Dear student

I am writing to advise you of a new approach to parking the University is implementing in Semester Two 2011. You most likely will have experienced difficulties with parking at the Bentley Campus and would understand that parking has been a significant source of student frustration.

Parking is a frustration in most busy centres and the State Government has been progressively changing parking policy and regulation to assist it to achieve both its “green” objectives and those relating to sustainable and effective road networks. The Government strategies include initiatives both on the availability of parking and the pricing of parking. The Curtin Bentley Campus, and surrounding road and public transport networks, figure prominently in the State Governments planning considerations.

Curtin has a responsibility to its students to address this matter. To do so, a Parking Working Group was established in 2008. This included members from Curtin staff and the Curtin Student Guild who have been working together to find a variety of solutions that offer students a range of travel and parking options. In 2009 the Parking Working Group commissioned an independent study which recommended the introduction of a metered, or ‘pay-as-you-go’ (PAYG), parking system.

Over recent years Curtin has made considerable investment into providing alternative methods of transport to Campus to ease parking congestion and create more sustainable transport options for both staff and students. These include;

- Establishing a local shuttle bus service, ‘CABS’, through St James, Manning and Waterford, now carrying over 3000 passengers per week. This represents a $300,000 investment by Curtin. Due to its success, Curtin is considering adding another bus to this service.
- Improved public transport links to Curtin, such as the bus link from the Canning Bridge train station, representing another $300,000 public transport investment by Curtin
- Increased number of bike racks and improved security for bikes on Campus

These initiatives are expensive but are an important part of balancing the needs of students and staff with Curtin’s sustainability requirements.

Curtin has also committed to adding new parking bays as part of on-going Campus development. A total of 1000 new bays will be ready for use in February 2011. However, continual building of new parking bays is both environmentally unsustainable and inconsistent with the direction of Government policy and regulation.

The current annual permit system works well for some but not for others. For instance, as Campus parking is often at capacity by 9am, those students who have paid for a permit but cannot secure a bay later in the day feel frustrated and either have to pay for visitor parking or consider alternative means of transport to Campus.

Curtin is not alone. All Western Australian and most Australian universities face parking challenges.

The proposed new approach to parking, incorporates the PAYG parking bays with varied fee levels. The new approach is expected to:
- be a fairer system by creating equality amongst parking users
- allow travel and parking decisions to be made day by day
- offer a greater spread of parking and fee options for students
- encourage a higher turnover of parking bays which will create greater access to parking across the day
- remove the inequities for part-time students, who currently pay the same permit price as full-time students
- encourage students to consider a range of transport alternatives beyond the car and assist Curtin in funding improvements in the availability and service quality of alternative options

The proposed PAYG parking fee structure has considered:

- fees charged by other universities, in WA and across Australia
- public transport student concession, two zone return fare, which is currently $3.00
- a Department of Transport directive to all universities to have parity between parking fees and public transport fares, in order to encourage greater usage of public transport

The proposed fee structure is as follows:

- ‘Pay-as-you-go’ hourly parking: 75 cents per hour, capped at $3.50 per day (2050 bays)
- Long term parking: capped at $2 per day (1200 bays)

The University will provide free parking in non-peak periods such as exams, the break between semesters, after 5pm every day and weekends.

We understand that some students may choose not to stay on Campus for long periods of time, but we also understand that many students have commitments off-campus and need the flexibility to come and go, and still find a parking option available to them.

Curtin is aiming to provide a better service to its students and alleviate the current frustrations that are being experienced. We recognise that no solution is going to be perfect for everyone but we believe that this approach is the fairest way forward and one that meets with Transport Planning requirements and our sustainability goals.

We will keep you informed as further information is available.

Ian Callahan

Vice President - Corporate Services