Parking Perils
PARKING PANIC
Residents, commuters discuss University parking

GUETHSHINA ALTENA  
News Director

With less than half of students living on campus, FIU is considered a commuter school. The department of Parking and Transportation is one of the biggest departments that deals with student, faculty and staff on campus; transportation from one campus to another and moving within the campus from one building to another.

Many students view the quality of service provided differently. Some have concerns and others are satisfied with how diligent the University is when it comes to providing safe and proper transportation for student. Resident students and commuters disagree on the best way the University can improve their parking problems and what are the main issues that students encounter on a daily basis.

Tamara Nathai is a senior criminal justice major who commutes to school and parks in Gold Garage. She has had difficulties finding parking multiple times and has been late to her classes a few times as a result of that.

"I know that FIU has a lot of parking garages already but I feel like we should have more parking spots or do a better job at helping students find parking," she said.

Nathai does not think that the boards outside of the parking garages help a lot. The boards are supposed to tell drivers if there is parking in the garage but the information offered is not sufficient in helping people find parking according to Nathai.

"When I used to live on campus, I took the bus to the Engineering Center and now I notice that it improved a lot; the [departure] times are now a lot more frequent and that really helps students," she said. "The department is doing a good job when it comes to that."

Nathai recommends other students who drive to get to campus early, about 13 minutes before their class in order to avoid being late since MMC is a busy campus.

Kiara Roberson is a sophomore psychology major who recently learned the difficulties of parking on campus.

"I just started driving this semester and since there was not a lot of people here during the winter break, I found it quite easy so far to park and drive around campus" Roberson said.

Emmalie Morisseau however disagrees.

"I have been here all four years and I find the parking situation to be terrible," the senior computer engineer major said. "When I come during rush hours, it has taken me as much as 20 minutes to find parking on campus."

Morisseau usually parks in Gold Garage and sometimes for both work in school, she has to wake up early to be on campus around 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and find a good parking spot.

"At the Engineering Center, the Parking and Transportation department needs to have more service available to help students with cars over there," Morisseau said. "I have had a few instances where I was able to find help from them when I need a jumpstart."

"For students like me who live on campus, parking is a little easier. There is always parking after students, staff and faculty leave campus and I don’t have to worry about people taking up my spot because residential students have their cars in designated parking," he said.

Juan Jose is a freshman journalism major who commutes to FIU. He says he has been late to classes before because of the long delay to find parking on campus.

"It’s freaking terrible, it sucks so bad; when I had a car, I spent an hour looking for parking and I ended up just giving up and parking across the street at Publix," Jose said.

Jose thinks that it’s best to come to school two hours early especially if you have an exam to make sure that you are not late even if it’s the worst case scenario.

Vanessa Louis, a finance major, Alkania Hepburn, nursing major, and Ruth Joseph, marketing major, are three first-year students who live on campus.

As residents, they are satisfied with most of the services that the Parking and Transportation department offer. Though they believe that improvements can be made.

Hepburn owned a car that she used to drive on campus, the frustration of not finding parking discouraged her and she just went back home.

“Sometimes it’s a good idea to get to campus at least an hour and 30 minutes before class because finding parking can be close to impossible at some hours,” Hepburn said.
University inaugurates Martin Luther King, Jr. busts

GUETHISHNA AITENA  
News Director

The installment of the Martin Luther King, Jr. bust at The Biscayne Bay Campus is the first MLK bust in the North Miami area according to commissioner Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.

On Thursday, Jan 12, the University hosted a ribbon cutting for the bust at BBC by Academic Center 1. The following day, on Friday, Jan 13 the ribbon cutting of another MLK bust at the Modesto Maidique Campus took place right after a commemorative breakfast in between the Graham Center and the Green Library.

Many participated in the ribbon cutting at the MMC including the director of Multicultural Programs and Services Doret Sawyers, Commissioner Bovo of the Miami Dade County, District 13 and the Black Student Union president Nykeema Radway.

