

FANSHAWE COLLEGE

CPA MEMBER

profile

By Marion Dietze

In May 2009, one of Fanshawe College's parking lots was the scene of a dramatic rescue. Eight baby ducks got trapped in a drain and might have perished, had Fanshawe staff not been able to fish them out with long drain tools and reunite them with their mother.

Who says parking lots are all about cars and tickets?

Rescues aside, Fanshawe's lots are much more than places for visitors to leave their vehicles. They are classrooms, concert venues, and locations for charity events. They –

and the attendants who look after them – are also the first face of Fanshawe for visitors.

And first impressions count.

Like most colleges and universities, Fanshawe can be described as almost a small city. Every weekday from September to May, approximately 20,000 people spend time on the college's main campus in London, Ontario. To accommodate them, Fanshawe offers 2,900 parking spaces in various lots, from pre-paid reserved lots to general parking lots available for \$3.25/entry. There are also \$2.00/hour metered spaces and pay-and-display lots managed by coin and credit card kiosks. There is no charge for parking during graduation ceremony days.

Fanshawe views its parking system as part of its overall customer service plan. For many visitors, the front gate parking booth acts as an information kiosk where they can get advice from an attendant on where they should park and where they need to go. Digital signs have also recently been posted at key spots on campus to provide parking information along with other relevant campus news.

In terms of personnel, the college has five full-time attendants either working in the parking booth or making parking lot rounds, writing tickets when necessary, but also watching for suspicious behaviour, providing help, and supporting campus security measures.



In recent years, Fanshawe has invested in a comprehensive campus beautification program. Parking lots have been a big part of that program, not just with resurfacing and routine maintenance, but with landscaping features along driving routes and lot perimeters. A new main gate has also been installed, along with a wrought-iron fence that surrounds the campus, providing an extra level of security.

Parking lots have been upgraded for functionality as well, with new, more secure coin and credit card kiosks and signage that makes navigation easier. Overall, the campus upgrades have earned a great deal of praise from prospective students and their families, which is a boost for the college's reputation.

Fanshawe has also made accessibility a priority, offering many more disabled parking spots than the 30 which are required by law. The college wants to make each building as accessible as possible for every visitor, with disabled and regular parking spots conveniently located.

When they aren't packed with cars, Fanshawe's lots are often transformed into venues for other activities, from concerts to charity car washes. The college's Motive Power division frequently uses larger lots for vehicle demonstrations. Lots are also used for dozens of Motorcycle Driver Education classes throughout the spring, summer, and fall. It takes a lot of organization to keep the lots operating, especially when potentially conflicting events put parking space at an even higher premium.

Of course, with such high traffic, safety is a huge priority. Fanshawe has contracts for snow removal, de-icing, and other maintenance. The Facilities Management department also works closely with Health & Safety to be sure that potential



safety issues – potholes, for example – are taken care of quickly to protect anyone using lots and sidewalks. Maintenance consumes a large portion of the parking system's budget. In 2009, the college spent approximately \$500,000 on resurfacing. A similar investment is on the books for the summer of 2010.



Combined parking revenues last year came in well above the \$1 million mark.

Despite a progressive and effective parking system, Fanshawe still faces issues with space. Expansion has taken away about 600 parking spots in recent years, so the college has taken steps to curb vehicle traffic on-campus, most notably promoting bus passes to discourage students from driving to school. There is also the problem of neighbourhood relations, which can become strained if Fanshawe students and visitors are parking off-campus because parking is not available at the college.

Bus passes have been a success so far. Bus pass fees are now built into the cost of tuition, so students are more likely to use passes instead of parking. Fanshawe is also looking at ways to increase capacity on-campus, particularly when it comes to the size of parking spaces. A dedicated parking garage would be ideal, but space simply isn't available for such a structure at the moment. Further creative solutions will have to be found as the college keeps growing.

With all of that in mind, Fanshawe is currently working with a consultant on a comprehensive study of its parking system.

For more information on parking at Fanshawe, visit www.fanshawec.ca/EN/parking/default.asp