Purpose
The purpose of this survey was to determine how graduate students use the UR shuttle service and other methods of transportation. We at the GSA have received several complaints over the years about the shuttle service, and we wanted to know if these issues are widespread. We had the goal of learning where graduate students live, how often they use UR shuttles and why, and what improvements they thought would be most helpful. We advertised our survey through the GSA newsletter and the AS&E GSO newsletter. We received 326 responses, approximately 7% of the graduate student population. Most responses came from PhD and MS students.

Take-Home Points
The main conclusions from our survey were:

1. Graduate students are split approximately equally between University housing and neighborhoods in the city center (e.g., South Wedge, Park Ave). Very few students live in suburbs.

2. The vast majority of respondents ride a UR shuttle at least weekly.

3. The most-used shuttles by graduate students are the Orange Line and the Blue Line. Over two-thirds of all respondents ride the Orange or Blue Line several times per week. The University should focus its efforts for shuttle improvements primarily to these lines.

4. Graduate students primarily use the shuttle service for commuting to work. While some students use the shuttle service for other purposes (like going to grocery stores, or non-work related transportation around Rochester), students are mainly using the service for work purposes.

5. Over a third of graduate students do not have a car in Rochester. This makes the shuttles critical to graduate students’ work life.

6. By and large, students who regularly use the shuttle would be willing to pay a transportation fee for increased services. We think this would work better as an opt-in system, as students who never use the shuttle don’t want extra costs added to their fees.

7. Our main recommendations are to expand shuttle services that serve students’ work commutes, including expansions to the Orange, Blue, and Corporate Woods lines.
8. Students do not use other transportation service options at UR such as Zimride and Zipcar. Approximately half of respondents did not know what Zimride was, and only 4 respondents indicated that they had used it before (and they did not like the service). More respondents were aware of Zipcar, but those who use it primarily use it for occasional grocery trips or road trips. Approximately half of respondents were also unaware of the existence of Safe Ride Home, although it does seem to be regularly used by a small percentage of respondents.

Recommendations

Orange Line

Expand Orange Line service to include mid-day service on weekdays.

Currently, the Orange Line does not run between 10:30 and 4:30 on weekdays. Of the students who use the Orange Line, we found a majority would utilize this expansion (see figures below). Several respondents explicitly mentioned this in their free-response suggestions as well.

Other Suggestions

We also received several other suggestions for the Orange Line via a free-response question. Suggestions included:

- Adding one earlier time in the morning. It’s currently impossible for students to make it to 8am meetings as the first shuttle time arrives on campus just around 8 (give or take a few minutes).

- Adding a stop in the Upper Monroe neighborhood. Currently, the shuttle briefly merges onto 490, emerging at Culver. If the bus instead continued on Monroe and turned on Culver from there, it would support a neighborhood in which 3% of respondents live.

- Splitting the Orange Line into two lines altogether due to the inefficiency of the currently very large loop. As several respondents pointed out, the second line could serve many different areas where students live, such as Upper Monroe, NOTA, and other important locations like the MAG, Amtrak station, and bus station.

- Creating a southbound South & Alexander stop in the afternoons to serve Eastman students who live in the South Wedge. There are currently only southbound stops in the South Wedge in the mornings.

- Stopping in the Mt. Hope area on the northbound shuttle in the afternoon. Students who live in the Mt Hope and Highland area (4% of respondents) only have the option of South & Gregory for their afternoon commute.

Blue Line

We received 3 major recommendations about the Blue Line. Each of the following expansions was proposed by several independent respondents in a free-response question about any improvements they would want to see to any line.

Adjust the timings of Orange & Blue Line so that students can take the Blue Line to URMC from the Orange Line.

Many respondents indicated that they work at URMC and find it difficult to get to the medical center in the morning because they take the Orange Line to campus from home, then take the Blue
Line. However, the Blue Line leaves right after the Orange Line arrives and students are stuck having to wait an additional 20 minutes. Shifting the Blue Line schedule by 5-10 minutes would be an easy fix to this problem.

**Expand Blue Line weekend service to be comparable to weekdays.**

Students, particularly those who work in lab settings, often need to be on campus early on weekends, but Blue Line service doesn’t currently allow this. We received several recommendations to expand Blue Line service in the mornings on weekends. Some students also requested more frequent timings on weekends.

**Keep the Blue Line and Orange Line separate during breaks, and run them on a comparable schedule to normal semester times.**

Many students mentioned how difficult it is to get to campus to work during breaks. Most graduate students, unlike undergraduates, still need to come to campus to work during breaks. Currently, the time between shuttles is doubled because of the merging of the Orange and Blue lines. Furthermore, these shuttles only run from 8am-5pm, which is unrealistic for students’ work schedules.

Other (less frequent) recommendations we received about the Blue Line include:

- Extend College Town express times during ‘rush hour’ – students are sometimes turned away from the Blue Line around 5pm because the bus is overfull with undergraduates going to College Town.

**Green Line**

The primary suggestion we received about the Green Line, proposed by over 5% of all respondents, was to expand the Green Line to Whipple Park.

**Corporate Woods Line**

Students indicated that they would regularly use the Corporate Woods line past 6pm on weekdays if service were extended to those times. Notably, although Corporate Woods ridership is relatively low, students who live in Rustic Village are less likely to own cars than other graduate students and are more likely to depend on shuttles for work.

**Data**

Here, we’ve included mostly coarse-grained information. We would be happy to send a more detailed report along. Much of the data that is missing below concerns free-response text giving recommendations about shuttle expansions.