

Faculty and Staff Commute Report

July 2008

Conducted by



Human Resource Services

Committed to Employee and Organization Effectiveness

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Executive Summary

The price of gasoline has risen approximately 39 percent in the past year. Considering an average daily commute of 82 miles, and assuming 20 miles to the gallon, the additional cost for fuel for employees at the University of Texas at Austin is \$91.35 per month. With no relief in sight to rising gasoline prices, employees are increasingly seeking alternative scheduling and methods of transportation to help balance their finances. Four-day work weeks, flexible work scheduling, car-pooling, and public transportation programs are some of the strategies employers are putting into place to assist employees.

With respect to public transportation programs, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports that during the first quarter of 2008 ridership on all modes of public transportation nationwide increased 3.3 percent over that period last year. However, statistics from Austin's Capital Metro report that during the first four months of 2008 ridership increased by 6.1 percent over the same time period as last year.

Human Resource Services conducted an analysis, based on zip codes, of faculty and staff at The University of Texas at Austin to determine the areas where employees live and their average commute to work. To determine average miles to work, the number of miles between focal communities and UT Austin were calculated and then averaged for each county. The goal of the analysis was to identify the number of employees who may benefit from an alternate scheduling or transportation program.

Employees were categorized by the counties in which they resided, mainly Travis County and eight surrounding counties. Approximately 96% of the university's 13,417 faculty and staff employees live within the aforementioned area. About 80% of employees live in Travis County. Of those, another 65% live within the Austin Metro area, as defined by the Capital City Metro Bus Service Area. These employees live in relative proximity to the university or a bus route to the university.

On average, employees in Travis County commute about 17 miles one way, a total of 34 miles. The 10% of university employees who live in Williamson County average about 68 total miles. Lastly, the 855 employees scattered across the other seven counties average 50-120 total miles. When all employees across the eight counties are considered, the two way commute to work averages 82 miles. While there was no correlation between average work commute and salary, considering the price of gas, getting to work can be a costly venture for many employees. Implementing transportation programs or alternative work schedules could add up to significant savings. Accordingly, Human Resource Services recommends the following:

1. Promote the free rider ship the university provides on Capital Metro and carpooling incentives offered by Parking and Transportation.
2. Promote usage of carpool, vanpool, Rideshare Services, and Guaranteed Ride Home opportunities available to employees.
3. Discuss with Capital Metro a proposal intended to increase the number of buses or routes serving the metro area in efforts to decrease travel time and buses reaching capacity during peak hours.
4. Encourage colleges, schools, and administrative units to consider alternative work schedules for their employees. HRS can assist with assessing feasibility and planning programs.
5. Create satellite offices at existing locations around Austin, including, but not limited to, the Pickle Research Center and Austin Community College campuses.
6. Change standard university business hours to avoid peak traffic times and/or bus rush hours.
7. Consider forward looking approaches to accommodate future vehicles, such as installing charging stations on campus for plug in cars.

Faculty and Staff Commutes

Over the last year, the price for a gallon of gas has increased by over a dollar. As employees strategize to balance their finances, they are increasingly looking to alternate scheduling and methods of transportation to offset the increase costs of gas. Strategies to accomplish this include use of four-day work weeks, car-pooling and public transportation programs. With respect to public transportation programs, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports that during the first quarter of 2008 ridership on all modes of public transportation nationwide increased 3.3 percent over that period last year. However, statistics from Austin's Capital Metro report that during the first four months of 2008 ridership increased by 6.1 percent over the same time period as last year. Additionally, Capital Metro reports that ridership from park and ride facilities has increased 13.3 percent the first four months of 2008 compared to a year prior.

Austin AustinGasPrices.Com July 8, 2008

Today-----	\$3.958
Yesterday-----	\$3.955
One Week Ago-----	\$3.936
One Month Ago-----	\$3.892
One Year Ago-----	\$2.844

Analysis

Human Resource Services conducted an analysis, based on zip codes, of faculty and staff at The University of Texas at Austin, to determine the areas where employees live and their commute, in average miles, to work. Of the 13,417 (2,962 faculty and 10,455 staff) employees at the university, 12,819 (96%), reside within Travis County or one of the eight surrounding counties. Approximately 80%, or 10,692 employees, live in Travis County alone. Another 10% of employees live just north in Williamson County, while 855 employees are scattered across the other 7 counties. The remaining 598 employees are based out of state or in other regions of Texas. This includes those employed at the McDonald Observatory, Marine Science Institute, and the University of Texas Health Science Centers.

