

Taxi Survey Results for Concordia College

Moorhead, Minnesota

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Introduction

Students attending college today have a variety of mobility needs. Many college students attend classes during the normal business day of 8 am to 5 pm. Students are involved in numerous other activities that occur outside the time schedule of classes. During these time periods students schedule jobs, study time at the library or with friends, sporting events/activities, exercise, and shopping as well as social events. Students may attend multiple activities before starting their daily studies later in the evening, which may not be at their own residence.

This provides a glimpse of the importance of mobility for college students. Some students worry about the availability of a mode of transportation, particularly during the evening hours, and, when not available, they may need to bypass holding a job or participating in some other activity.

The students who have vehicles can get around easily; however, for the Concordia College students who do not have vehicles (about 23 percent of the student body) the task is more challenging. The Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area Transit (MAT) provides bus service to the Concordia College area. The day time fixed route bus service runs from 6:15 am to 6:45 pm with half hour intervals. The evening bus service runs from 5:30 pm to 10:15 pm with 45 minute intervals, and focuses on a north-south route. The north route covers business in north Moorhead and along Highway 10. The south route goes to West Acres, movie theaters in south Fargo, and businesses in south Moorhead. Concordia College students have the option of purchasing a \$35 semester pass to ride the MAT. However, there is a void in low cost public transportation between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am. Concordia College students who do not have automobiles are without affordable transportation after 10 pm when MAT services close. The taxi is available, but at current market prices. There is a possibility of offering a taxi service during these hours at a \$2 per person per ride fare.

A study was conducted to determine the potential acceptance and usage of a taxi service with a \$2 fare serving Concordia College.

The two primary objectives of this study were:

- To determine the travel patterns of Concordia students living on and off campus.
- To establish potential taxi usage for night and late night travel in the local community.

The second section of this report will identify the research methods used and the third section reports the results of the survey.

Research Methods

The Concordia student body association and Mr. Tom Iverson identified questions they wanted to include in the survey. The Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC) worked with them to develop the finalized version of the questionnaire and hosted the survey. The survey instrument included nine questions pertinent to information useful in identifying a potential taxi service market. In addition, students were asked two demographic type questions: If they lived on or off campus, and their year classification. Their name, phone number and e-mail address were optional and the students were guaranteed confidentiality.

The student body association sent an e-mail message to 2,750 Concordia students asking them to complete the on-line survey. The e-mail message included the reason for the survey, location of the survey, and request for the students to complete the survey. Six hundred and twenty one students responded to the survey request. This response rate generates a 95 percent confidence level.

Survey Results

The survey was conducted in July. The first two questions were on the demographics, whether they lived on or off campus and their student classification.

The survey respondents were close to a even split between students living on campus and students living off campus. The off-campus students comprised 51.4 percent of the survey respondents (Figure 1).

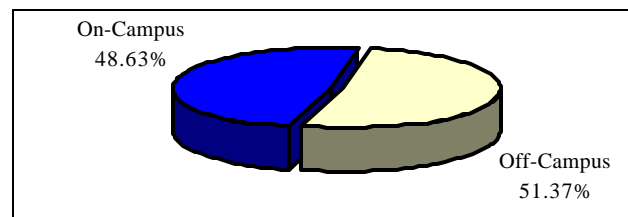


Figure 1. The percent of respondents that lived on and off campus during the survey period. N=621

Conducting this survey during the summer explains the fact that very few freshmen responded to the survey. The other group, represented by a small response, was the non-classified student or “other”. The senior class had the largest number of respondent at 227 or 36.5 percent of the total number of students responding (Figure2).

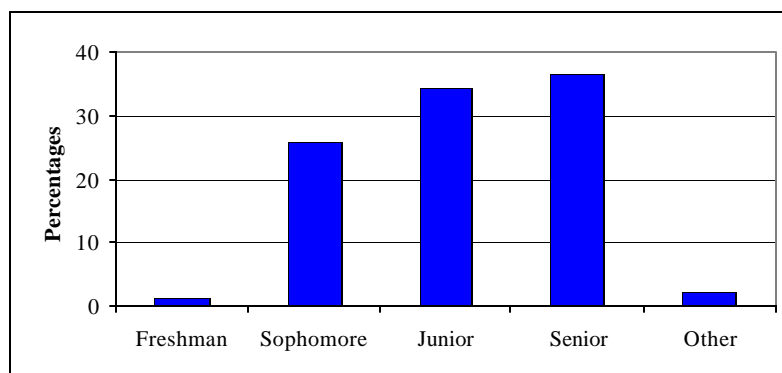


Figure 2 The percent of responses from each of the student classifications. N=621

A large number of students attending college in the Fargo-Moorhead area have access to vehicles. This survey showed that 76.6 percent of the students at Concordia College have vehicle access (Figure 3). The results from previous surveys by SURTC showed that at both NDSU and MSUM over 90 percent of the students have access to vehicles while attending school.

