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Metro Commute Services representatives Edie Howard, and Liz Armijo-Holbrook welcome transit agencies and colleges to a symposium on the universal college pass program.



Universal College Pass Program: A Metro Partnership

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 6, 2006) Metro's Commute Services welcomed transit agencies and colleges to a symposium, Dec. 5, exploring creation of a universal college pass program for students and staff commuting to campuses.

David Sutton, director of Commute Services, described the Gateway Building event as an effort to build partnerships enabling students and staff to reach campuses more efficiently, avoiding parking and traffic problems.

"We want to get the colleges and the transit agencies together . . . and create a dialog so we can start thinking about and implementing a universal college pass program, not just something where the student applies for a monthly pass, but [something] that puts a transit pass in every student's hand," Sutton said. "Because only then will we see an impact on our buses and trains. That will, of course, reduce traffic



Julie Gatica, a management analyst for the Montebello Buslines, and Betina Cervantes, a Rideshare Program Specialist for Cal State Los Angeles, collect information from Jocelyn Feliciano at Metro Commute Services table. Below, Feliciano and Teresa Milliken greet

and congestion.”

Sutton sees a universal college pass as offering benefits to both student and college. “We’re hoping the students save a ton of money and the colleges can delay new construction for parking with this kind of program,” he said.

Don Shoup, a UCLA professor of Urban Planning and author of *The High Cost of Free Parking*, offered an overview of college pass programs across the country. Speakers from the Los Angeles Community College District, Orange County Transportation District, Whittier’s Rio Hondo Community College and UCLA spoke about the effectiveness of their college pass programs.

Edward Hargrave, Metrolink advertising manager, hoped to encourage colleges to sign up for a discount program for their students.

“Metrolink has a discount for college students,” he explained. “We offer a 25 percent discount. College students are the only ones who can receive the discount.”

Hargrave wants colleges to join Metrolink’s corporate program and begin helping their students save money. Students “cannot get the 25 percent discount at any machines. We can only generate those tickets from our office.”

college and transit agency representatives.



Photos by Ned Racine