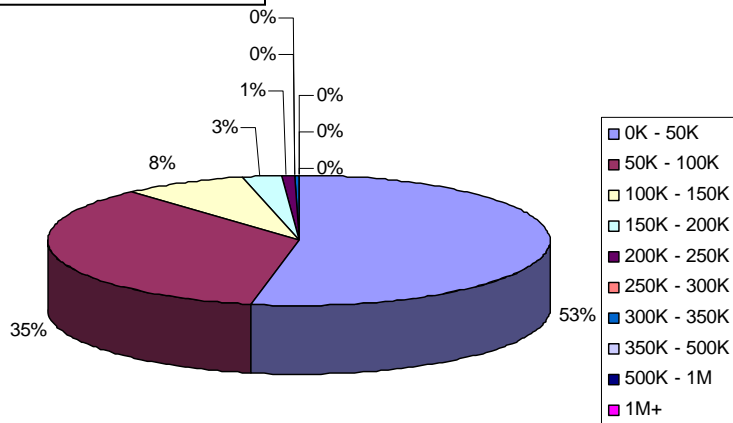
Based on the employees in Travis County, more than half (65% or 6906) live within the Austin Metro area, as defined by the Capital City Metro Bus Service Area. That is, those employees live in an area near the university or within the proximity of a bus route to the university. The other 35% constitutes employees that live outside the metro area. This includes the areas west and south of Mopac (about 2158 employees), northwest or east of Howard Lane (about 584 employees), south and east of Slaughter Lane (about 805 employees) and east Austin (about 239 employees). Most of these employees, however, have a bus stop into the city only a short drive away. On average, employees in Travis County commute about 17 miles one way, a total of 34 miles per day. The following charts show the average commute (two-way) for employees who live in the surrounding 8 counties and the average commuting miles (two-way) by occupational group. To determine average miles per day, the number of miles between focal cities and Austin were calculated and then averaged across counties.

Employees in Travis and Surrounding Counties			
County	Number of Employees (%)	Base Pay Range	Average Miles per Day (Two-Way)
Bastrop	284 (2.12)	\$22,884 - \$179,121	64
Blanco	14 (0.14)	\$22,884 - \$102,604	98
Burnet	28 (0.21)	\$23,580 - \$240,037	108
Caldwell	69 (0.51)	\$22,884 - \$96,300	78
Comal	24 (0.18)	\$23,920 - \$150,000	114
Hays	424 (3.16)	\$22,884 - \$243,448	50
Lee	12 (0.09)	\$30,117 - \$208,000	120
Travis	10,692 (79.84)	\$8,800 - \$2,610,000	34
Williamson	1,272 (9.50)	\$19,200 - \$295,404	68
Total	12,819 (95.54)		
Average			82

Occupational Group	Mean Commuting Miles	Median Commuting Miles
Administrator	23.02	19.96
Professional	22.78	19.96
Secretarial/Clerical	22.68	19.46
Technical/Paraprofessional	24.44	19.96
Skilled Craft	35.26	32.98
Service/Maintenance	25.50	19.46

Further analysis was done, based on employee salary, to determine if salary correlated with the length of an employee's commute. A significant correlation ($r=-.04$) was not found. Employees were divided by counties and then base pay ranges. The following pie charts illustrate the percentage of employees who fall into each category of pay.

Travis County Base Pay

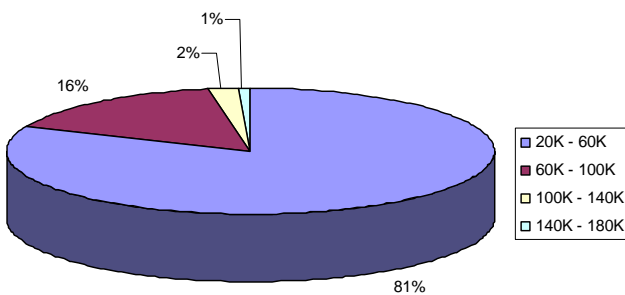


Pay Range	Employees
0K - 50K	5676
50K - 100K	3769
100K - 150K	854
150K - 200K	268
200K - 250K	92
250K - 300K	18
300K - 350K	3
350K - 500K	6
500K - 1 Million	4
1 Million +	2
	10,692

The average salary for employees in Travis County is \$60,272.

