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Future freshmen don't need cars

Posted on 06 September 2011. Tags: [freshmen](#), [IndyGo](#), [IUPUI](#), [parking](#)

Parking on university campuses can be a real pain.

For the last several years I attended and worked at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, where once I looked nearly two hours for a spot.

Texas Christian University, my undergraduate alma mater, was more like Butler University, and it presented a fair share of problems too.

Butler is the smallest university I have attended, and its parking "concerns" were well addressed in last week's Butler Collegian. With 1,412 more faculty, staff and student parking decals issued than there are parking spaces, a lot of Bulldogs want something done right away.

The way I see it, the solution is simple. Next year, do not issue parking decals to freshmen.

The university's Master Plan foresees the construction of two parking garages, but both are slated for "long-term" development. The Master Plan does not say how long the "long-term" is, but I think we can rest assured that all the current freshmen will be gone before it happens.

The reason for the delay in building parking garages is fairly simple. The university just doesn't believe that parking is a key to the future success of its students.

That's a bitter pill to swallow when you're stuck behind three cars waiting for a spot to open up.

Now I know there are good reasons for allowing freshmen their cars, and I will get to those.

But first, consider this: Last year 671 freshmen had cars with decals. That figure represents nearly half of the 1,400 surplus decals.

Freshmen and their advocates will argue that they need cars to be fully engaged in the Indianapolis community. And it is absolutely essential in today's competitive job market for students to have access to community events, internships across town and whatever else they may fancy.

But, frankly, there are other, greener options for getting around town — options that also will alleviate Butler's parking crunch.

Butler is situated in a beautiful, bike-friendly neighborhood. Broad Ripple is less than three miles away. The Indianapolis Museum of Art is less than two miles.

Unfortunately IndyGo, the Indianapolis bus system, doesn't offer a direct line on Butler's campus. But freshmen easily can ride a bike to one of the nearby IndyGo bus stops. The Illinois Street line is only a half-mile away. Meridian, Central, and College lines are less than one mile away.

And the 38th Street line is less than two miles away via the Central Canal Greenway.

And if that isn't enough, the Student Government Association offers a free— yes, that's right, free— shuttle service to Glendale, Broad Ripple, downtown or the airport. Did I mention that it's free?

I know, shuttles aren't stylish. They aren't hip. You cannot blast your music with your windows rolled down inside a shuttle.

So you could rent one of Butler's two new Zipcars.

I've been assured that they have both windows and radios.

Let's face it. Freshmen without cars will still need to get around. There's no doubt about that.

They say that necessity is the mother of invention, and if freshmen need to go somewhere, they will invent a way to get there.

Granted, Indianapolis has places to go that are not bike-friendly, but that's one more reason for freshmen to make new friends—just make sure at least one has a car.

In the end, it's only one year. And, really, let's be honest, freshmen should be studying anyway.





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

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