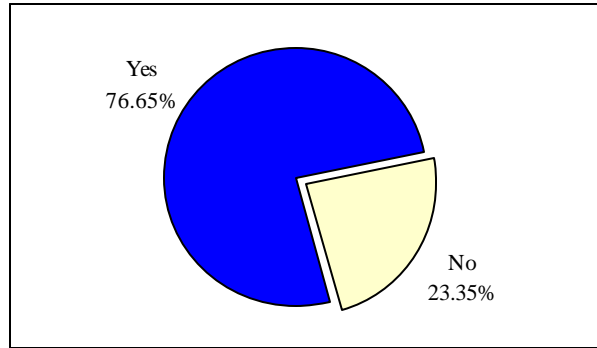


Figure 3 Percent of students who have access to vehicles while attending school. N=621

Students were asked to indicate how often they travel out into the community during the week. Over 70 percent of the students travel more than two trips away from campus or home during any given week (Figure 4). Further analysis reveals that of the 71 percent that travel more than twice a week, 43.6 percent are off-campus students and 27.8 percent are on-campus.

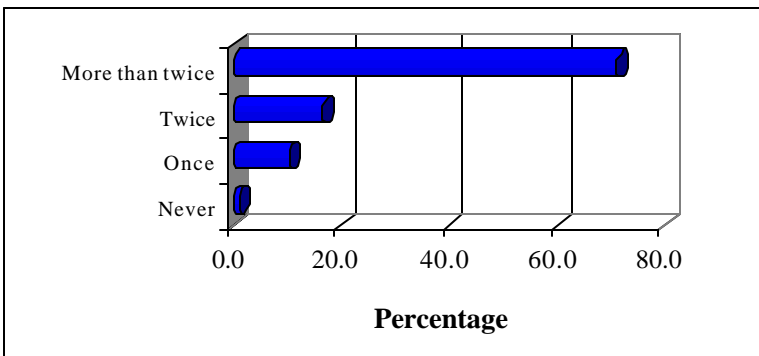


Figure 4 Frequency per week that people travel. N=621

A large percent of students have access to motor vehicles, so it comes as no surprise that the preferred source of travel is the automobile. College students probably look at full fare taxi as too expensive and therefore taxi is the least used public transit mode. Motorcycle didn't get any votes for first mode of choice, but it did for second and third mode of choice. Walking and car pooling were the primary choices for second and

third modes of choice for community travel. Almost 25 percent of the respondents chose "not applicable" for their third choice (Figure 5).

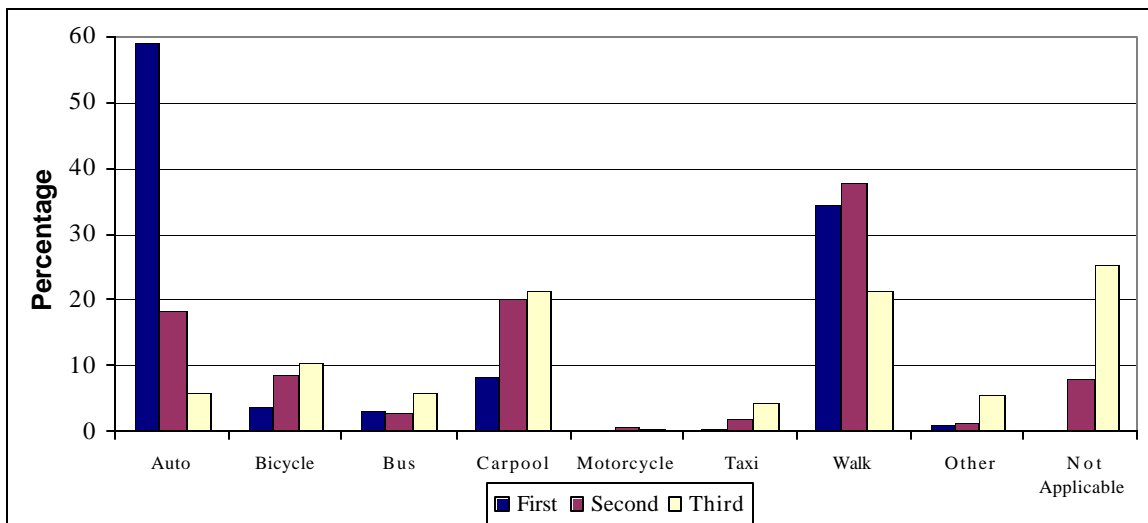


Figure 5 Student's first, second, and third mode of choice for community travel. N=621

The respondents were asked to indicate their reason for traveling from a given set of reasons, including: work, entertainment, restaurant, shopping, grocery shopping and other. The respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer for this question. The results are a high rate response for the top four reasons for travel (Figure 6).

