	1.5%
Get to campus without a car	8%	1%	24%	12%
Other	4%	2%	2%	2.7%
If you had to pay an additional \$100 per year just to maintain current parking facilities would you:				
Count	401	342	469	1212
Buy a permit	26%	6%	15%	16.5%
Park where no permit needed	57%	88%	51%	63.4%
Car pool	1%	2%	3%	1.8%
Get to campus without a car	11%	1%	28%	14.9%
Other	5%	3%	2%	3.4%
If you had to pay an additional \$200 per year just to maintain current parking facilities would you:				
Count	400	342	467	1209
Buy a permit	17%	10%	12%	13.1%
Park where no permit needed	64%	83%	50%	63.9%
Car pool	1%	1%	4%	1.9%
Get to campus without a car	13%	1%	31%	16.6%
Other	7%	4%	3%	4.5%

Students who commute to campus have an anomalous pattern of responses. As Table 7 indicates, the proportion of commuters who say they would purchase a parking permit actually increases as the cost of the permit increases! Perhaps they are assuming that spaces in university lots near their destination are going to be more readily available (and spots on the streets even harder to find) if the permit price increases.

Again, the survey doesn't suggest that student commuters are going to leave their automobiles at home. There are not increases in car pooling or getting to campus without a car as the permit price increases by \$50 to \$200 per year. It should also be noted that even the lowest percentage (83 percent) saying they would park where no permit is needed is higher than the current level (76 percent). Again, given the number of commuters and their current propensity to arrive without passengers, this would mean at least an additional 200 cars looking for parking on the streets of River Falls.

What people say they will do and what they actually do can be two different things. However, the results summarized in Table 7 indicate that demand for parking permits is fairly "elastic". This means that the percentage change in the number of permits demanded decreases by more than the percentage change increase in their price. Pragmatically, elastic demand means that as the price per permit increases, the amount of revenue generated decreases. For example, at a price of \$229/year, Table 7 indicates that 172 permits would be sold to employees in this sample (= 42% \* 407 employees), which would generate \$39,388. The number of permits sold falls to

106 when the price increases to \$279/year, generating a total of \$29,574. In addition to reducing revenues, pushing more employees and student commuters onto city streets would create significant public relations costs for the university.

Table 8: Willingness to walk and current parking satisfaction

	Employee	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
Relative to your destination, what do you consider convenient parking?				
Count	411	353	478	1242
Less than 1 minute walking	16%	5%	10%	11%
1 – 5 minutes walking	61%	62%	64%	63%
5 – 10 minutes walking	21%	32%	24%	25%
11 – 20 minutes walking	2%	0%	2%	1%
How satisfied are you with your current parking experiences/options?				
Count	414	353	479	1246
Very satisfied	36%	5%	5%	15%
Satisfied	40%	25%	28%	31%
No opinion	6%	15%	19%	14%
Dissatisfied	14%	37%	29%	26%
Very Dissatisfied	5%	18%	18%	14%

The final two questions in the section covering parking at campus asked about parking convenience and overall satisfaction with campus parking; these results are summarized in Table 8. Employees and students living in River Falls have similar opinions regarding the definition of “convenient” parking. Roughly three-quarters of both of these groups say that parking is convenient if they walk 5 minutes or less to get to their destination and only about a quarter are willing to walk more than 5 minutes. In contrast, commuters are willing to walk for longer periods of time; one-third stated that a walk 5-10 minutes to the destination makes a parking spot convenient. The observed differences are highly statistically significant.

Overall, there are roughly equal proportions of the overall sample that are more or less satisfied with current parking experiences and options (46 percent) and those that are dissatisfied to some degree (40 percent). The students, whether resident in River Falls or commuting to campus, are significantly less satisfied with parking than are employees. Much of these different levels of satisfaction are explained by referring back to Table 3 where we showed that the average time spent walking to class or workplace from where their car is normally parked is 3.4 minutes for employees, 7.7 minutes for students living in River Falls, and 9.1 minutes for commuting students. Ninety percent of all employees report that it takes them 5 minutes or less to walk from their normal parking spot to their work station. Since most employees are able to walk to their workplace in less time than they said defined convenient parking, it is reasonable that most will be satisfied with parking on campus.

In contrast, about three-quarters of all students reported that they walk for a longer time (more than 5 minutes) than they would like (two-thirds of all students defined convenient parking as being when it takes 5 minutes or less to get from the car to the classroom). So, not surprisingly, students, whether commuting or resident in River Falls, are significantly less satisfied with parking than are employees. Nearly one-third of the variation in satisfaction with parking on

campus is associated with the status of the respondent (employee versus student) and the average amount of time spent walking from their parking spot to their destination.