University President Mark B. Rosenberg delivered his remarks and recognized Ysmelio Lopez and his family for sculpting the two busts. Lopez, from Cimagos Nursery, donated the sculpture to FIU, along with a similar one that is now located at BBC. Guests at the MMC ribbon cutting included the Martin Luther King Committee, the Black Student Union members, the Alpha Phi Alpha- Tau Delta and other student organizations.

"The University is committed to learning both in and out of the classroom, Martin Luther King is an historic leader in the world," Rosenberg said. "My idea was to celebrate Dr. King because there is a lot of lessons that Dr. King taught and continues to do the right thing matters."

"I am anxious for thousands of people to see the sculpture and this is one of the most special places we have on this campus (MMC) as well as the location at the Bay Biscayne for a bust," Rosenberg said. "It provides the opportunity for people to pause and contemplate the lessons that Dr. King taught and to question their relationship to those lessons and what they can do to help improve the world."

Rosenberg wants Dr. King to be present with the thousands of people and students pass by this area everyday. At MMC, it is right across from the Green Library which is one of the most visited places on campus. At BBC, the bust is placed by the Academic Center 1 which is right across the bus stop where a lot of students get off. The accessibility of the locations is why president Rosenberg thinks it’s the perfect spot for both campuses.

"Courage to do the right thing" is the message that the president is sending to all those who pass by the sculpture.

"The most important thing about Dr. King is that he had the courage to step up and to provide hope and leadership," president Rosenberg said. "Dr. King was a person that the times required and he stepped up and so it should be with our students. The times that require them to step up and do the right thing, you don’t know when, you don’t know where."

The Black Student Union played a key role in the realization of the ribbon cutting and the preparations leading up to it. According to the BSU president, Nykeema Radway, the University included them in every part of the process leading up to the commemorative event.

The vice president of BSU Rashad Perry-Patterson is a senior graduating in spring who majors in political science. He was heavily involved in the choosing of the location for the MLK bust at the MMC campus.

"This is the Student Union [pointing at the Graham Center] this is one of the first places that were build at FIU campus, so we choose the location. At BBC, the bust because of that and because of the heavy traffic and the proximity to Martin Luther King, Jr. the library," he said. "Given that GC and the library bring a lot of student engagement with campus life, the BSU office, sororities and fraternities close by, we felt like it was a significant area and more feasible place for students to see it."

Radway was invited to speak at the ribbon cutting commemoration at MMC.

"I really hope that this sculpture is empowering just by the sight of it. I think for me when I look at it, it’s symbolic to the fact that change can simply start with a dream," Radway said.

She believes that King was an everyday man who just decided not to look past social injustice and inequalities.

"Today is the day to create the change that you want and speak out against any injustice that you see around you," she said. "Martin Luther King fought for everyone and he was a very significant figure within the black community."

Radway is honored to help give a voice to and uplift the black students by the University of participating in the ribbon cutting on behalf of the Black Student Union. She believes that this bust will forever be engraved in FIU’s history and the Black Student Union history.

Walking past this bust, I want people to challenge their inner Martin Luther King. Not to downplay who he was, but to be a man who chose not to be silent and that’s what we can do," Radway said.
It always starts out the same way: a race to the elevator entrance at the sight of anyone entering the garage followed by a head popping out of a lowered car window yelling “Are you leaving?”

Four years at this University and about 60 percent of conversations I overhear consist of three things: complaining about parking, complaining about textbooks, and more complaining about parking.

From the Starbucks line in the Green Library to the elevator ride in MANGO, everyone is wondering why finding parking on campus is so difficult. Or rather venting out their frustration in an expletive-filled sentence.

A few years ago, when I was a freshman full of optimism and hope for the college life, I pictured entering the Gold Garage every day, parking on the first floor available to students while singing to great music on the radio.

