January 20, 2019

Ana Mari Cauce

President

University of Washington

301 Gerberding Hall Box 351230

Seattle, WA 98195

Dear President Cauce,

We, the undersigned, write to you to request fully subsidized transit passes for all University of Washington employees.

As a public institution and one of the five largest employers in King County, the University of Washington has a significant responsibility for environmental stewardship and to serve as a model for the region, nation, and world. Fully subsidizing the U-PASS for all employees clearly aligns with the UW’s own stated values for sustainability including the goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2050[[1]](#footnote-1). Increasing public transportation use for the entire UW workforce will decrease congestion in the region, promote healthier communities, and ultimately set us on a path to reach our ambitious environmental goals. Offering a fully subsidized U-PASS to all UW employees would also mirror the benefits offered by other major employers in the region, including the City of Seattle and King County[[2]](#footnote-2).

We are encouraged by UW’s willingness to offer a fully subsidized U-PASS for classified staff and urge the university to offer this benefit to all employees as a matter of equity. Given the current contract, professional staff, librarians and faculty are left facing future increases in U-PASS costs, as well as the continued rise in cost of living in King County and surrounding areas. By offering all employee groups the same transit benefits, UW would be acting on its own espoused value of Standard of Excellence, creating policies that aid in recruiting and retaining diverse and innovative faculty and staff, and holding ourselves to the highest standards of ethics.

To gauge interest in a fully subsidized U-PASS, we conducted Catalyst surveys of professional staff and librarians.

The Professional Staff Organization conducted a Catalyst survey of 10,000 professional staff asking if the PSO board should advocate for a fully subsidized U-PASS. The response rate was a whopping 49% and of the 4932 responses received, more than 90% of them favored this advocacy.

The Association of Librarians of the University of Washington conducted the same Catalyst survey of 125 librarians asking if ALUW Executive Board should advocate for a fully subsidized U-PASS. The response rate was 79% with 98% of respondents positively favoring this advocacy. Additionally, of the 23 respondents that currently do not have a U-PASS, 21 of them would be more likely to use the U-PASS if a fully subsidized UPASS was made available.

We urge the University to fully subsidize the U-PASS for *all* employees and work to match values with effective policy. We are proud to work at one of the world’s premier public universities, and seek to work with the University of Washington to fulfill our collective environmental responsibility to the region.

Sincerely,

**The University of Washington Professional Staff Organization Board**

**The Association of Librarians of the University of Washington Executive Board**

**Faculty Forward Steering Committee**

**American Association of University Professors – University of Washington Chapter**

**University of Washington Housestaff Association**

**IHME Professional Staff Union**

1. UW Sustainability, Greenhouse Gases <https://green.uw.edu/dashboard/greenhouse-gas> UW Transportation Services, Climate Action Strategy for Transportation <https://transportation.uw.edu/files/media/climate-action-strategy-02-04-15.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. King County Employee Transit Program <https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/employees/transportation/docs/King_County_Employees_Commute_Options_and_Benefits.ashx>; City of Seattle Commute Trip Reduction Program <https://www.seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/optional/commute.asp> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)