

11/11/19

OXFORD TRAFFIC

There may not be a lot more students at Miami than when I was here (undergrads only up about 10% overall) but there is probably a 200% increase in cars. Imagine traffic jams in a small town like Oxford! When I was here the only times traffic was bad was move-in, graduation and the occasional sold out football game... of course that was when the stadium was at the corner of High Street and Patterson! Now you need to stay off High Street around noon! Of course, the issue is exacerbated by the general politeness of driver to people in crosswalks... but that's a good thing!

Miami's campus is beautiful, full of red brick and trees, but it's really not that big. Nevertheless, there are buses and trolleys that roll around the exterior of the central campus and out to off campus housing on a regular basis. The main line around the perimeter goes by my window every 15 minutes or so...nice beeps! I understand it for the off-campus locations like the one that bills itself as a "resort" south of town... but seriously... do you really need a bus to circle this campus? Another contributor to traffic congestion.

One of the major impacts of additional cars is income for the city of Oxford. Just about every street is filled with meters that are active from 7 am to 7 pm 6 days a week... they generously take Sunday off! And the enforcement people are always busy. I approached one young lady outside the House and said, "We're thinking of a philanthropy project where we put quarters in the meters around our House to keep people from getting tickets... and then leave them a note!" "Go ahead", she replied... "It's still income to Oxford... and you better have a lot of quarters! Students have 4 hour classes and meters only go 2!" Quite the scam!

There are fewer bicycles than I remember... we have a full-size bike rack out back that rarely has more than 1 bike in it! But they are more than compensated for by the motorized skateboards and scooters that are constantly weaving their way around campus. A company called "Lime" provides "pay by the ride" electric scooters that get more than their share of use... no I have not tried it... and it's not likely to happen!

I used to think I was one of the fastest walkers I know... not anymore! I still move pretty good, but the average student will blow by me. The difference is that they rarely look up from their phones or around at their surroundings... and they almost never smile! John McCutcheon has a line about young people dancing... "and they pray their eyes don't meet". That's how it is around campus... anyone walking alone wants it that way... don't try to engage me... my phone and my destination are all that's important! Not sure if this is sad or just true...