I should have known from the “great music on the radio” part that my fantasy wasn’t going to mirror reality. The radio is like the artist Pitbull, it takes great music and ruins it with an awful remix no one says they’re “parked around the corner.”

You breathe a sigh of relief, silently laughing at the poor suckers still waiting for a spot. It’s not until a look of confusion and half of a Pitbull song to get.

However, for every parking spot you’ve gotten quickly, there’s a time you followed someone who says they’re “parked around the corner.”

You overhear consist of three things: Gold, Blue and PG5.

To my surprise, parking is just as daunting for faculty as it is for students. With multiple floors left exclusively to faculty, I assumed the only trouble they had was finding one too early and having to kill time. But, you know what they say about assuming.

While standing in front of the pay machine for visitor parking once, a faculty member and I realized we were members of the FIU community paying for parking. We jointly shook our heads in frustration, paid our hourly fee and went about our day.

Nowadays, I alternate between that and what everyone does: creepily and aggressively following students from the elevator doors with a blinker marking them as mine for the next 45 seconds until they reach their car.

When standing in front of the pay machine for visitor parking once, a faculty member and I realized we were members of the FIU community paying for parking. We jointly shook our heads in frustration, paid our hourly fee and went about our day.

So for 75 cents a day, the daily cost of parking as stated in our tuition, you can continue to enjoy endless car lines in front of every floor of the parking garages and confused students who don’t know what floor they’ve parked on.

But wait, there’s more. If you call the University right now, you will also get unlimited access to the terrible individuals who ignore your blinker and steal the parking spot you waited 20 minutes and half of a Pitbull song to get.

One Martini, Please is a column about a broad range of issues that affect students.

Metered parking popular alternative at BBC

With the student body reaching nearly to 54,000, parking has become a big issue for members of the FIU community. The Parking and Transportation Department manages 40,000 parking spaces on both campus.

Back in 2011, former executive director for the department said supply was not the problem.

“Convenience next to the buildings is always going to be a problem when you have 40,000 students and 8,000 faculty and staff at MMC and it’s the busiest time of the day,” he said.

To hear from members of the comunity about their parking habits on campus, 12 faculty members and 69 students at The Biscayne Bay Campus and the Modesto Maidique Campus were polled during the first week of the spring semester.

The results are as follows: at MMC, 50 percent have never parked illegally or in visitor parking. 29 percent have parked illegally and 21 percent have parked in a metered parking space usually reserved for visitors.

In this context, illegally means any undesignated parking spot: faculty, administrative, student of the year, handicap, etc.
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I found that the majority of freshmen polled at both the Modesto Maidique and Biscayne Bay have never parked illegally or in the visitor sections for fear for tickets. However, seniors openly talked about regularly parking in the visitor section or illegally of the hassle of finding parking.

When major events happen at school, parking is “impossible,” said one senior. Students either pay their fines, appeal the tickets they receive, while some students have yet to get caught.

But students aren’t the only people parking illegally, faculty members of the school said they don’t have enough spots and drive around looking for an area to park in and it becomes tiresome, thus results in parking in the visitor section without paying as they already pay fees per semester for parking.

All seven faculty members polled at BBC answered yes when asked if they have parked illegally or in metered spaces.

Part of the reason why some students park illegally or in visitor is their reluctance to walk a long distance to their destination on campus.

One student polled says she has trouble finding parking at the main campus, is usually in a rush and doesn’t want to walk far.

Overall results showed that metered parking at BBC is used far more often than at MMC.
**The Leveler**

**AUBREY CARR**

Anyone who has ever visited Miami is well aware of the struggles that accompany not having a car or a friend with one.

Students who live on campus without access to a vehicle are nearly stranded; even getting groceries at the nearest Publix can be miles away from the dorms most centrally located on campus.

