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ODU Parking Issue

If there was something that I would add to campus, it would be to add more parking for students. Students may find campus parking to be safer and more convenient if Old Dominion University were to add spots for students. Since there is a lack of parking spots close to or on campus, students have to park far away in spots that don't seem very safe. Many of these spots that are far away are poorly lit, have little to no security, and can put many of these students at risk. More parking near or on university grounds will help guarantee safety, become more convenient for many people, and cause less stress about their and their car's safety. As stated on the Old Dominion website, "At Old Dominion University, safety is a top priority. We are always working vigilantly to ensure that the Monarch community has access to services and resources that promote a safe campus environment." Old Dominion has made it clear how much they believe safety is important, along with being their top priority. I believe that this would be a great step in the right direction to help improve campus safety.

I talked to a few of my friends who live on campus, and the main thing they said that needed to be changed was the parking problems. Many people agree with them also on how there seems to be more parking for teachers than for the students. For people who don't live on campus, they have to try and find parking every time they have class and normally it would be a very far walk. Struggling to find a parking spot could cause many things like being late for class

or study groups, and if they have to park far during bad weather it could also cause a few issues also.

Many people including myself, on popular days like game day, find it difficult to find a place to put their car. Anna Irvin, a freshman at Old Dominion, said how it's really inconvenient that students have to move their car from the blue stone garage on game days. Since there's nowhere for all of these cars to go. "There's more teacher parking then students and on game days students have to move their car outta blue stone garage leaving them with nowhere to go" Ivrin states. I agree with her completely, because when I've been on the compass I also struggled to find parking. Whether it was game day or just a normal day, game day was a bit harder to find parking as expected. Even when I was on campus just to pick up Irvin to go out to eat, I also couldn't find any parking around or near her dorm. On that day, there was no event and it was around five in the afternoon so it wasn't too busy.

When you look up "ODU Transport and Parking Services" on Google, you can see that they only have 1.8 stars out of five on Google reviews. They mainly only have one or two-star reviews, they have a one-star review from two weeks ago as of writing this essay. This review is from Caiden Petty and it states "Some things could be better, this could not get worse". Another one-star review from eleven months ago by Tee Jackson says "Odu parking is one of the worst parking systems I have encountered, they give you chances to appeal citations, but never approve them even when you have a valid reason you were parking wrongly. They give out unnecessary citations and furthermore do not have regard for any students who may be struggling financially, as if we don't already have to pay thousands of dollars for school." The latest at least decent review was from three years ago, it has five stars and it's written by Rudy Wingate. This review says "Get here early and you will have a parking spot!"

The most recent good review was from three years ago, but there were still one-star reviews from around this time if not older shows a lot. From so many unhappy people with this occurring issue about parking, this shows that it hasn't just been within recent times parking is an issue. Since the first bad review about this topic from five years ago by Sydney Pasto, I couldn't find anything that Old Dominion has done since a lot of people have shown their dislike to the parking situation.

There are a few ways that I think the University could help or possibly fix this issue. The simple solution to this problem would be for them to add more parking to the surrounding area if not make them bigger. For example, making the parking lots next to the dorms more than just one or two small rows long for the cars to park. The university has five parking garages, but none of them are by the dorms. So if they were to add another garage, if not a bigger parking lot, I think it would be best to put it close to the dorms. It would also do good by the Powhatan Apartments. The Old Dominion has 23,494 students enrolled at the school, not counting their staff, so it will always be hard for students to always have a parking spot.

A solution they could also do is for the people who pay for these parking permits they could make if these people get assigned parking spots. They could have it as only some parking garages or lots have this aspect, but you'd have to pay a bit more. One of the main perks of someone paying more for your parking permit would be that you are always guaranteed the same spot, and you wouldn't have to go searching for one. Which is something many students have mentioned being a big problem. It would have to be first come first served these kinds of permits, but this would definitely help with paying off building the garage. Another way for Old Dominion to fund this project would be things like fundraisers and some people donating money towards this. They can do many fundraisers, similar to Greek Life, and host a few events that

students have to participate in. One of these events could be something like Powerpuff, and students pay to come watch. This would be a very expensive project, so as a way to save money, the University could have their engineering students make admissions for designs if they were to make a new parking garage.

Old Dominion University makes it a point that they try their best to make sure the campus is safe, but many students have said the opposite. Many of them feel unsafe in the places that they have to park at times. Sometimes in very dark, poorly lit, and possibly in sketchy areas for the students. In The Virginian-Pilot they said, “Likely best recognized for its proximity to Old Dominion University, with multiple dorms, apartment buildings and houses nearby that serve as home to many students — it’s also become notorious for multiple shootings and criminal activity”. Many say that “It used to be quiet” around the university, but within the last couple of years people have been thinking otherwise. Within the last few years, there have been more crimes around the campus. Many students park right off campus to get to class, and many also live right off campus because of houses and apartments you can rent through the school on a website called ODUrent. They are pretty well-priced places, but some of them aren't in the best areas. Overall, the residents of this website are more pleased than not when staying at these apartments or houses.

This danger isn’t only in parking off campus, but over the last one or so there were incidents in these parking garages also. “The victims were then transported to the 1300 block of 43rd Street where the sexual assault allegedly took place in the on-campus parking garage there” (Key, 13newsnow.com). There have been two incidents where females were sexually assaulted on campus. Students who park far away tend to end up having to walk for a while through poorly lit areas, unkempt roads, walking around some of the construction around campus, and being in

sketchy places. “Known by many as ‘Kill ‘em’ street or avenue ... The shooting was one of many near the corridor that have resulted in students and non-students being killed or wounded over the years”. Having students walking around makes them more vulnerable and puts them at risk of being put into bad situations and or threats. If they were to add more parking areas on campus, at least closer, students could then park in more authorized and safer places. This is so they can avoid potentially dangerous situations, by having these extra parking spaces closer to campus buildings. Additionally, because safer campus areas benefit more than just students, staff, visitors, people walking through, and people living in the surrounding areas. It will be very important for these new parking lots to be well-lit, supervised, and have things like 24/7 security cameras.

Overall parking at Old Dominion is very limited for the amount of people who are enrolled at the school and work there combined. It depends on when you visit. For example right before the first home football game of the season compared to a random Tuesday. As I stated before, many students have said that staff members seem to have more space than students. Kaitlyn Monsanto, under my discussion board, stated that she felt like she had to race into a parking space to try and get there before someone else. Having to park far away from something like a class, and things like weather or bad situations. There are many things like shootings, which have become more common over the last decade or so.

Improving Old Dominion University's parking problems is very important to helping the campus's comfort and safety for everyone like students, staff, and other visitors. The current parking situation could put people at risk, threats, and maybe danger, mainly in areas near the campus. Along with the university receiving low ratings and a lot of complaints about their parking situation and the services offered. This is to the point of an ongoing problem for a few

years now, that has yet to be addressed. The demand for parking and to be safe for these people could be fixed by building more parking lots and or garages close to something like the dorms. Something like assigning parking spaces to permit holders that you could pay a bit more for. Other ways to help pay off constructions like the university could set up fundraisers or events. Lastly, they should prioritize safety because of dangerous things people, mainly students, have had to encounter. These new areas have to be well-lit parking lots, and should have 24/7 security stuff like this would help make the school environment safer.

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