

# Free Bike Share Program Puts Students Behind the Wheel

Monday, September 26, 2016, By Kathleen Haley



Students can reserve one of eight bikes housed outside the Schine Student Center to venture on and off campus for the day as part of a new Bike Share Program.

If you need to get further faster—around campus or off—or maybe just do some exploring, there’s a new transportation service on campus that can help you get there.

The Student Association, in collaboration with several administrative units on campus, has launched a free Bike Share Program. Students can reserve one of eight bikes housed outside the Schine Student Center to venture on and off campus for the day.

The program kicks off today with a table outside of Schine between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At noon, Otto will be there, along with Department of Public Safety officers and representatives from

Mello Velo, the bike company that has been contracted for the program. Students can reserve the bikes through the Student Centers and Programming Services office.

The program has been a few years in the making—beginning with Daniela Lopez '15, then vice president of the Student Association in 2013.

“I saw the need for a bike share program, since my freshmen year in college,” Lopez says. “I am originally from Arizona and this was a norm at our university campuses. I made it one of my priorities to work on a bike share program since the beginning of my time as vice president.”

### **Collaboration on campus**

Lopez developed strong relationships with Energy Systems and Sustainability Management (ESSM), U.S. Green Building Council Students Group, Students of Sustainability, Department of Recreation Services, Parking and Transit Services, and the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The collaboration resulted in a six-bike pilot program at Archbold gym for two months in 2015.

“We were able to use bikes that students had left or forgotten on campus and were stored by DPS. We painted them and put stickers on them so students could tell them apart,” Lopez says.

The initiative was then passed on to Lopez’s successor, Jane Hong '16, who reached out to Mello Velo to obtain bikes and have them painted orange. Design students were commissioned to help create materials, and students passionate about sustainability helped with the launch.

“The demand was high during the pilot program, proving that our students were looking for other means of transportation; so when I came into office, one of my goals was to establish a permanent bike share program in a central location on campus,” Hong says.

Hong wanted a bike share program to help students be more adventurous off campus.

“There’s so much to do and see in Syracuse alone, and these bikes are just another tool for students to get out of the Orange bubble,” Hong says. “The bike share program encapsulates what an ideal Student Association initiative is—created for the students, by the students.”

In the transition to the newest session of the Student Association, Hong turned over the program to Joyce LaLonde '17, current vice president of the Student Association.

“The Bike Share Program exemplifies the beauty of and tenacity behind Student Association. For three administrations now, vice presidents have worked tirelessly to get this program in place for students, by students,” LaLonde says. She looks forward to continuing the work of Lopez and Hong as the program launches.

The current and former vice presidents thanked the many staff members involved in getting the program underway, including Scot Vanderpool, manager with Parking and Transit Services; Melissa Cadwell, sustainability coordinator for ESSM; Rick Martin, project manager for Sustainability Management (now retired); Afnan Ahmed '15, with the student sustainability groups; Dave Sargalski, director of the Office of Student Activities; Bridget Yule, director of

Student Centers and Programming Services (SCPS); and Dave Pennock, associate director of SCPS. The project was also assisted by the Office of Campus Planning, Design and Construction.

### **Sustainable option**

“The new bike share program is a significant addition for students who attend Syracuse University, but cannot bring their own bikes or vehicles to campus,” Cadwell says. “This program gives the students a sustainable option to travel around campus and the surrounding community.”

Sargalski agrees the program is a substantial new feature for students to take advantage of. “Students will now have the opportunity to access a free means of transportation to run errands, get around campus and the community, but probably most important—enjoy the exercise of bicycling,” Sargalski says.

Details of the program for students interested in reserving a bike are the following:

- The bike rental is free of charge for the day, as long as they are checked in by 10 a.m. the following morning. After 10 a.m., there will be a late fee assessed to the student. The bike will come fully equipped with U-bolt locks, running lights and a rear basket, and it will be the student’s responsibility to properly lock the bike at all times. The replacement cost for a lost, stolen or damaged bike will be the responsibility of the student who checked out the bike.
- Students will need to fill out and submit a reservation form through the Student Centers and Programming Services office, along with a liability waiver, in order to check out the bikes. All bikes will be first come, first served.
- Students will be encouraged to purchase a properly sized helmet; helmets are available to purchase at Mello Velo on Westcott Street.
- The program will be weather dependent, but it is anticipated the program will be in operation between mid-March through October.
- The bike rack closest to the Schine on the right side of bookstore wall will house the bikes.
- The Mello Velo bike shop, owned by Steve and Sara Morris ’07 on Westcott Street, will also service and maintain the bikes.

Organizers are also looking at accessible options. “We hope to provide adaptive cycling options as part of this program in the very near future, and made it a priority to work with students and staff to identify some adaptive bicycle options,” Sargalski says.

LaLonde plans to use the service to experience some new adventures.

“The bikes will be a neat way to explore downtown with friends, adventure to Green Lakes on a weekend, head to the doctor for a checkup or get from home to campus,” LaLonde says. “There are so many pleasurable and practical uses that these bikes have for so many people. Better get good use out of them before the snow comes!”

Watch Video Here: <https://vimeo.com/187858755>