But there may be an answer to taking that day trip to Wynwood or an answer to taking that day trip to New Orleans or an answer to renting a car for a road trip to New Orleans or an answer to finding a place that will rent you a car out to someone under 25 and without violating your wallet. If you’re under 25, Zipcar can be the least expensive way of going about getting a rental car.

The only concerning part of Zipcar relates to its fueling system. As mentioned, gas costs are covered with the one-time application fee and the annual membership fee. This means that when you need to fuel up, you use the Zipcar card you receive as a member and the bill is sent to the company.

At first, this sounds phenomenal to a broke college student, but it could negatively impact the environment if the people who use Zipcar take advantage of the company’s bank account that’s bound to be bigger than any undergraduate’s. Zipcar seems fantastic and it’s a pleasure to have this as an option, but keep in mind that it’s not always a necessity to get around by car. Overcoming a little laziness can be a more beneficial solution to the environment and one’s health. By all means, enjoy the wonders Miami and the world have to offer, and have fun being behind the wheel!

As always, with great power comes great responsibility. Even the best rental option for a desperate college kid must be approached with the wisdom to refrain from taking advantage and creating a bigger carbon footprint.

Aubrey Carr is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, The Leveler, covers global social justice and political commentary.

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**FIU continues to improve its parking situation**

**MAYTINEE KRAMER**

Being a commuter school, FIU brings in a lot of traffic, and parking is often considered a nightmare, especially during the first few weeks of classes.

As the University continues to grow in size and number, it has taken the necessary measures to ensure that its faculty, staff and students have decent and plentiful parking spaces.

A few years back, FIU did not have the many garages, virtual parking decals, apps and the garage count signs it has today. During my freshman year, a professor actually advised my class to arrive early in the morning, just to ensure a good parking spot. From that and through experience, I learned that you had to arrive early on campus if you wanted lots of good parking spaces to choose from.

Another issue was that the University had more parking lots than parking garages. Parking lots expand outward, therefore limiting the number of spaces available. Parking however, expand upward and stack the car lots, therefore ensuring hundreds of spaces for commuters.

Hunting for that coveted parking spot has been made easier during the recent years with the addition of the new parking garage, PG6, and the garage counters all across campus.

Hunting for that coveted parking spot has been made easier during the recent years.

The counters are the biggest improvement as they help keep track of cars entering and exiting garages, and automatically update drivers on how many staff, student and administrative spaces are available in each garage.

Despite the many upgrades and improvements, however, there are still some difficulties in finding good parking. For new and returning students, I recommend these tips to ensure smooth sailing:

1. First, it’s always best to arrive early to campus to ensure you have lots of good parking spots to choose from. The best time to find parking is still in the early hours of the morning, usually before 8:00 a.m.
2. After that time, it’s more difficult to find parking as the spaces begin to fill up fast. This can be a hassle to people who have classes later on in the day, but if they come later, they have to spend a large amount of time searching for a spot, or waiting in hopes of someone leaving campus to take their spot. However, arriving early to campus doesn’t have to be a bad thing. It can actually be beneficial to an enriching college experience.

As always, with great power comes great responsibility. Even the best rental option for a desperate college kid must be approached with the wisdom to refrain from taking advantage and creating a bigger carbon footprint.

Maytinee Kramer is the Assistant Opinion Director for Panther Press. Her column, Panther Health, is a commentary on maintaining one’s health during college.

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**PARKING BLUES**

**THE LEVELER**

**AUBREY CARR**

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Aubrey Carr is a staff writer for Panther Press. Her column, The Leveler, covers global social justice and political commentary.
Parking struggles affect faculty and staff, not just students

Parking on campus sucks. However, the lack of parking spaces available after 8 a.m. affects students and university employees alike. According to FIU’s Analysis and Information Management Factbook, the University has 6,100 full-time and part-time staff ranging from office & administrative support staff to graduate assistants. This data excludes employees of different companies like Chili’s and Barnes & Noble.