### Section C: Student Employment Status

As Table 9 indicates, only one in five students are not employed while at school; many students reported multiple jobs as can be seen by the fact that the percentages in the first segment of Table 9 sum to more than 100 percent. Commuting students are more likely to have a job (85 percent are employed) than are students living in River Falls (76 percent are employed). Relatively few commuting students are employed in River Falls (6 percent) compared to students resident in the 54022 zip code (65 percent).

Table 9: Student work patterns

	Commuter	River Falls Resident	All
Are you employed while at school?			
Count/Range	359	519	878
No	15%	24%	20%
Yes, on campus	3%	35%	19%
Yes, off-campus within River Falls	3%	30%	17%
Yes, off-campus outside of River Falls	78%	55%	66%
Other	2%	1%	2%
Do you need a vehicle to get to your job?			
Count	306	399	705
Yes	96%	72%	53%
No	2%	19%	3%
Sometimes	2%	9%	2%
Other	0%	0%	0%
How do you get to your job most frequently?			
Count	306	393	701
Walk	2%	22%	3%
Bicycle	0%	1%	0%
Motorcycle	0%	0%	0%
Drive alone	94%	72%	53%
Passenger in car	1%	2%	1%
Car pool	0%	1%	0%
Other	2%	2%	1%
Do you normally travel directly from campus to your job?			
Count	304	389	695
Yes	41%	50%	46%
No	30%	25%	27%
Sometimes	29%	25%	27%
What days of the week do you normally travel to your job?			
Count/Range	299	374-385	674-682
Sunday	34%	47%	41%
Monday	68%	62%	65%
Tuesday	64%	56%	60%
Wednesday	67%	59%	63%
Thursday	68%	58%	62%
Friday	78%	77%	77%
Saturday	34%	60%	55%

Not surprisingly, commuting students are more likely to need to use their automobile (96 percent) than are student resident in River Falls (72 percent). Commuters also tend to drive alone to their job. Students living in River Falls often walk to their employment, which is expected since many work on campus or in town. The two groups have similar patterns with respect to the percentage that do or don't go directly from campus to work. About three-quarters of all students go directly from campus to work at least some of the time.

Interestingly, for both commuting and students resident in River Falls, the highest percentage of our students travel to their jobs on Fridays. For commuters, there is relatively little variation in the percentage traveling to work from Monday through Friday. About half as many commuters work on week-ends as do during the week. The pattern of traveling to work for students living in River Falls is substantially more variable during the week with a low of 56 percent working on Tuesdays to a high of 77 percent on Fridays. Students living in River Falls have a smaller drop off in terms of week-end employment than do commuters.

In short, student employment is likely to add to the “churning” of parking spaces on and around campus since most students work, drive directly from campus to work, drive alone, and work most days during the week.

## Demographics

The demographic profile of employee respondents is summarized in Table 10. There are few surprises in Table 10; there are roughly equal proportions of men and women and faculty, staff and classified employees in the sample. Employees who responded tended to be middle aged. In particular, faculty are significantly older than staff and classified employees. In fact, 45 percent of the faculty who completed the survey fell in the 45 – 54 age group and another 26 percent into the 55 – 64 age group. In contrast, 20 percent of staff respondents and 13 percent of classified employees reported their age as less than 35 years of age compared to only 6 percent of faculty. There were no statistical differences between the three groups with respect to the number of years employed at UW-River Falls. Interestingly, the largest percentages in the years worked at UW-River Falls question are at either end of the spectrum, under 5 years and over 25 years.

Table 10 Employee demographic characteristics

Gender	Male		Female			
	46%		53%			
Are you	Faculty		Staff	Classified		
	39%		27%	34%		
Age	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	2%	11%	20%	39%	25%	4%
Years at UW-River Falls	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+
	28%	19%	13%	11%	14%	28%

Table 11 provides a profile of the students who responded to the questionnaire. Women represent a disproportionate share of the sample of students, given that they compose roughly 60 percent of the overall student body. Women in the sample tend to live in closer proximity to campus and classes than did men and, hence had somewhat different parking/commuting practices. Women, for example were significantly more likely to walk to campus than were men, probably because of their closer proximity. The unexpectedly high percentage of women in the sample means that some of the parking issues raised in this report may be understated.

Commuters are significantly older than students living in River Falls. Since more than half of the students living in River Falls reside in the residence halls, which contain high percentages of freshmen and sophomores, this result is expected. The same sort of pattern, though less pronounced is seen in the data on class standing.