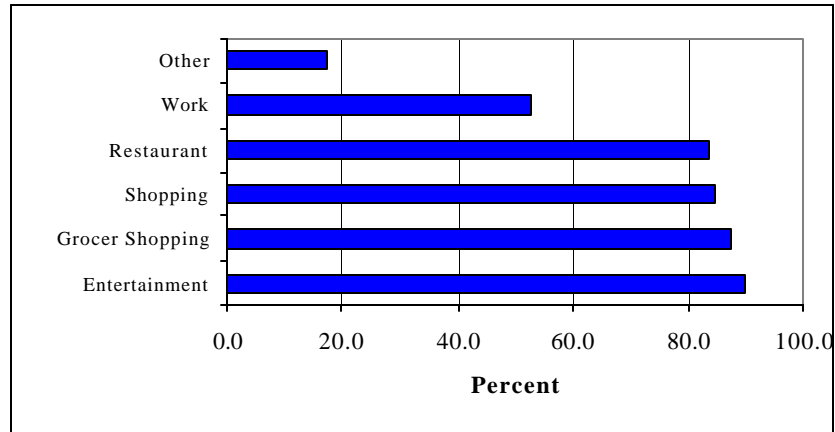


Figure 6 Respondents ranked the given reasons for travel. N=621

Weekend travel by college students is by far greater than travel during the week. Friday and Saturday travel is more than double the percent of students that travel during the week days of Monday through Thursday (Figure 7).

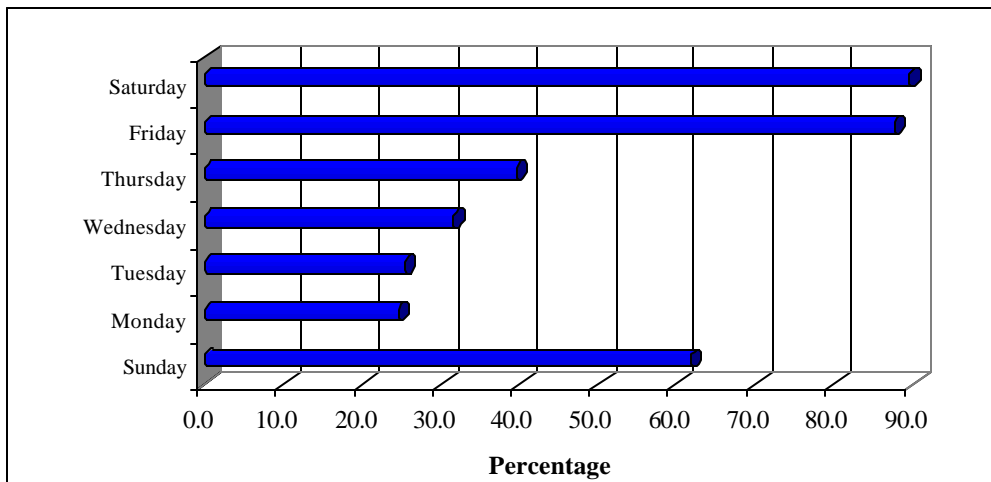


Figure 7 The percent of students who indicated they travel on a given weekday. N=621

The day was divided into five time periods: mornings, 6am to 12 noon; afternoons, 12 noon to 6 pm; evenings, 6 pm to 9 pm; nights, 9pm to 12 midnight; and late night, 12 midnight to 6 am. Again the respondents were asked to check all that apply. Evening and night is when most students (61 percent) travel in the community. There is some differences in travel times between the students that live on campus and the students that live off campus (Figures 9 and 10). The largest difference is during mornings and evenings. During the night and late night hours of the taxi service, the percent who travel is almost the same for on-campus students and off-campus students at 40 and 42 percent respectively.

