The Bike Stable

Introduction:

The Bike Stable is a student run bicycle co-op, which provides free bicycle maintenance and assistance to Western Michigan University students and community members alike. We assist our visitors by sharing our tools as well as our knowledge about mechanics and bikes in general. Visitors get the opportunity to work on their own two-wheeled contraptions with the guidance and support of the friendly, encouraging mechanics here at the Stable.

Our mission is to work with students, staff, and community members in order to promote, encourage, educate, and create a safe environment for learning. While working towards advancing non-motorized transportation infrastructure and meeting our proposed 2065 Climate Neutrality target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on campus and in Kalamazoo.

The Bike Stable begun by two ambitious western students and a SSG grant. It was originally located at the Gibbs House garage with only basic tools. Numerous grants helped expand the tool selection allowing for better service and a deeper understanding of bike mechanics. Eventually the Bike Stable found its new home in the Office for Sustainability shared studio space.

Projects:

The Bike Stable team has consistently worked towards improving and organizing its space and service. Our main projects over this semester where very unique and helpful.

The following are some of the projects:

- Created an electronic Sign-In system for a more convenient flow of visitors.
- Built several projects for expansion of storage spaces in the studio area for basically any project related with tools/parts.
- Researches and proposals to increase mobility of bikes around campus/Gibbs house/Kalamazoo. I.e. (Cargo bike for the Gibbs House proposal), (secured and safe fix-It stations and pumps around our campus).
The best day of the week: “Western Wednesdays”. Which aimed the student population to gain more knowledge about how take care of their human-powered vehicle.

We have continuously attended the “Complete Streets Coalition of Kalamazoo” planning meetings for a more active role on helping our community.

The new Sign-in sheet is supposed to improved the old system, which is basically replacing the paper with an electronic system. This electronic system will automatically calculate the amount of visitors every day, month and/or year. This idea will improve our service and have aim to save time and to be more efficient.

“Western Wednesdays” was basically a fall project organized by WSA, here at Western Michigan University. Our role was to essentially promote our projects and assist the student community with any questions or concerns they had about non-motorized transportation at our university.
Once again we helped the “Diversity & Inclusion” department at WMU with their annual community project. This was the 3rd time we collaborated in this team building project. This project was basically teaching WMU students and others from Lakeside Academy how to re-build 8-10 disassemble bikes. Students from both sides completed these bikes in order to give them away to younger students at the Lakeside Academy.

**Methods and Results:**

![Picture #4: Bikes given away to Lakeside Academy](image)

The methods we have chosen for this semester have been the same we have believed in since day one. We think that the way we present our structure and the way we execute our daily tasks will compensate and show the expected results we projected.

Our structure is divided into four major areas starting by the most important: Education, Service, Research/Policies efforts and finally Promotions/Marketing.

We believe in education and that if we start by educating people about their commuting options, common issues and understanding basic maintenance skills, people will eventually overcome and gain knowledge that will be useful for them and the choices they’ll make in the future. Our Open Shop is dedicated to have one of the friendliest service on campus, we are truly sure that if we keep a welcoming environment using proper communicative skills we will attract the kind of curious people we want to attract. Our efforts in researching the best way and/or commuting option for students on campus have always been something we wanted to study more in depth. Our university lacks of policies that gives fare rights to all kind of transportation methods, either if someone is skating, rollerblading, biking, walking or driving a car. Our interns do their best to study policies and fare right for all. Promotional efforts is our simplest form in our structure; basically we get more of our visitors by “word of mouth” or fliers around campus.
Our staff have recorded the amount of visitors since we started operating at the new Office for Sustainability building. It is incredible how much we have grown and how positive have been the public’s acceptance.

These graphs represent the flow of visitors of each open shop we have got during each year, which it shows that the flow has always been permanently consistent.

Table #1 & #2: Bike Stable visitors per semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Open Shops</th>
<th>Total First Visitors</th>
<th>Total Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>294</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commentary, Reflection, and Next Steps:

Our next steps are very clear. The following are some of them:

- To rent out all of the Bronco Bikes for 2016 season
- Monthly classes: i.e.: Winter Biking, Science behind bicycles, how to be safe on the road, etc.
- Work with WSA for a national initiative through a new resolution “Bike Awareness Day”
- Bring discussions about improvements in our biking infrastructure on campus