Table 11 Student demographic profile

Gender	Count	Male	Female						
Commuter	355	28%	72%						
River Falls Resident	480	28%	72%						
Age	Count	Under 18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24+
Commuter	355	0%	5%	11%	9%	15%	12%	8%	41%
River Falls Resident	479	0%	8%	17%	22%	19%	16%	6%	13%
Class standing	Count	Freshman	Soph	Junior	Senior	Grad	Non-degree		
Commuter	355	14%	12%	21%	29%	19%	5%		
River Falls Resident	478	19%	23%	26.2%	25.7%	4.8%	1.5%		
College		CAFES	CAS	CEPS	CBE	Not declared			
Commuter	348	7%	35%	27%	25%	6%			
River Falls Resident	476	20%	31%	29%	16%	4%			

With respect to college affiliation, students with majors in CAFES are significantly more likely to live in River Falls than to commute to school. Students in CBE, in contrast, are significantly more likely to be commuters. Since CAFES draws students from throughout the rural areas of Wisconsin and Minnesota and CBE seems to draw disproportionately from the Twin Cities metro area, these patterns are predictable. Further, students in CBE and CEPS are significantly older than students with majors in CAFES and CAS.

## **Conclusions**

Parking is an issue that people on campus feel strongly about, whether they are students or employees. This is indicated by the response rates to the questionnaire (which were high) and the large number and vehemence of comments received.

Most employees and commuting students drive alone to campus whether the weather is good or bad. There are no indications that the weather or increasing the cost of a parking permit will induce many people to leave their vehicle at home. Indeed, the data indicate that raising the price of parking permits will primarily increase demand for on-street parking with the attendant public relations problems. If there is a goal of reducing the number of automobiles coming to campus each day, a combination of carrots and sticks may be necessary. For instance, providing preferred and discounted parking for people who car pool.

A number of consistent patterns appear throughout this study. Generally speaking, employees and commuting students have very similar habits with respect to their dependence upon their vehicles and are quite different than students resident in River Falls. In contrast, when we consider the level of satisfaction with current parking conditions, employees tend to be quite satisfied while students, whether commuters or local residents, feel otherwise. Faculty parking spots tend to be readily available and within a distance they consider convenient while this is generally not the case for students.

The vast majority of our students report working during the school year, many go directly from campus to their work site, and most use their cars to get there. Their coming and going adds to the churning of parking places on and around campus.

### Parking Survey Comments: Key Themes

- Over 600 comments were made. 130 from River Fall's residents (off- and on-campus), 245 from employees, and 261 from commuters.
- The most frequent comment (75x) was that a University parking permit is not needed because respondents are able to park on the street. Over half of the comments were from commuters. The next most frequent (27x) comment was also about not needing a University parking permit because they (commuters) parked in the commuter lot.
- When responding to what action they would take if the permit price was raised, the number of comments (actions) increased as the price went up. Some of the comments included: buying the permit, uncertainty about their action, refuse to buy the permit, use alternative parking/rides, and quit working at the University.
- Many people (employees 13x) commented that they didn't make enough money to pay for a permit.
- Employees reason that they deserve a decreased permit price or a raise to cover the permit costs.
- Employees were the only group to comment that they would leave if the permit price went up to \$379.
- Students more commonly claimed they would find alternate parking in response to increasing permit costs.
- Employees were the only group to comment that they always park in their desired spot.
- Not one student denies there is a parking problem. Some felt that it is UWRF greatest downfall.
- Students (resident and commuting) would like to see UWRF work with the city to solve the parking problem.
- Commuters and employees provided numerous and varied suggestions for where more disability spots are needed.
- Many students didn't know how to obtain a parking permit.
- Employees and students stated that the parking employees are not as helpful as they could be.
- Employees and commuters say there should be earlier notice when F lot is being closed.
- People have difficulty finding a parking spot after they have left and returned (lunch, errands, responsibilities at the lab farm).
- All respondent groups commented that the lots are not properly maintained throughout the winter months.

### Parking Survey Complete Comments

How do you get to campus?

2x don't go if bad ice/snow

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May 27, 2005

1x "park and ride" lot off campus  
1x Scotty beams me there

How do you get to work?

8x work at home  
4x walk  
3x car pool

Where do you park when not in class?

7x home  
4x work  
2x on the street/at meters  
2x community lots (public/private)  
1x school lot

Where do you park while in class?

13x campus/faculty lots  
6x do not drive to class  
6x anywhere, usually downtown  
6x handicapped spot  
4x work  
4x at a friend/relatives house  
4x community lots (private/public)  
3x park illegally  
2x first available spots  
1x bike rack at KFA

Where do you park if desired spot is filled?