Any employee working at the University—like students—must purchase a parking decal if they want to have access to the metered parking. The more expensive the parking decal, the more accessibility one has when it comes to parking. However, unlike student, employees are limited to parking in student-designated spots, faculty and staff are able to park not just in their designated spots but in student spots as well.

For example, the administration decal, which costs $280 a semester, gives you access to the extra parking spaces just in the spaces labeled ‘Admin,’ but also Faculty! Staff and Student. Faculty/Staff on the other hand, ranges from $64 to $140, and also gives them the option of parking in student spots.

This editorial board has noticed that many faculty or staff spaces are available in different areas of the school, such as in the Gold Garage, but the availability of the cheaper Faculty/Staff spaces has decreased. This decrease in the availability of university employment has also affected the availability of student parking as employees have had to resort to parking in student spaces.

Parking and Transportation Services should mean the University has enough parking spaces available to fulfill the needs of everyone’s. The University’s parking problem is not just a student problem, it’s affecting the community as a whole. Faculty/Staff should not be pressured into purchasing the more expensive Admin parking upgrade because they are unable to find a space with their decal permits.

They should not have to go to do the same as their boss. The administration should have a designated spot for the parking decals, the parking lots need to be expanded. The University’s status as a commuter school means that we all need to do our part. When FIU parking problems are not just in MMC but BBC and GMCC. It is not just the administration’s problem, but also the students, faculty, and staff.

Parking struggles affect faculty and staff, not just students. However, as a student, I was so accustomed to seeing different color decals on the back window of cars that I didn’t realize they were not parking in their own spots. For example, the administration decal, which costs $280 a semester, gives you access to the extra parking spaces just in the spaces labeled ‘Admin,’ but also Faculty! Staff and Student. Faculty/Staff on the other hand, ranges from $64 to $140, and also gives them the option of parking in student spots.

Now to not only avoid damage to the thousands of cars, trucks, and SUV’s on all of FIU’s campuses, you will not have to pay the extra cost of the decals actually saved paper. No wonder we’re the most energy efficient, eco-friendly campus in Florida.

If we think about how many students, teachers and faculty attend our campus just imagine how many papers were used for decals alone. I know that one of my professors often tweets, “wow, FIU decides to do virtual again after I have four parking decals ruining my Hyundai.”

I laughed so hard at the tweet just thinking about her dark blue four-door sitting in the driveway of her house as if it was the spokesperson for FIU. Parking decals are like a kid in school, however, once I entered my sophomore year I used my mom’s white Mercedes-Benz and would always have to get citations, 20 dollars here, 15 dollars there. It wasn’t until I got a car of my own that I realized I needed to “add on” my vehicle.

A year later, my lovely Fiat two-door was added on in business, until I came home. Later on in my career, I had to put my girl in a car, and back to the bench, Benz went, however instead of paying a fee of $15 plus, I was able to delete my vehicle and add my mom’s. Being able to edit and delete has truly saved me money and worry.

If I reminisce on the parking and traffic situation at FIU — on all campuses — I do still have a few complaints. With FIU’s community specifically having traffic through Alonzo Mourning High School is killer and unfair. It definitely adds on $40 a week to my commute and I wish there was another route or a lane specifically for cars traveling to the University. Aside from traffic, the shuttle situation is favorable. I’ve always thought parking deduction from my tuition without it going towards my commute, at least not where I can see. If you all are unfamiliar with the Panther Shuttle, it’s $2.50 per ride.

Let’s say you are a Monday, Wednesday and Friday student, that’s $15 per week. Myself and others are spending solely to get from MMC to BBC and vice versa. As a commuter, I find it unfair and even incommodate to have to pay such a high price for transportation to a place I already pay to go to. If things are going to change or if they will change at all, but I do know change needs to happen and I’m pretty confident numerous students feel the same.

Laquavia Smith is a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, Eyes on the Earth, is a commentary on current global environmental issues.

