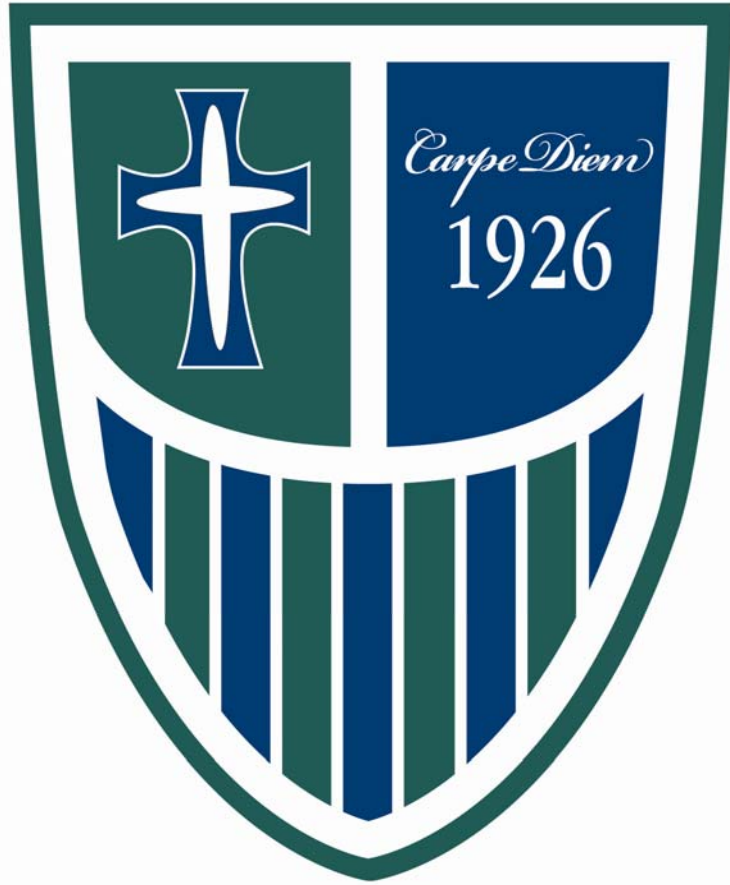


MERCYHURST
UNIVERSITY



Aiming
High

The Asperger Initiative at
Mercyhurst (AIM)

Brad McGarry



Founded: 1926

Sisters of Mercy

Enrollment: 3077

Full Time Faculty: 149

Campus: 75 Acres

80 Buildings

Undergraduate

Degrees: 50

Graduate Programs: 6



Erie, PA

4th Largest City

Metropolitan:
280,000

Nickname:

Flagship City

US Brig Niagara

Learning Difference Department

- Founded: 1986
- Division of Student Life
- Services approximately:
200
- AIM included: 2008



Learning Difference Department

- Level One – Standard 504 Accommodations
 - Free
- Level Two –
 - Fee Based Program
- Level Three
 - Asperger Initiative

AIM—a natural fit at Mercyhurst

- Integral part of the Mercy tradition and the mission of the University
- Twenty five year history of nationally ranked Learning Differences program (K and W Guide; Peterson's)
- Ranked 3rd - Impressive Special College Programs for Students With Autism
- Ranked 9th - Incredible Colleges for Special Needs Students



AIM Program Overview

- Foundations
- AIM GPA
- Supportive Living Learning Community
- Peer Mentor Program
- Social Skills Training
- Social Outings
- Learning Differences Services
 - Priority Registration
 - Weekly advising meetings
 - Alternative testing accommodations

Foundations Program

Three week summer experience to assess readiness for the rigors of college life

Students live on campus, eat at the cafeteria and participate in course work.

Designed for college-bound teens with Asperger Syndrome and high-functioning Autism Disorder

