

Staff Council Comments on UC 0003 06F

Graduate Student Parking Policy Recommendation

We do not agree with the last paragraph that would allow graduate students to acquire gated lot parking permits.

The proposal identifies generic "graduate students" throughout the policy with the exception of the first paragraph. With the understanding that the proposal utilizes this term to mean Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, Research Assistants, Instructional Assistants and Teaching Fellows only (rather than all students enrolled in graduate classes), the concerns related to this proposal are as follows.

- 1) The change in policy to allow graduate students to acquire gated parking permits is of concern. Faculty and staff who utilize various gated lots often are in need of coming to campus multiple times per day. This situation is not often an issue in the morning hours, however, with additional permits afforded to graduate students, the afternoon hours (which are currently often at capacity) would create a barrier to faculty and staff being able to have easy access to finding a space with the gated lots.
- 2) The change in policy to allow graduate students to acquire parking permits in the garage parking seems much more reasonable from an initial perspective. If there was a way to identify particular spaces (or even a floor) for graduate students that may provide an alternative that would not have significant impact on faculty and staff's ability to have flexibility as noted above. As an aside, allowing graduate student access to the parking garage may also support the necessary financial requirements associated with the initial development and the operational costs associated with the new parking garage.
- 3) There also seems to be a philosophical issue to this question/proposal. It would seem to reason that the University should either categorize graduate students as either "students" or as "staff" (as there seems to be no gray area identified in the other colleges and universities listed on the attached resource pages).
- 4) There is also a practical issue to this proposal. Does the number of graduate students that fall into the Teaching Assistant, Graduate Assistant, Research Assistant, Instructional Assistant and Teaching Fellow categories provide too large of a customer base to handle with the spaces that may be available? If there is a higher demand, how will the determination be made? It seems in one place on the proposal (under Faculty/Staff Gated Parking Permit category) that graduate students could apply, and it would be on a first come-first serve basis. However, the last paragraph identifies that colleges (Does this also apply to divisions and departments which employ graduate students?) can substitute a space to a graduate student for a former faculty/staff space. This "substituting" process does not currently occur in the parking permit process for departments throughout the year. Will this create an additional level of bureaucracy and tracking requirements that may represent another form of "class" system between colleges/departments/divisions at UH?

In addition to the issues identified above, the proposal may require additional information to be fully measured in terms of impact. These outstanding questions include:

- 1) How many graduate students fall into the category of Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, Research Assistants, Instructional Assistants and Teaching Fellows?

- 2) The proposal does not indicate if graduate students would be able to acquire non-gated faculty/staff parking passes? Is this an option?
- 3) As identified above in point number four (4), will divisions and departments which employ graduate students be able to substitute a space to a graduate student that was originally identified by a faculty/staff member within the area?