

## Summary of Literature: Increases in Transit Ridership from Deep Discount Student Transit Pass Programs

**PROGRAMS BELOW ARE STILL ACTIVE and WELL UTILIZED**

University	Year Began	Annual Student Transit Ridership		
		Before	After	Change
Cal State Univ., Sacramento	1992	315,000	537,700	+ 71%
Univ. California, Davis	1990	587,000	1,054,000	+79%
Univ. Wisconsin, Madison	1996	812,000	1,653,000	+104%
Univ. Illinois, Urbana, Champaign	1989	1,058,000	3,102,000	+193%
Univ. Colorado, Boulder	1990	300,000	900,000	+200%

Source: Brown, Hess and Shoup, 1999

**Average cost of these programs: \$32 per student per year.**

- Cal State Sacramento, “OneCard” – Status: Active.** With the student OneCard and the current semester commuter sleeve, students can ride Sacramento Regional Transit buses and Light Rail anywhere, anytime, for free. University employees with faculty and staff OneCard's may purchase an employee transit sleeve from University Transportation and Parking Services (UTAPS) for their OneCard (\$40 for six months) and also ride e-tran, RT and Light Rail at no additional cost.
- UC Davis, “goClub” – Status: Active.** UC Davis undergraduate students pay a student fee each quarter, which entitles them to unlimited rides on Unitrans by showing their Aggie Card. Currently \$28.50 per quarter is paid by each undergraduate for the Unitrans busing system.
- University of Wisconsin, Madison, “Associated Students of Madison Bus Passes” – Status: Active.** ASM Bus Passes are good for unlimited travel on all regular Metro Transit buses. Campus bus routes--the Routes 80, 81, 82 and 84--do not require a pass--anyone can board for free, campus including visitors and staff. You must be enrolled as a student paying student segregated fees for the appropriate semester at UW-Madison. The money towards the bus pass is part of the segregated fee portion of your tuition that is not refundable. **Phone(s)** (608) 263-3950 Bus Pass Info; (608) 265-4276 Associated Students of Madison
- University Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: “i-Card” – Status: Active.** All eligible University of Illinois students, faculty, and staff have unlimited access to all routes and services at all times. Arrangements with the University make it unnecessary for these riders to pay a fare. When boarding at a campus iStop, simply board the route identified as an iStop route (no fare required). When riding community services, all eligible students, faculty, and staff are required to present their valid University-issued identification card.  
**Unlimited Access accounts for 61 percent of all transit rides in Champaign-Urbana**
- University of Colorado at Boulder “Student Bus Pass” – Status: Active.** The Student Bus Pass provides free rides on Front Range public transit routes including the RTD skyRide route that travels to Denver International Airport (DIA). Environmental Center administers the Student Bus Pass Program; visit the [Student Bus Pass web site](#) for more information. University of Colorado at Boulder and RTD Denver reports that **most students travel at off-peak hours and fill empty seats. In the spring of 2009, students voted 8:1 in favor of increasing their fee to maintain their bus pass program.**

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## All PROGRAMS BELOW ARE STILL ACTIVE and WELL UTILIZED

### UCLA BruinGo collaboration with Santa Monica Big Blue Bus: Unlimited Access

**Status: Active.** Bus ridership for commuting to campus increased by 56 percent during BruinGO's first year, and *solo driving fell by 20 percent*. Because these startling results were achieved in a city famous for its addiction to cars, they suggest that Unlimited Access can succeed almost anywhere.

### University of Washington, Seattle: U-PASS Program

Change in mode choice one year after initiation of U-PASS Program in Seattle

	Students		Faculty & Staff	
	Before	After	Before	After
Auto Drive Alone	25%	14%	49%	40%
Transit	21%	35%	21%	28%
All Others (carpool/vanpool, bicycle, walk, "other")	54%	51%	30%	32%

Source: Williams and Petrait

#### Status: Active.

- Increased the modal share for public transport from 21% to 36% during the first year (Toor & Havlick 2004)
- Thereby reducing total vehicle trips by 16% (Litman & Lovegrove 1999).
- Students pay \$20 per quarter while faculty and staff pay \$27.
- Helped to avoid building 3,600 new parking spaces that saved \$100 million in construction costs.

### UC Berkeley (UCB): Student Class Pass Program, 2008

**Status: Active.** The Class Pass program which began as a pilot program in 1998. The Class Pass enables all registered students to ride AC Transit local, Transbay buses and Bear Transit shuttle routes free of charge. The Class Pass is a sticker that is affixed to a student's UC Berkeley student ID card. The Class Pass is funded by a \$69.50 portion of each student's registration fees each semester.

- Overall student transit mode share has grown from 5.6% in 1997 to 14% in 2000 to 27% in 2008
- Student drive-alone share fell from 16% to 7% during the same period.

#### [Study in 1997-2000](#)

Universal coverage of all 32,000 enrolled students, unlimited use of all AC Services with no out of pocket charges. Sticker on student ID, 26,000 got the sticker. Student ridership and revenue both increased even though AC Transit made no changes in service to accommodate the student population and thus did not incur additional costs.

