

Students at Penn State Altoona have been using Amtran's bus service to get to and from the downtown campus. Recently, Altoona has been revamping the downtown center in hopes students use it more frequently. But the travel has been becoming difficult for the students of Penn State Altoona. The importance of this issue is crucial because there are many students on campus who struggle with the hustle and bustle of getting downtown to class.

Amtran has been partnered with Penn State Altoona for 25 plus years. Amtran, which is short for American Transportation Corporation, rebranded itself in 1980 and has since provided transportation all over the U.S. Amtran does not solely supply



One of the busses provided by Amtran waits at the Hawthorne shelter to take students to and from the downtown campus and around Altoona.

transportation to Penn State Altoona but as well to the city of Altoona. Sydnee Cookerly who utilizes public transportation in her hometown of Madrid Spain, says that "I don't see a problem with sharing the busses, yes it might take longer to get downtown but I have never felt that there have been issues or conflicts with sharing the bus and still feel comfortable taking it." Kendyl Morse on the other hand who is a nursing major at PSUA expresses that if it was up to her she would not want to share the bus. "I just think if I pay all this money out of my activity fee for a bus system

then why should I have to share it, and if we didn't have to share it there wouldn't be that many stops." Penn State Altoona does allow freshman to have a car on campus and many students take that opportunity, but there is a fee that comes with parking on campus as well. Although, some might say that it is cheaper to not buy a parking pass and utilize the bus, it just depends for each student. But then some students, one in particular Carol Dannenberg says that, "I have to make sure I schedule my classes wisely or else I won't make it in time from my class downtown to making it back on campus for my next class." So what is the use in having transportation if it hinders students from getting to class on time, or getting there at all?

Others regarding the parking spaces downtown have made more comments. One communications student spoke on behalf of others stating that the parking downtown is limited, you have to park in areas that are not the safest and are a far walk from the downtown center, and the parking spots are not safe in bad weather conditions. So if the busses were faster and more dependable would students be more inclined to take them?

It takes about 25 minutes to get downtown from campus, making multiple stops along the way in surrounding developments in Altoona. A straight route from the downtown campus would take about half the time. So is it worth having a direct route? The cost for the busses does come out of students activities fee through the campus so regardless students are paying for these services.

Rick Wareham, the director of business operations here on campus, deals with anything non-academic at Penn State Altoona. He does believe the services can be improved but right now it is not in the budget for the school to have a direct bus

route to the downtown campus. Roughly ten years ago they did have a direct bus route downtown although due to budget cuts they had to cut that bus as well. Since students are the ones that pay for the bus services through the activity fee from tuition, would more students up the fee to have a direct bus route? That is the question. Wareham also mentioned that, "most complaints he gets are from student who have never taken a bus and the other majority of students who have complain that the bus takes too long." Wareham says he is trying to work with Amtran to eventually get a contract that has a direct bus to downtown but he is still in progress of getting that approved by Amtran and Penn State Altoona.

Penn State Altoona is also a school that has many commuter students as well as students from all around the world. In hopes that students choose to stay at Penn State Altoona for all four years the school has come together to try and get more attendees at the downtown campus, but the link between that is the transportation, and the busses specifically. The link is the busses, and so in order to help better establish these two campuses together making the transportation easier, faster, more reliable, and one direct route could make all the difference for some students.