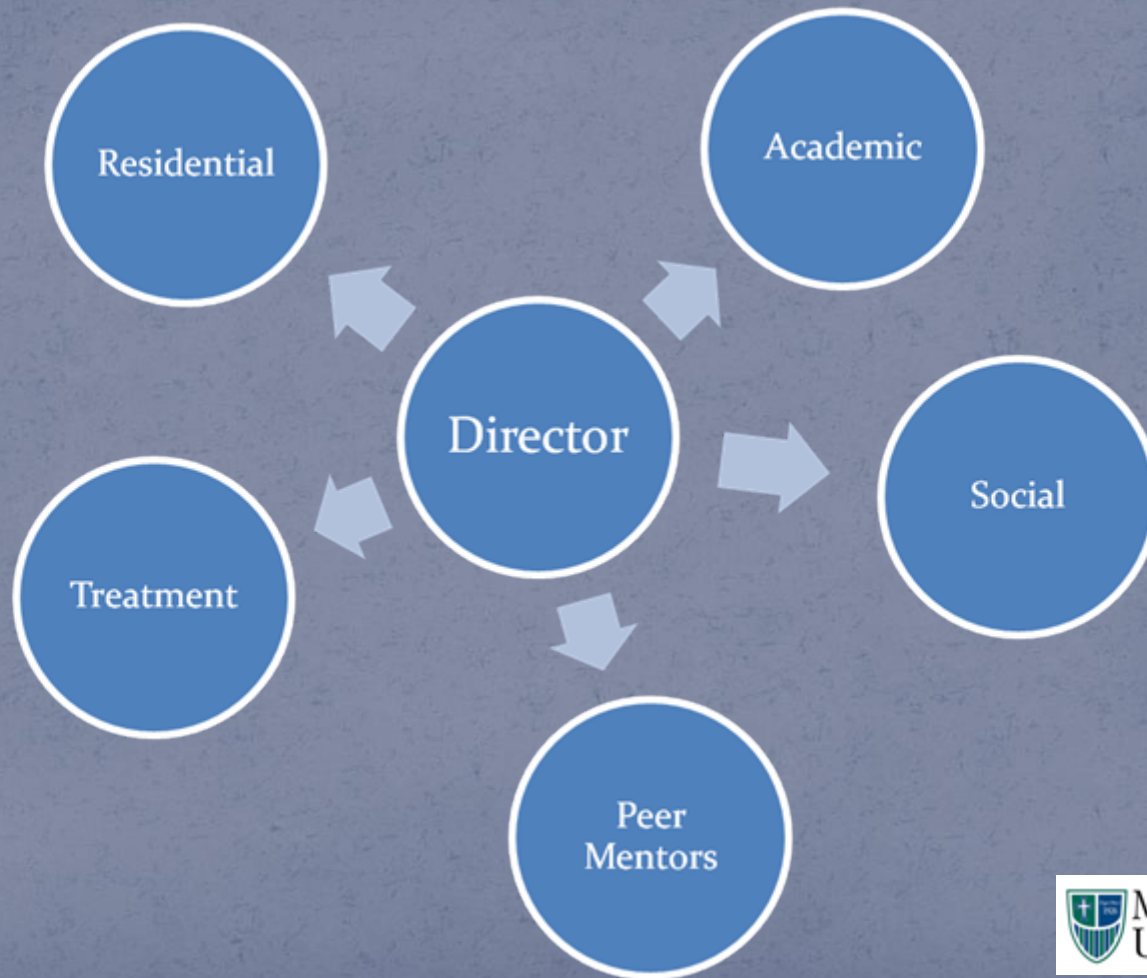
Program assesses functioning across academic, living and social domains



Daily activities include:

- A three-credit college course
- College 101---Seminars on navigating the campus community
- Mini Series Lectures
- Social skill tutorials
- Community outings

AIM Foundations Staff



Staffing

- Director
- 4 Grad Students
- 12 Peer Mentors
- 3 Shifts
- 24 students

Peer Mentor Job Duties

- Assist in monitoring and implementing the program in the student living area, classroom, and community
- Model appropriate social interactions
- Assist in addressing academic and social concerns
- Develop, produce, complete and enter data
 - Anecdotal Notes
 - DRC
 - Behavior Plans
- Complete paperwork on two to three assigned students
- Complete final recommendations on all assigned students

AIM GPA

- Weekly Meetings
- Social Skills Training
- Event Participation
 - Non-engaged
 - Social
- Faculty Consultation
- Utilization of the program
- Focuses on four key domains to succeed in college:
 - Social Engagement
 - ASP (Academic Social Progress),
 - Independence,
 - Peer Relation
 - Emotional

Supportive Living Learning Community

- Specialized AIM Housing
- 2 students
- Hall Director
- Housing Events
- Groups
- Peer Mentor Participation

Peer Mentor Program

- One year commitment
- No pay, no credit
- 2 – 4 hours per month
- Brief documentation
- AIM students
- Participate in 2-4 per month in a mentoring role with students with more serious disabilities.

Social Skills Training

- Consulting Psychologist
 - Janet Pawlowski
- Focus on Adult Level Interactions
 - Social Initiation vs. Social engagement
- Students required to attend three quarter of sessions
- Partnering with Special Education and the (ABA) Applied Behavioral Analysis Programs
 - Video Modeling
 - Functional Assessments
 - ABC Behaviors