
Additional Tips on Operating Saferide Programs

Editor's note: In the October 1 issue, we featured an article about creating campus Saferide programs, which give students free rides to their homes. The authors of the article, Jesse Ketterman and Heather Holmes, recently gave additional advice on creating Saferide programs during an online presentation with David Tiscione, who implemented a program at Frostburg State University while he was a student there.

A campus Saferide program can save students' lives by giving students free rides to their homes after drinking alcohol or studying at the library late at night. But although the idea sounds good, logistical and financial challenges keep many campuses from pursuing it.

To help resolve some of the challenges, the presenters of the November 12 online seminar "Campus Saferide Programs: Practical Advice and Rules of the Road" offered concrete advice on how to make day-to-day operations run smoothly.

For example, the presenters outlined the pros and cons of using different types of vehicles:

- University vehicles are already covered under the institution's insurance

policy but might be difficult to get during busy times.

- Rented vehicles are clean and attractive but costly. In addition, some rental companies set minimum ages for renting or operating the vehicles, meaning that many traditional-age students wouldn't be able to work as Saferide drivers.
- Private student vehicles are a quick, low-cost option for an operation that's just starting up or an operation that needs to add extra vehicles to its fleet before the next funding cycle. However, the cost is ultimately passed on to the owners, who pay for any damage and wear and tear.

The presenters also offered advice about the following issues.

Dealing with high demand and long wait times

- Before starting the program, ask students what they believe peak use times will be; your assumption might not be correct.
- At Texas A&M, a Saferide staff member called a "trotter" visits high-

traffic areas (such as a football stadium right after a game) to organize and call in rides.

- At Salisbury University, Saferide dispatchers advise students to call back if they've been waiting for more than five to 10 minutes. Dispatchers also advise waiting students to resist the temptation to walk or drive home and therefore risk becoming a crime or accident victim.

Ensuring that students have the Saferide number when they need it

- When introducing the service to students (during orientation, for example), ask students to program the Saferide number into their cell phones right away.
- Post the number in libraries, residence halls, the student center, venues for sporting and cultural events, and area bars.
- Make sure that the information is easy to find through an online search.
- Try a variety of promotional approaches. At Frostburg State

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University, the Saferide number was printed on coasters and distributed to bars and restaurants. Salisbury University tried a more controversial approach—putting the number on bottle openers.

Finding support

- When proposing a Saferide program to administrators, don't talk only about preventing drunken driving. The program will also keep students from becoming crime victims while walking home alone. So when you provide administrators information about alcohol use, also include statistics about sexual assault and community crime.
- Look to residence halls, parents' associations, and alumni foundations for help with buy-in and funding. ●