



# Campus Service Vehicle

## BUYER'S GUIDE

BY STEVE HENSHAW

For those who may be struggling to re-imagine ways to save money on campus service vehicles, this must-read guide will explain how purchasing a bus or fleet can save a university thousands of dollars in annual expenses. This guide also explains what features to consider, the right questions to ask, how to identify red flags, and how to determine what vehicles will be a worthwhile investment.

Campus service vehicles have a lot of different uses, as many administrators may already be aware. The Transportation Services department, in many cases, may have an existing fleet of cars, trucks, and vans that support smaller passenger capacities, and other official business uses. The university may lack the ability to transport larger groups of staff, students, and other campus visitors. The wisest administrators will see the cost savings obtainable when comparing the purchase or lease options of a front-engine motorcoach with the amount spent on bus charters, team travel, and additional marketable activities that will help increase student enrollment. Owning or leasing a bus comes with an abundance of benefits that many campus decision-makers may not have considered.

The most obvious savings for universities that decide to purchase a bus will be in athletic travel. A cost analysis will show the clear numbers. By pulling budget data from previous charter rentals, hotel stays, and airfare for further destinations, then comparing the total to an annual lease-purchase cost or total acquisition price, the savings will be clear. Having a lavatory on the bus can also reduce travel time and increase convenience.

Public transportation is the most used transportation for college students in localities that don't have a well-developed public transportation system. Campuses that don't have such transportation options could be missing out on student enrollment numbers. Public transportation, however, has its disadvantages when it is the only option for students. It can become costly, inconvenient regarding class schedules, may not offer accessibility for students with disabilities, and comes with a risk of harassment and violence that can be avoided. Universities with buses can offer shuttle services to frequent off campus

locations and common visited sites, such as grocery stores and laundry facilities. In colder climates, a bus could assist with off-campus student housing.

Additionally, universities that host an abundance of events but don't have the parking infrastructure to support the additional traffic on campus can ease the hassle of transportation by owning a bus or fleet.

Not only do students and their parents look for a quality education when determining which university to attend, they also consider what campus life is like. They consider whether the university offers activities that support social connections and interactions. Not only are students interested in attending on campus events, but they also enjoy also off-campus group outings that lead to overall increased satisfaction in the educational experience. Sure, fraternities and sororities can be an important part of the college experience, but for other students to increase connection, having the means to provide other forms of social activities for

student engagement, such as a motorcoach or a fleet, will increase the overall well-being and happiness of campus life.

Overall, the visibility of the sports team and college branding is extremely important to the communications department. The exterior of the bus functions as a billboard for all new students, competing schools, and community members. Everyone can appreciate the sleek look of the buses and how they represent the university.

Here are some examples of ways campus service vehicles can be used:

- Athletics travel
- Off-campus transportation
- Academic events, on and off campus
- Campus life activities
- Educational day trips and travel
- Marketing/collegiate branding

Those considering the purchase of a motorcoach for a university should look for



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several, often overlooked features. Without knowing all of the considerations, buyers could easily end up with huge repair bills or not enough space for sports gear. First, buyers need to research on service centers. If a motorcoach has only a few service centers in the United States, requiring hundreds of miles and hours to arrive, this lack of available service centers is a sign that repair bills could be outrageous. Additionally, when the bus is out of service, the towing expenses to the service facility would be beyond imaginable. Choosing a front-engine motorcoach built on a common chassis allows access to thousands of service centers nationwide.

A quick look at the total cost of ownership can give prospective buyers a good idea which type of motorcoach would be best for the university. Front-engine motorcoaches not only offer a large network of service centers, but they also have low acquisition costs that are a fraction of the cost of traditional motorcoach acquisition. In comparing features

of a front-engine motorcoach to a traditional motorcoach, prospective buyers will find better fuel efficiency, easier part replacements and availability, fewer underbody parts on the chassis that can be damaged on the road, fewer axles, tires, brakes, lower insurance premiums, and lower toll fees.

**Front Engine vs. Flat Nose**

- Low total cost of ownership
- Thousands of service centers nationwide
- Enough storage space for large equipment with no obstructions
- Full composite no wood construction
- Fuel efficiency
- Easy to find parts
- Few exposed underbody parts
- Fewer axles, tires, brakes
- Lower toll fees
- Ceramic window coating

**Making a Sound Investment**

Prospective buyers may wonder how they will know if they have made a sound investment. Overall, the take-away from this guide is that decision-makers need to research, ask the right questions, and consider everything they may want to offer students, staff, and visiting patrons. Most of all, prospective buyers should remember that this purchase is an investment in the future of the university.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Steve Henshaw, Chief Executive Officer of National Bus Sales, and one of the innovators behind

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