

Coming and going at Harvard

Kris Locke directs commuter-assistance programs

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Kris Snibbe/Harvard Staff Photographer

Locke, seen here by the Harvard Square T station, is a transportation maven, overseeing the diverse ways in which the Harvard community commutes.

Each morning, Kris Locke rides the Red Line to her job at Harvard. But it's her own job to make sure that thousands of other Harvard employees are riding the T, too.

Locke is manager of the [CommuterChoice Program](#), a part of [Transportation Services](#) and [University Operations Services](#) (UOS) that offers faculty and staff discounted MBTA passes, carpooling options, and much more. That automatic update at the end of the

month on your CharlieCard? Locke makes it happen.

“Our most popular program is the discounted-pass program,” she said of the 50 percent reduction offered to employees. “But a lot fewer people know about the carpooling.”

Who knew that going to work could be so transforming? Discounted campus parking spots are issued for Harvard carpoolers. Love may be on the horizon, too. Locke said that two people who began carpooling as strangers wound up getting married. Aren't sure how to find a carpool to join? Call 617.384.RIDE.

Locke began her career at Radcliffe in 1996. She left for the Provost's office, then the BRIDGE program, before settling at CommuterChoice two years ago. On Monday mornings, she attends new-hire orientations — “I give 'em my spiel,” she said — informing employees about preferred parking for low-emission vehicles, \$25 Zipcar memberships for Harvard affiliates, or GoLoco, a service that quickly arranges ride opportunities, such as lunch trips to Target.

At the end of October, Locke organized a campuswide Walk to Work Day. “We had about 110 people participate,” she said, adding that she has bigger plans for the future.

She hopes to implement hour-long campus tours for new hires, and others who want to join, to provide a physical orientation to the campus. “Even people who have been here awhile tell me, ‘I'd love to know what's in that building.’ And along the way show employees such places as the Queen's Head Pub. Show them the real campus.”

Locke recently partnered with WalkBoston to design a map that encourages foot travel while highlighting the assorted Harvard museums, art spaces, and theaters along the way. The result is an eye-catching pamphlet — available at many of the CommuterChoice kiosks around campus — that touts the health benefits of walking while enticing participants to familiarize themselves with unfamiliar places.

Locke also monitors biking on campus. When she first joined CommuterChoice, she saw lots of bike racks, but not much organization. “They were filled with abandoned bicycles,” she said of the racks, noting that in her first year alone they tagged and removed 75 to 100 bikes, mostly left behind by students who graduated and moved from Cambridge.

The bikes were put in storage for 30 days, in case anyone claimed them, and then

donated to Quad Bikes, a nonprofit bicycle shop for the Harvard community, for refurbishing and resale. Locke encourages bicycling to and from campus, but underscores the importance of registering with the [University Police Department](#). “We’ve found ‘lost’ bikes in two feet of snow,” she said.

Participation in a Greater Boston bike-share initiative is something Locke has on her agenda.

Off campus, Locke watches a lot of basketball — her husband is a college basketball coach in Waltham. Her commuting habits have even rubbed off a bit on her husband, who travels by car. “At the end of the day, he’ll call me and ask to pick me up from work,” she said, “and I know it’s just so we can ride in the HOV [high-occupancy vehicle] lane.”

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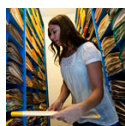
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