

My alma mater (as of three days ago), Lake Forest Academy, has a fifty percent residential population, meaning that driving to school is not a primary “right of passage” within our student culture. However, LFA’s administration has taken various proactive initiatives that promote practicing safe driving. As a local boarding student, I’ve had the privilege to keep a car on campus from time to time, and with that came my experience with a variety of school policies intended to regulate student drivers. This included having frequent meetings with students who drove on school grounds and offering an optional driver’s ed class that conveniently met on campus, the latter of which became fairly popular amongst students (especially those of the international background). While these tactics have served a great purpose in our overall community, and are certainly well intended, I’ve taken notice of a few improvements within the past few years that could be made to improve upon safe driving practices at my school.

There are essentially two types of student drivers that can be found on LFA’s campus: The day student driver and the boarding student driver, both of which have their own respective strengths and areas for improvement. From my experience, I’ve observed that even though our student driver population consists almost entirely of day students, our school’s safe driving initiatives don’t take into account this discrepancy. The school’s advice and driving policies fail to contain information about driving off campus, which is where student commuting primarily takes place. No references, reputable resources, or local laws are given or enforced upon students, which in turn fails to promote holistic safe driving. Instead, I think it’d be more proactive for my school to include a packet with local city driving laws, helpful resources, and contact information to students upon receiving their parking pass, as well as requiring a one-time seminar that teaches and solidifies safe driving practices. Giving students all pertinent information upfront eliminates having to make uncertain judgement calls and

gives students a widened perspective on how their actions extend beyond school property and into the lives of themselves and others.

Moreover, the frequent student driver meetings, while helpful, don't highlight the most common way students may encounter unsafe driving. Instead of putting a strong emphasis on where students are permitted to park, I believe that a greater focus should be on how students need to stay alert and that driving is a privilege, not a right. By shifting priorities from rules to consequence based actions, it encourages students to maintain accountability and promotes safer habit building, rather than rigidity in notable, yet slightly less significant details.

Furthermore, the driver's ed class that our school offers is very expensive. As a school that stands for diversity, not everybody in our student body can afford taking the course, and as such, have to either enroll in a less thorough program or postpone receiving their license. In my opinion, my school should work more closely with the driving agency they partner with and coordinate a sliding tuition scale for students that otherwise wouldn't have the financial means to take the course, as this lack of accessibility indirectly impacts the remainder of the driving community on campus.

Even though I won't be attending LFA anymore, I know that these changes have the power to greatly elevate the safety of my peers, as well as adults, when driving on campus. Because if there's one thing that matters most in a school community, it's the wellbeing of the students, faculty, and staff. And safe driving is a vital component in maintaining that wellbeing.