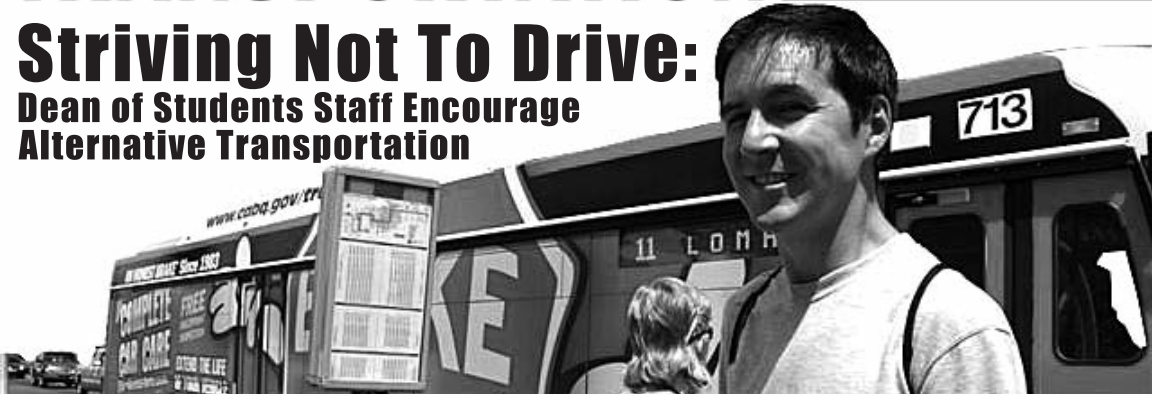


# THE BUS STOPS HERE

## PARKING & TRANSPORTATION NEWS

### Striving Not To Drive: Dean of Students Staff Encourage Alternative Transportation



"It is surprising how polite people are on the bus," says Rob Burford, a Judicial Affairs Specialist for the Dean of Students office. Burford, along with his co-workers Victor Chacon and Matthew Maez (above) both New Student Orientation Coordinators, believe public transportation in Albuquerque has a bad rap and has more to offer than the familiar negative stories and perceptions suggest. They won't deny they encounter a variety of characters; to them it is part of the charm. It's also part of being a member of a larger community of people.

"Being on the bus exposes you to a wide array of people and you see a lot of people you recognize, as well" says Maez. Maez was apprehensive about using the bus until he started riding with a friend. "The more you use the bus, the easier it gets and the more comfortable you feel."

Chacon adds, "When I get on the bus I feel more connected to and a part of a community. Cars can be so isolating."

The three Dean of Students office employees began sharing their transit experiences in the fall when they received their UNM staff free bus passes. Their conversation not only served as a support network encouraging continued use of alternative transportation, but engaged other staff members as well. Bi-weekly Monday morning meetings with Dean of Students staff frequently began with ice-breaking discussion about their experiences using ABQRide.

For Burford, Chacon, and Maez using the bus to commute to campus provides a variety of benefits including financial, cost-savings, time savings, and environmental benefits.

"One of the things I found compelling was looking at my MPG and projected wear-and-tear costs on my car and discovering I could save money by using public transit," said Burford.

Maez found that he could not only save money, but save time by using public transit. "Once I started using the bus I found that I got to work a lot faster." Maez cited traffic, congestion, and the duration of time it took to get from his car to his office as factors that increased his overall commute time when he drove to campus.

Chacon does not own a car and is not planning on buying one in the future. "I am reducing my carbon footprint," he says. To get

around, Chacon uses public transit, walking, and the Zipcar car-sharing program on campus. Additionally, when Maez and Burford are not using public transit, they look for other opportunities to use alternative transportation. Burford carools when he can and Maez uses his bicycle.

For the week of May 11-15, the City of Albuquerque is challenging the whole community to Strive Not To Drive. The campaign seeks pledges from individuals who will commit to using or to trying alternative transportation (transit, walking, bicycling, or carpooling) throughout the week. UNM Parking and Transportation Services is offering a free Zipcar membership for the UNM department with the most staff pledges for the Strive Not To Drive Campaign. To pledge visit: <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/special-events/strive-not-to-drive> and if you are staff be sure to identify what UNM department you work for.

"I challenge people to try not driving for a whole week – strive not to drive," says Maez. To make public transit more accessible Maez adds, "The City of Albuquerque Transit's Trip Planner is great and makes using the bus easier and more convenient."

The Trip Planner will map what routes and times an individual needs to use to travel roundtrip on the bus system. To check it out visit: <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/trip-planning>.

#### Tips for first-time ABQRide users from Burford, Chacon, and Maez:

- Use the ABQRide Trip Planner.
- Give yourself plenty of time. Give the bus a 10 minute window to arrive at the stop (5 minutes before and 5 minutes after the scheduled time).
- Don't be afraid to try it even if you have heard stories.
- Try it on a weekend for a short trip.
- Get a bus buddy; it will make you feel more comfortable.
- If you can, ride with someone who has used the bus before.
- Try it to get a feel for the system and decide what routes are best for you and what time of day you feel comfortable using public transit.