

**POINT PARK UNIVERSITY COMMENTS ON TRANSIT FUNDING  
SUBMITTED BY  
MARIANN GEYER, VICE PRESIDENT UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT  
TO THE  
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' TRANSPORTATION AND POLICY COMMITTEE  
FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 2010**

We all care about the place we choose to call home. It's where we raise our families, put down roots, and make one of the largest financial investments we will ever make. We don't enter into it lightly and we fiercely protect that asset.

How would you feel if suddenly the ability to access the place you call home was taken away from you? You could see it on the map but you could not physically get to that place.

As our region faces the largest transit funding crisis ever- we risk experiencing that feeling of the inability to access the places where we live work and play because of drastic cuts in transit service and large increases in the cost of providing public transit services to the residents of Allegheny County.

Not everyone uses public transit but the fact is, for a large part of the region's population, mass transit is the number one- and in some cases- only mode of transportation available to them providing access to the region's urban core.

Point Park University is a comprehensive, master's level university with a strong liberal arts tradition, and is located in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh. Point Park currently enrolls 3,986 full- and part-time students in 67 undergraduate programs and 11 graduate programs offered through its School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Communication and Conservatory of Performing Arts. Its students represent 45 states and 31 countries.

The University's undergraduate population has a strong draws from the City of Pittsburgh and areas outside of the city but within Allegheny County. The significant adult population utilizing night and weekend education opportunities come from throughout the city and surrounding areas. The 500 plus faculty and staff who draw their livelihood from distinguished careers at the University have strong roots coming from various locations inside and outside of the city of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and beyond.

Point Park University has been a proud part of Downtown Pittsburgh for more than 50 years. Now as the moving force behind the Academic Village Initiative, the University and its community and neighborhood partners are aggressively transforming an important part of the area along the Wood Street corridor with a dynamic economic and academic plan. The \$240 million plan is rebuilding infrastructure critical to the Downtown, adding new amenities that will strengthen the neighborhood and adding key academic initiatives that will support and enhance the academic environment for the campus community.

For the Point Park University community, the loss of affordable, easily accessible, regularly scheduled mass transit, would be a devastating blow to the University and to the businesses that are a part of the neighborhood. According to a study conducted by the Association of Independent Colleges and

Universities, Point Park University infuses more than \$73 million into the southwestern Pennsylvania economy annually.

- More than 50% of our faculty and staff depend on public transit to get to work.
- Of the nearly 1,000 students living in on-campus residence facilities, a recent study shows that 90% of those students depend on public transit to access areas outside of Downtown for shopping, entertainment, etc.
- Of the 2,460 traditional aged students who enrolled at Point Park in the fall 49% are from Allegheny County and many of those students depend on mass transit on a regular basis for access to campus.
- With approximately 1,100 adult students who are a part of the Downtown workforce and attend night and weekend classes, many depending on mass transit for access to work and school, a loss of night and weekend transit service would hinder their pursuit of not only a paycheck but of a higher education advancing them and the region's workforce.

Point Park continues to invest in the place we, our students and neighbors call home.

We are fortunate to have partners from the private, philanthropic and government community working with us to build a vibrant, competitive urban core.

The Port Authority of Allegheny County has taken stock of its operation and made major changes to improve efficiencies, streamline operations and still provide the type of transit system that serves the people of the region and serves as a major component to a competitive region.

But all of that is not enough to ensure an amenity that is essential to the region. As an investing member of the Pittsburgh community Point Park University urges our elected officials to review the field of potential long term funding options available and move quickly to determine a long term, sustainable funding structure for mass transit.

We do all care about the place we call home. Let's make sure we all care enough about mass transit and the access it provides us to always be able to get home.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Mariann Geyer  
(412)392-3805  
mgeyer@pointpark.edu

#