

AUTISM INITIATIVE

at Mercyhurst University



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The distinctions of our innovative program model and talented staff include:

- In 2012, AIM staff testified on behalf of autism before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.
- In 2014, AIM staff contributed to the published guide “Emerging Practice for Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum in Higher Education.”
- In 2015, AIM was featured at TEDxErie with “Creating Meaningful Careers for Adults with Autism.”
- In 2017, AIM’s program director was a finalist for the Autism Connection of PA’s Temple Grandin Award.
- AIM has been ranked 3rd in the country among “Impressive Special

Enhanced Services Offered by the AIM Program

The AIM Program supports students in all areas of the college experience, including campus life as well as class work. Students are evaluated in key domains that are essential to higher education and vocational success. These A.I.S.E domains explore functioning in Academic, Independence, Social, and Emotional areas. Students enrolling in AIM pay an annual fee that covers services in academic, social and counseling support as needed.

- Weekly AISE domain assessment meetings
- Peer Mentor programming
- Priority for specialized housing arrangement
- Standardized social opportunities
- Individualized social skills training
- Independence skill development
- Assessment to assist in understanding of learner-type and category of autistic thinking
- Access to optional meal gatherings to encourage socialization in the dining hall
- Development of student-centered individualized behavior plans
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How to Apply

To apply to AIM, students must:

- Complete the standard Mercyhurst University application, available online at apply.mercyhurst.edu and be accepted to Mercyhurst University.
- After being accepted to Mercyhurst University, complete an additional application to the AIM Program, available at mercyhurst.edu/aim.
- Provide documentation from a licensed professional.
- Participate in an on-campus interview.
- Deadline for AIM applications: February 1, 2022.

Beyond the Bounds of the Mercyhurst Main Campus

Through a liation with the AIM program students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of experiential adventures that serve to broaden their awareness of both the outer world and their inner self. Two highlighted opportunities are:

Raise the Roof for Autism

Conquer the Canyon

The CREATE Summer Program:

College Readiness Experience for Autism Training Excellence

Mercyhurst University offers a three-week summer experience to help potential students determine whether they are ready for the demands of college life.

Through this well-rounded experiential program, students gain exposure and experience in every facet of college life. The CREATE experience includes:

- Three-week College Readiness Assessment
- Residential life in a Mercyhurst residence hall
- Extensive social skills curriculum
- Dining in the campus dining hall
- Interacting both socially and academically with fellow students in a variety of settings
- Access to social environments to practice skills learned on campus and in the program
- Enrollment and participation in a three-credit college course taught by a Mercyhurst faculty member who has experience working with and advocating for students on the autism spectrum
- Participation in our specialized College 101 series expressly designed for the needs of students on the autism spectrum. This series provides exposure to the different components of a college campus such as residence life, registrar, financial aid, health center, etc.
- Participation in our Mini Lecture Series presented by a panel of Mercyhurst faculty on a broad range of topics designed to intrigue a variety of interests. This series provides exposure to different lecture styles and fields of academic study.
- Opportunity to learn valuable study skills, develop / enhance social interactions, and hone independent living skills while adjusting to the rigor of college-level academics.

Mercyhurst's Old Main bathed in blue light to mark World Autism Awareness Day



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