The salary range is \$8,800 - \$2,610,000.

Bastrop County Base Pay

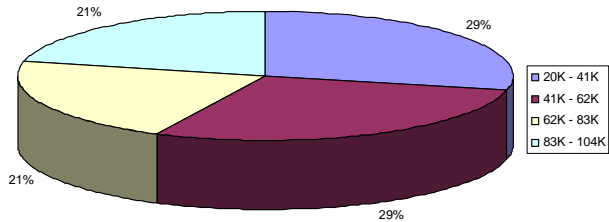


Pay Range	Employees
20K - 60K	231
60K - 100K	45
100K - 140K	6
140K - 180K	2
	284

The average salary for employees in Bastrop County is \$46,608.

The salary range is \$22,884 - \$179,121.

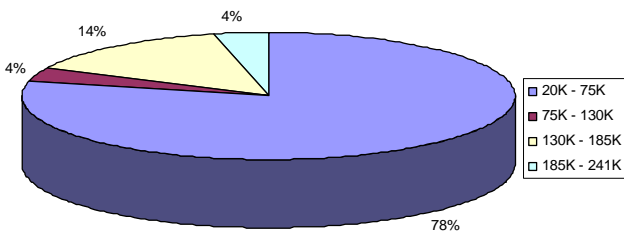
Blanco County Base Pay



Pay Range	Employees
20K - 41K	4
41K - 62K	4
62K - 83K	3
83K - 104K	3
	14

The average salary for employees in Blanco County is \$57,669.
The salary range is \$22,884 - \$102,604.

Burnet County Base Pay



Pay Range	Employees
20K - 75K	22
75K - 130K	1
130K - 185K	4
185K - 241K	1
	28

The average salary for employees in Burnet County is \$69,174.
The salary range is \$23,580 - \$240,037.

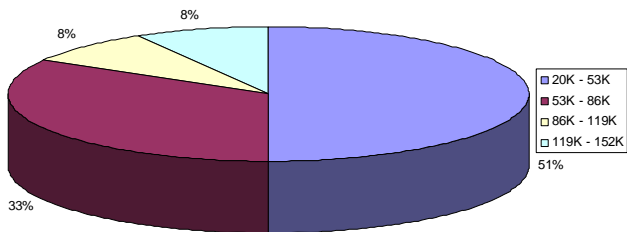
Caldwell County Base Pay



Pay Range	Employees
20K - 40K	39
40K - 60K	23
60K - 80K	5
80K - 100K	2
	69

The average salary for employees in Caldwell County is \$40,256.
The salary range is \$22,884 - \$96,300.

Comal County Base Pay**

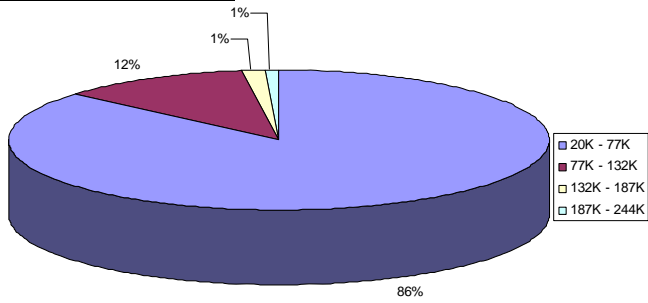


Pay Range	Employees
20K - 53K	12
53K - 86K	8
86K - 119K	2
119K - 152K	2
	24

The average salary for employees in Comal County is \$59,072.
The salary range is \$23,920 - \$150,000.

**Another 74 employees live in Bexar County and commute approximately 80 miles one way. Their average salary is \$54,159. The salary range is \$22,901 - \$136,415.

