

Bicycle Fleet Survey Response Analysis

Introduction

After sending out a survey to assess the status and health of existing Bicycle Fleets on campus, F&S received responses from 4 active bicycle fleets. This is a brief summary and discussion of the results. We should start by acknowledging the small sample size of this survey – it is probably more appropriate to view this as a stepping stone towards encouraging new bicycle fleets on campus rather than concrete evidence of what does and does not work. I think it would be a mistake to take these results as concrete facts; however, that does not diminish their importance. We can certainly learn a lot from the few active bicycle fleets currently on campus.

Analysis

We asked several questions of the respondents, ranging from who they were affiliated with, how often they performed maintenance, how many bicycles they had, how they felt their program was going, etc. On average, the bicycle fleets were small, about 5 bikes big. The smallest two each have three bicycles and the largest has seven. They are used relatively little, about only 1-5 times per week, with one of the fleets using them significantly more, about 16-25 times per week. Student staff/Students were important in two of the programs because they were ones who performed regular maintenance on the bicycles.

Maintenance

Maintenance structures for the different programs were interesting and ranged heavily in terms of time and money spent. Respondents reported spending everywhere from 0 hours on maintenance a year to 2-3 hours per week. It seems that perhaps there is a happy medium that needs to be struck – maintenance on the bicycles should certainly be happening more than 0-3 hours per year, but probably does not need to quite reach levels of multiple hours per week (although that certainly would not hurt). I think that offering some sort of guidance to new bicycle fleets on how often maintenance should be performed could be useful. Perhaps a short infographic or information sheet that could be distributed along with other documentation might be helpful.

Concerns Over Locking Procedures

Concerns brought up by half the respondents cited issues with getting users to lock the bicycles correctly. With a proper U-Lock, it is not difficult to lock the bicycle correctly, so I think the programs might be able to benefit from either an education effort or perhaps a small laminated sheet permanently attached to the bicycle showing with a picture exactly how to lock the bike. There could also potentially be a little note on the lock asking “did you lock me correctly?” or something along those lines as a reminder to the users.

Additional Help from F&S or Other Outlets

When asked “What additional help would you like to have from Facilities & Services, students, public affairs with your bicycle fleet?” the responses were varied. One respondent said they didn’t know, one said they do not need any help unless F&S would like to purchase them more bicycles, and the other said that more covered parking and a winter storage solution would be very helpful. Anecdotally, through my experience, and through the responses in this survey, I think that many people simply do not know what F&S or other organizations on campus have to offer these bicycle fleets.