

Mr. Steven Spradling
Director of Parking and
Transportation Services
1006 W. Hall of Fame
Stillwater, OK 74078

Mr. Joe Weaver
Vice President for
Administration and Finance
208F Whitehurst
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Lee Bird
Vice President for
Student Affairs
201 Whitehurst
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dear Mr. Spradling, Mr. Weaver, and Dr. Bird,

As graduate students, we are proud of our traditions here at OSU, including football games. However, the Graduate and Professional Student Government Association would like to voice our concerns about game day parking policies that negatively impact graduate students.

We received accounts of problems from graduate students, who represent almost 20% of OSU's student body. Many graduate students have concerns about game day parking. Graduate students must perform time-sensitive experiments and provide daily care for animals used in research. However, on game days, graduate students are banned from parking near our buildings. In addition to limiting all students' access to resources including the library and computer labs, current parking policy presents unique challenges to graduate students.

One graduate student performs genetics work that requires her to check the progress of multi-day experiments, but she is prevented from doing so by the lack of available parking on game days. Another graduate student conducts daily field work requiring heavy equipment that must be transported from his lab to his car before going to the field. On game days, he loses several hours waiting for permission from parking services to temporarily park near his lab. A graduate student who provides daily care for animals used in research cannot park on campus to do so, as even metered parking is restricted. Participants in psychology studies sometimes give short notice of their participation, and game day parking policy is a challenge for data collection. Graduate students working with radiation sources face unique challenges because the inability to access their labs at precise times invalidates experiments that must then be started over, resulting in wasted funds. These are only a few of the reported difficulties that graduate students face. Our experiments are time-sensitive, and our animals need care. We acknowledge that parking on campus is an extremely limited resource, but current policies interfere with our research.

One possible solution is to designate one parking space for each department and allow graduate students to request a temporary pass in advance for research purposes. Another possible solution is to reinstate loading zones near buildings where research is conducted. We are open to other ideas that provide football fans on-campus parking while still allowing graduate students to access labs and offices. Incoming president Solmaz Bastani is eager to meet with you to discuss possible solutions.

Football is a vital part of community life at OSU, but graduate students carry out a core part of OSU's mission to contribute world-class research, education, and outreach. Our research changes industry, expands human knowledge, and enables practical solutions to pressing issues in our communities. We appreciate OSU's commitment to the highest standards in research, and look forward to working with you to develop parking policies that reflect that commitment.

Sincerely,

Catherine Haviland, President, catherine.haviland@okstate.edu
Solmaz Bastani, Incoming President Fall 2016, solmaz.bastani@okstate.edu
On behalf of the members of Graduate and Professional Student Government Association