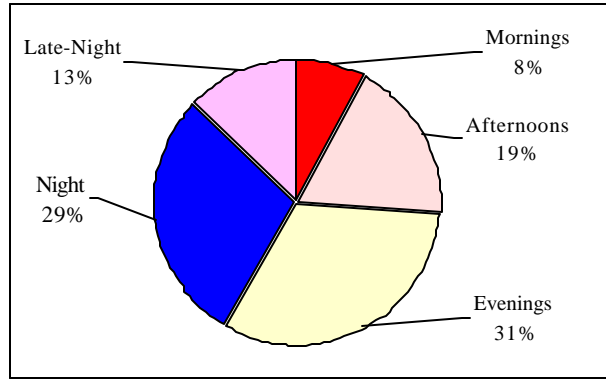


Figure 8 Indicates what time of day a given percent of students travel in the community. N=621

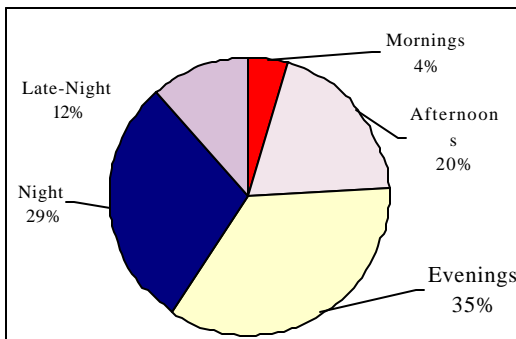


Figure 9 Travel times for students who live on-campus. N=277

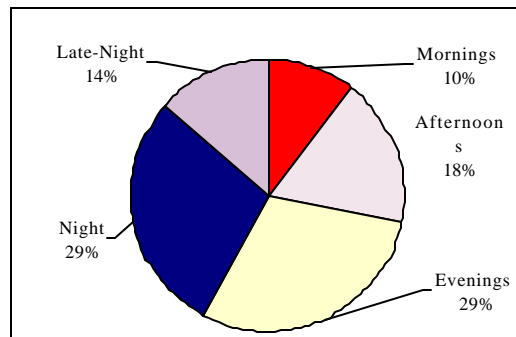


Figure 10 Travel times for students who live off-campus. N=294

The respondents were asked, “If given an opportunity to ride the taxi for just a \$2 fee, how often do you think you might ride the taxi?” The daily expected usage is very small, at less than 5 percent (Figure 11). This is consistent with answers to previous questions. The weekly usage and possibly the once or twice a month usage, indicates there is a willingness of the students to use the service.

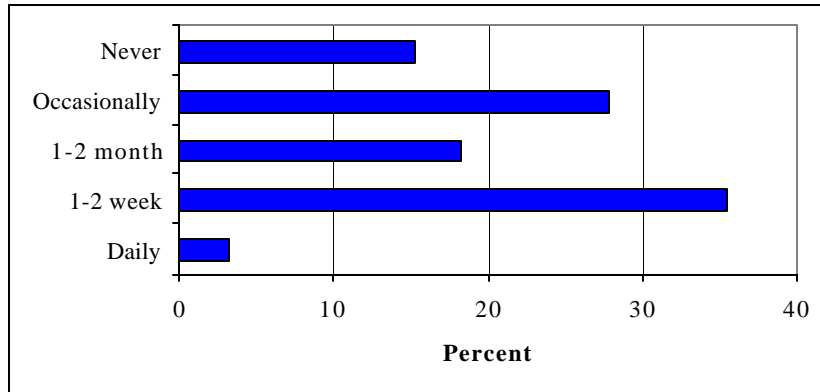


Figure 11 Anticipated usage of taxi with \$2 fee structure. N=621

About a third of the students who wrote additional comments and the majority of those were in favor of the taxi service. The students commented they were envious that both NDSU and MSUM have the service, but Concordia College does not. A “great idea” was a very frequent comment. Another comment was that while Concordia students are not considered heavy drinkers some students do drink and this would be a safe choice for a ride home-both the students and community would benefit. A few students reflected that they did not consume alcoholic beverages and would not be happy if some of their activity fees were used to subsidize a taxi service to give low cost rides to those who choose to consume too much. Some of the women mentioned that now they could keep their late night jobs and know they would have a safe ride home after work. The lack of transportation options was another issue frequently noted. Some students compared the service to UND’s taxi service where the fare is \$1.

In summary, some of the factors that would indicate the potential usage of a \$2 fare taxi service are:

- About 23 percent of the students do not have access to vehicles
- Entertainment and shopping are the primary two reasons for traveling in the community
- Twenty-nine percent of the students claim to be out in the community during night hours (9 pm to 12 am) and 13 percent during late night hours (12 am to 6 am)
- Three percent of the students said they may use it daily and 35 percent indicated they would use the service once or twice a week
- Numerous comments from students saying “great idea,” “this would be a big benefit,” and many other favorable comments.

These survey results indicate that a taxi service to supplement the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area Transit may be well accepted at Concordia College.