

Activity Fee and U-Pass FAQ

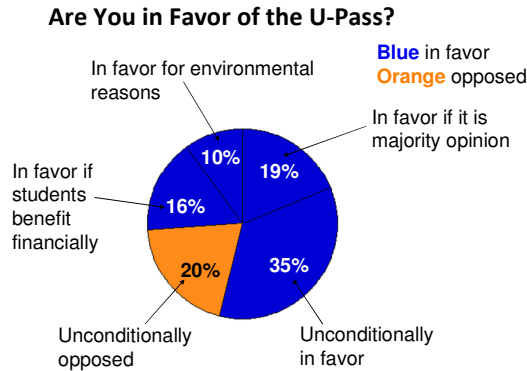
Prepared by Northwestern University's Graduate Student Association and Graduate Leadership Council

Last updated: June 1, 2009

1. When was the Activity Fee first implemented?
 - a. 2007-2008
2. How much is the Activity Fee for the year 2008-2009? (and 2007-2008)
 - a. \$60 per quarter
3. What does the Activity Fee get me?
 - a. \$56 goes towards the U-Pass and \$4 goes towards providing an attorney to assist students with legal issues such as landlord, traffic, credit or debt problems and to support the community building grant activities.
 - b. For additional information regarding legal services, see http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentlife/legal_services/
 - c. For additional information regarding community building grants and the activities they fund, see <http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentlife/commbuildingproposals/>
4. What is the U-Pass?
 - a. The U-Pass is a discounted fare card that is good for travel on all Chicago Transit Authority bus and elevated train/subway routes (does not include Metra trains or Pace bus lines.) For additional information, see http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentlife/tgs_activity_fee/u_pass/U_Pass_FAQ/
5. Can I use automatic paycheck deductions for the Activity fee?
 - a. The administration is working on it.
6. How much is the Activity Fee for 2009-2010?
 - a. \$78 per quarter
7. Why the increase?
 - a. The CTA has increased price of the U-Pass 15%. U-Pass coverage has also been expanded to include the entire year. Previously it covered only 46 weeks each year.
 - b. The new Activity fee breaks down into:
 - i. \$74 goes towards the U-Pass and \$4 goes towards providing an attorney to assist students with legal issues such as landlord, traffic, credit or debt problems and to support the community building grant activities.
8. Why can't I use my U-Pass on the Metra trains or the Pace buses?
 - a. The CTA and Metra have never had a reciprocal agreement. Unfortunately, on Jan 1, 2009, the agreement between CTA and Pace was terminated.
9. I rarely use the U-Pass. Can I opt out?
 - a. No. The activity fee is mandatory for all full-time eligible students. The CTA contract requires that all full-time students participate in the U-Pass program.

10. How many people are in favor of the U-Pass?

a. Results from GLC 2007 survey. (967 respondents)



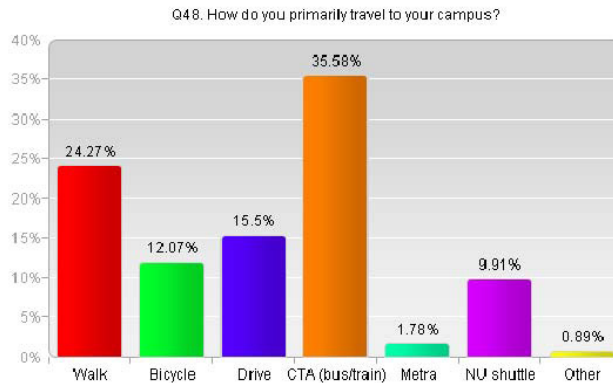
b. The above graph is based on the original question: What conditions would encourage you to support the mandatory U-Pass program for all full time graduate students?

- 1) No matter what, I support the current U-Pass program
- 2) If the graduate population as a whole benefits financially (based on estimates from survey results and CTA usage reports)
- 3) For environmental reasons
- 4) If the majority of graduate students (>50%) want the program to exist
- 5) I would never support the current U-Pass program

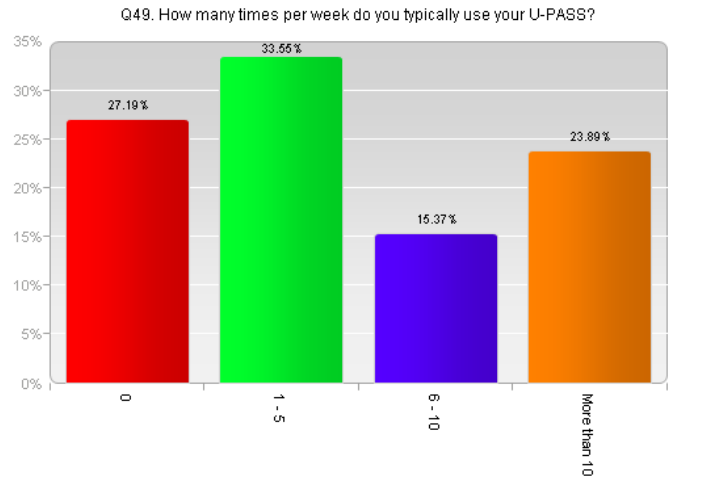
c. Graduate student opinion of the U-Pass program was not surveyed in 2008.

11. How many people actually use the U-Pass? Is it financially prudent?

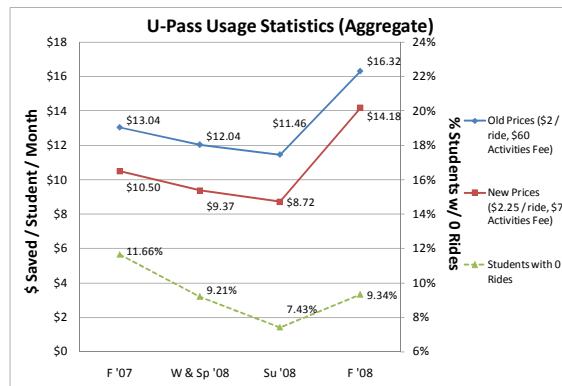
a. Over 1/3 of surveyed graduate students in 2008 use the CTA / U-Pass as their primary mode of transportation. (848 respondents)



b. Based on 2007-2008 U-Pass rates of \$60 for 12 weeks, and a CTA per ride cost of \$2.00, the breakeven point is 2.5 rides per week. According to self-reported usage rates in the GLC 2008 survey and assuming the 1-5 ride respondents are evenly distributed, approximately 60% of the graduate student population is either breaking even or saving money as a result of the U-Pass.



- c. The CTA has provided aggregate U-Pass usage data for the 2007-2008 academic year consisting of: total number of cards, total number of rides, number of unused cards. The average amount of money saved per student per month based on both the \$2 per ride/\$60 “U-Pass” and the \$2.25 per ride / \$78 “U-Pass” were calculated and plotted below. The green dashed line represents the number of students who did not use their U-Pass at all during a given quarter. We understand that this is very limited data, so please bear with us as we try to obtain more detailed usage statistics from the CTA.



- d. Quarterly savings for the entire student body for Fall '08.

$$2903 \text{ Students} * \frac{\$16.32 \text{ saved}}{\text{student} * \text{month}} * 3 \text{ months} = \$142,130$$