15x always park in desired spot  
15x community lots (private, i.e. Econo Foods, Bank lot)  
10x walk  
15x other University lots  
4x never have that problem  
4x friend's house  
6x park illegally  
2x on the street  
1x faculty lot  
1x goes home

Why don't you have a University permit?

75x the street is closer-arrive early  
27x park in commuter lot  
12x didn't know they could purchase a permit

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May 27, 2005

- 13x only have class in evening
- 13x too expensive
- 12x park at private residence
- 11x walk
- 6x lots too full, not guaranteed a good spot
- 4x handicapped permit
- 2x should be free for faculty
- 1x goes directly to class from work
- 1x park illegally

Where are disability spaces needed?

- 6x middle of campus near library and KFA
- 5x all campus lots
- 5x North Hall
- 2x behind Karges
- 2x Centennial Science Hall
- 1x Agricultural Science lot
- 1x Rodli
- 1x South Hall
- 1x on the other side of the streets not in use

What action would you take if permit price was raised to \$229?

- 5x would not buy a permit
- 4x buy it (begrudgingly)
- 4x uncertain about what they would do
- 3x protest
- 2x get here early
- 1x spouse brings me
- 1x park illegally
- 1x quit

What action would you take if permit price was raised to \$279?

- 8x uncertain
- 6x quit
- 4x gripe, demand a raise
- 2x would buy only 1 permit
- 2x arrive early
- 2x buy the permit
- 1x spouse brings me
- 1x park illegally

What action would you take if permit price was raised to \$379 (build a ramp)?

- 12x payment depends on placement of ramp
- 11x quit, retire, resign, transfer
- 6x uncertain about their actions

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- 5x would refuse to purchase permit
- 4x cost is too high and should be included in tuition
- 4x don't think a ramp is needed
- 3x park anywhere
- 3x walk/no longer drive
- 2x would buy the permit
- 2x arrive early
- 2x spouse would transport
- 2x protest/ start a petition to block construction
- 1x park illegally
- 1x parking employees should be fired

#### Additional Comments

- 17x do not make enough money to pay for a permit
- 12x the lots are not properly maintained in the winter months
- 10x have difficulty finding a spot after they have left and returned (for lunch, errands, responsibilities at the lab farm)
- 10x University should petition in the city to help with the parking issues
- 7x do not support a ramp
- 7x should be more metered lots (and they should be closer to the classrooms)
- 6x feel there should be prorated or daily parking fees
- 6x warnings should be issued to those who "fail to display"
- 6x frequency of parking tickets/fees issued by the University can make enough revenue to build a ramp (only use for parking expenses!!!)
- 5x should be temporary (15min.) parking near all campus buildings
- 4x angered by the swift closings of lot F
- 4x only option is to arrive early
- 4x dislike the attitudes of parking office employees
- 4x satisfied with parking
- 4x lots are too far from classes (especially since classes are 1-2 times per week)
- 4x parking problems make them consistently late to class
- 4x we should be building a ramp, not a new student center
- 3x needs to be clarification about where to park for night classes and the permit in general
- 3x there should be a free lot for University employees
- 3x support the building of a ramp
- 3x WILL find alternate parking if costs of permits continue to increase
- 2x all illegally parked vehicles should be towed, not ticketed
- 2x E and K lots should be opened on the weekend
- 2x UWRF should adopt to the changes and are unhappy with the lack of progress
- 2x parking problems almost swayed their decision on attending UWRF
- 2X like the ramp idea, but \$300 is too expensive
- 2x enjoy the daily walk to class and more should do it
- 1x parking lines should be painted on all the streets surrounding campus
- 1x would like to eliminate parking services and let campus security handle the parking situation

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- 1x believes the main parking problem is at the center of campus
- 1x recommends that students living on campus should have the last and most expensive priority
- 1x the last 200 ft. along the intramural field should be paved
- 1x University should charge for disability parking permits
- 1x \$0.25 per hour is too much money for meters
- 1x it is hard to get in and out of metered lots
- 1x should have asked the question "what time of day do you drive to campus"
- 1x all UWRF students should be able to park in the student lots until 4:30pm (with or without a permit)
- 1x build a ramp on the south side of Cascade to reduce the amount of pedestrians crossing the street
- 1x construction of the ramp would cause even more parking problems
- 1x there should be better parking for guests of students
- 1x that commuters should have more parking available (other than Ramer Field)
- 1x Ramer should not be ticketed after 2:30pm
- 1x suggest a ramp with a daily charge
- 1x there should be special parking for emergency responders (EMTS, firefighters, etc.)  
"Can't save a life if you have to walk 15 mins. to your vehicle"
- 1x appreciates overnight permit
- 1x permits should be given to Grad. students
- 1x the trolley should be brought back to RF
- 1x taxes should pay for the ramp