- Net additional revenue was \$40,600 per month, more than \$406,000 per year, and approximately fifty percent above the pre-Class Pass level.
- Majority of student travel was in midday off peak: 50% in 1997; 42% in 2000

### Colorado University: College Pass

- **Status: Active.** In 6 years, *student bus riders grew 300,000 to 1,500,000*. Surveys indicate that 42% of these trips would have been by auto. EPA estimated program reduced driving by 3.2 to 6.5 million miles per year preventing 1700 to 3000 metric tons of GHG emissions. In 1997 CU students approved a referendum by 16 to 1 raising semester fees to \$19.42

### University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University: U-Pass

- **Status: Active.** At the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, transit ridership increased 68% and 48% respectively within the first two years of U-Pass programs being introduced (Urban Systems 2005).

## THE PROGRAMS BELOW ARE STILL ACTIVE and WELL UTILIZED

### California State University, Long Beach

**Case Study: Free, unlimited rides on Long Beach Transit for all campus affiliates. Subsidized transit passes for employees to use on other regional transit providers.**

As part of the survey, participating campuses were asked to describe their experiences regarding the successes and challenges of the TDM measures listed in Figure 3-1. Several campuses noted that their Universal Transit Pass program has been one of the most successful measures offered with steady increases in ridership witnessed since implementation. Several campuses stated that the success of this program is due to the fact that it is both free for students and easy to use; students need only show their campus ID card to use designated transit services. This suggests that a Universal Transit Pass can be successful at various campus types. P 3-5

As the best practice case studies show, transit services can also be effective at all campus types, though the structure will vary. At urban, inner suburban and suburban campuses, which are typically located near local transit services, U-Passes or subsidized transit passes can be very effective. **At CSU Long Beach annual transit ridership on Long Beach Transit has increased from 98,860 to 1,114,709 since the program's inception.** The campus has chosen to invest in transit rather than new parking facilities as it is more cost effective to provide a U-Pass and subsidized transit passes and reduce parking demand than to build new parking facilities. P 3-10

### The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, UPASS transit pass program

**Status: Active.** University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) with Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS). A report to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation by James Meyer and Edward Beimborn, 1996

All UWM students receive an unlimited transit pass as part of their tuition. The pass can be used anytime, anywhere, for any trip purpose throughout Milwaukee County without any additional fare required.

**The UPASS program has influenced modal shifts.**

- Students riding MCTS increased from 12% prior to UPASS to 26% after.
- Student driving to UWM declined 54% prior to UPASS to between 38% to 41% after

**The UPASS program has increased overall transit ridership to UWM.**

- MCTS on-board counts show between a 31% and 45% increase in overall transit ridership compared to counts conducted prior to the implementation of the UPASS.
- Survey findings show approximately a 35% increase in ridership.

**The UPASS program has increased transit ridership for trips to work, to shopping, and to other locations.**

- Transit mode split for work trips by survey respondents showed nearly a doubling over pre-UPASS semesters from a rate of 8% to approximately 15%.

**The UPASS program has attracted new riders to transit and increased ridership levels of regular transit users.**

- Approximately 14% of students riding transit to UWM after UPASS were new transit users.
- Approximately 9% to 10% of students using UPASS for work trips were new users.

**Freshman students in particular showed high rates of transit usage compared to other students.**

- 44% of freshman indicate using UPASS at least one or more times per week for trips to UWM in Fall 1994.
- Nearly 48% indicate using the pass one or more times per week during the Spring 1995.

**The UPASS program reduced vehicle trips to the university which resulted in a reduction in emissions, fuel consumption, and resulted in a dollar savings to students.**

- The UPASS program resulted in 221,055 fewer vehicle trips to UWM during 1994-95 school year.
- This resulted in a reduction of 5,084,265 VMT for trips to UWM, a savings of 242,108 gallons of fuel, and a savings of \$295,371.76 in fuel costs.
- The program also reduced emissions by 20% for trips to UWM.

## Resources

- TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT MANUAL| FINAL REPORT for California State University Nelson-Nygaard
- “Deep Discount Group Pass Programs as Instruments for Increasing Transit Revenue and Ridership” Cornelius Kofi Nuworsoo, Institute of Transportation Studies University of California at Berkeley, 2004
- Jeffrey Brown, Daniel Baldwin Hess, and Donald Shoup, “Unlimited Access,” University of California, Los Angeles, Institute of Transportation Studies, School of Public Policy and Social Research, 1999.
- Jeffrey Brown, Daniel Baldwin Hess, and Donald Shoup, “BruinGO: An Evaluation,” University of California, Los Angeles, Institute of Transportation Studies, School of Public Policy and Social Research, 2002.
- Robert Cervero, “Transit Pricing Research: A Review and Synthesis,” *Transportation*, no. 17, 1990.
- John Curtin, “Effects of Fares on Transit Riding,” *Highway Research Record*, no. 213, 1968.
- James A. Meyer and Edward A. Beimborn, “An Evaluation of an Innovative Transit Pass Program: The UPASS,” *Technology Sharing Report DOT-T-96-16*, US Department of Transportation, 1996.
- James H. Miller. *Transportation on College and University Campuses: A Synthesis of Transit Practice* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001).
- Richard L. Oram. *Implementation Experience with Deep Discount Fares* (Washington, DC: FTA, US Department of Transportation, 1994).
- Michael E. Williams and Kathleen L. Petrait, “U-PASS: A Model Transportation Management Program That Works,” *Transportation Research Record 1404*, TRB, National Research Council, Washington, DC, 1993.