Hays County Base Pay

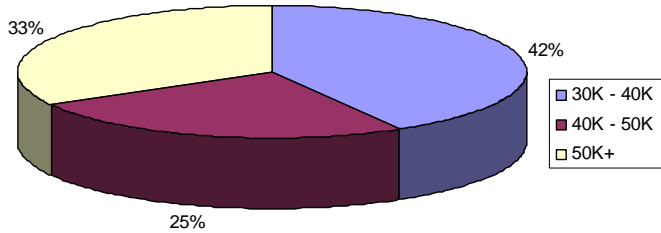


Pay Range	Employees
20K - 77K	366
77K - 132K	49
132K - 187K	6
187K - 244K	3
	424

The average salary for employees in Hays County is \$50,749.

The salary range is \$22,884 - \$243,448.

Lee County Base Pay

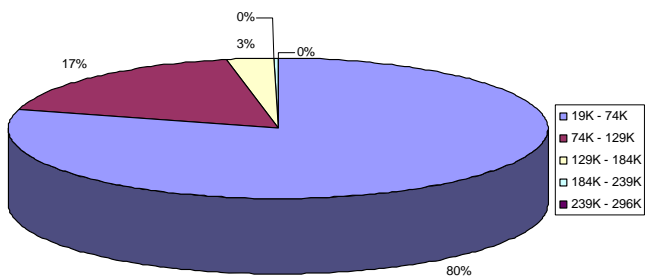


Pay Range	Employees
30K - 40K	5
40K - 50K	3
50K+	4
	12

The average salary for employees in Lee County is \$60,832.

The salary range is \$30,117 - \$208,000.

Williamson County Base Pay



Pay Range	Employees
19K - 74K	1024
74K - 129K	211
129K - 184K	32
184K - 239K	4
239K - 296K	1
	1272

The average salary for employees in Williamson County is \$55,759.

The salary range is \$19,200 - \$295,404.

Conclusions and Recommendations issue

Over the past year the price of gasoline has risen approximately 39 percent. Considering an average daily commute of 82 miles, and assuming 20 miles to the gallon, the additional cost for fuel for employees at the University of Texas at Austin is \$91.35 per month. With no relief in sight to rising gasoline prices, employees are increasingly seeking alternative scheduling and methods of transportation to help ease financial strains.

Public transportation is one of the most efficient options but, for many employees, not the most convenient. For those with schedules that revolve around picking up family members and children, bus times and routes do not always coincide with the employee's daily activities. These employees prefer to drive themselves so their vehicle is readily available in the event of an emergency or other issue. In reference to buses being too crowded and routes taking too long, the university may consider negotiating more buses and/or additional, direct routes with Capital Metro. These changes would apply to rush hours when an increase in buses would ease crowding and provide more pickup times. Others opt not to ride because oftentimes the bus is standing room only and riding would actually take longer than driving. For those with reservations about using the city's public transportation system, the university also offers carpool, vanpool, and Rideshare Services. The database and rider information can be found through the Parking and Transportation Services website, though a more direct link and stronger advertising of the services may be necessary in order to attract more users. The Guaranteed Ride Home service, in which one free ride by taxi or other public transportation method is provided to an employee who carpooled but needed transportation outside of carpool hours, should be highlighted in conjunction with the carpooling opportunities. This option may alleviate some of the employees' fears associated with not having their own vehicle available.

A further proposal is to install satellite offices at various locations around the city of Austin, such that employees do not have to travel all the way to the university in order to work. Providing office space at points between the university and an employee's home allows the employee to continue working productively while cutting transportation costs and time. Considering the Pickle Research Center and the many Austin Community College Campuses around the city that could serve as satellite locations, the suggestion is practical and achievable. Granted, some job positions that require being at the university to complete, will not be benefited by this initiative and department heads will need to determine which employees can actually work away from the university. Additionally, satellite offices will need to be equipped with computers and any other resources necessary for the employee to work efficiently.

Human Resources Services suggests adding questions regarding carpooling, work times, satellite offices, and the bus system to the Employee Satisfaction Survey to better assess employee needs in these areas.

Though there was no correlation between average work commute and salary, it is clear that getting to work can be a costly venture for many employees. Implementing transportation programs or alternative work schedules could add up to significant savings. Accordingly, Human Resource Services recommends the following:

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