Eyes on the Earth

Amanda Jung was a contributing writer for Panther Press. Her column, What’s Up FIU, is a commentary on the latest style and entertainment news.

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**Drowsy driving a hazard to campus community**

**JULIETA RODRIGO**
**Staff Writer**

The start of a new semester can be rejuvenating, inspiring and filled with new opportunities for students. However, it can also be a dangerous time, particularly for those students who drive to campus.

Increased congestion on college campuses at the start of every semester correlates with an increase in car accidents, according to statistics released by the Brain Injury Society. Many of these accidents are caused by drivers who are sleep deprived.

Like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, impairs judgment and vision, decreases awareness and vigilance, and intensifies moodiness and aggressive behaviors.

Data released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that drowsy driving was the cause of 72,800 crashes, 44,000 injuries, and 800 deaths in 2013. College students are particularly susceptible to sleep deprivation while school is in session, with almost three-quarters reporting that they sleep less than eight hours every night. This statistic is troubling as the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that drivers who sleep six to seven hours a night are twice as likely to be involved in a crash as those sleeping more than eight hours, while drivers sleeping less than five hours a night increased their risk four to five times.

For students, it is imperative that we do not allow assignments, extracurricular responsibilities, and other tasks to take precedence over sleep.

Law student Aby Rodriguez told Student Media that she has driven drowsy before and it was scary. "I had to keep the A/C on really cold and sing along to the radio so I wouldn’t fall asleep," she said. Rodriguez also encouraged students to take naps when they can and finish their assignments before 9 p.m.

On Jan. 5, FIU’s Healthy Living Program Facebook page shared an article titled "The Single Best Way to Ensure a Better Night’s Sleep, Starting Tonight."

The main takeaway was the importance of "setting a bedtime and sticking to it."

Using smartphone apps to track how much sleep you’re getting is a way to ensure you are meeting your body’s sleep needs every night.

While some nights may be more difficult than others because of personal obligations or homework, Rodriguez said it’s best not to allow those things to affect your sleep.

"Worrying about school while you try to get sleep will affect you, and you won’t wake up relaxed." With these tips, students can work on reversing the statistics on drowsy driving, saving lives and ensuring a more prosperous and safe future for the community around them.

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**Junior survives ‘plum ambush’ during parking war**

**HEATHER O’DELL**
**Staff Writer**

It was an early Monday morning, and Amanda Lorenzo, a junior majoring in logistics, was rushing to make it to her first class of the day. In addition to living in Broward County, Lorenzo is constantly frustrated with the traffic on the Turnpike.

But nothing irritates her more than the never-ending search for parking at FIU.

"I’m not sure if it’s my two cups of coffee in the morning or the anticipated anxiety from trying to find a spot before my morning class, but I am always on edge come Monday morning," Lorenzo said.

FIU is notorious for parking and traffic issues for students that commute. Although the University has improved parking by adding a new parking garage, students are still stressed over finding available parking.

Lorenzo said her worst parking experience happened during the fall 2016 semester.

"Next thing I know, a plum was flying at my car," she said. "I didn’t hesitate and put my blinker on right away. As soon as the car backed out, another car came and was waiting for my same spot; I was furious."

But Lorenzo said she was clearly there first, so she pulled in the spot.

"As soon as it happened, I felt the blood rush to my head," she said. "Then I thought to myself, ‘Did someone really just throw a fruit at my car over a parking spot?’ It sounds funny when you put it like that."

Lorenzo said she and her mother, Darlene Lorenzo, usually have bad road rage. But after hearing her daughter’s plum story, Darlene Lorenzo realized it is not worth it.

"Sometimes you just have to let it go," her mother said. "It isn’t worth getting upset over parking spots or traffic."

This semester, Lorenzo hopes to avoid any “fruit wars” with any fellow panthers.

"Fighting for parking really isn’t worth it," Lorenzo said. "But hey, I did get my spot and survived a plum ambush."

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